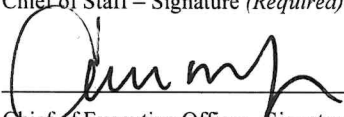

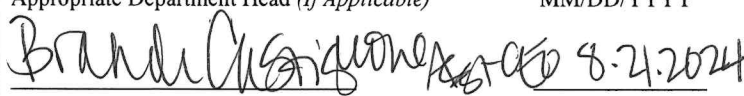


EASTERN LOUISIANA MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

ELMHS Visitation Policy

POLICY NUMBER:	LD-21
DEPARTMENT:	Administration / Leadership
SUBJECT:	ELMHS Visitation Policy
CONTENT:	Visitation Guidelines
STATUS:	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Published <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot _____ (time frame)
ATTACHMENT(S) TO POLICY:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes - X Form(s) – Visitor Pass & Attestation <input type="checkbox"/> Instructions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Louisiana Revised Statutes <input type="checkbox"/> No
EFFECTIVE DATE:	9/18/2018
REVISION /REVIEWED DATE(S):	01/20/2023; 08/01/2024
SEND INQUIRIES TO:	Name: Brandi Castiglione, Associate CEO Location: Center Building Phone No.:225-634-0682 Fax No.: 225-634-4345
APPROVAL SIGNATURE(S):	Chief of Staff – Signature (Required) MM/DD/YYYY  8/20/24
	Chief of Executive Officer – Signature (Required) MM/DD/YYYY  8/21/24
	Appropriate Department Head (If Applicable) MM/DD/YYYY  8-21-2024
	Appropriate Department Head (If Applicable) MM/DD/YYYY _____

EASTERN LOUISIANA MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Subject: ELMHS Visitation Policy

Policy No.: LD-21


Date Revised / Reviewed: 08/01/2024

Effective Date: 09/18/2018

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LD-21_ELMHS Visitation Policy

	Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System (ELMHS)	
	Content	ELMHS Visitation Guidelines
	Effective Date	09/18/2018 Revised/Reviewed: 01/20/23; 08/01/2024
	Policy Director / Title	Associate Chief Executive Officer Center Building

I. DEFINITIONS

1. ASSA – Admissions Special Security Area.
2. Attestation – Form completed by adult visitor attesting to the guardianship of a minor visitor.
3. Contraband – Any item that can be considered dangerous, injurious, or that might be a threat to the integrity of security of Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System. Contraband describes prohibited or unauthorized objects of varying levels of threat. Categorized as Class I, II, III or IV Contraband Items.
4. CV – Cedarview.
5. Clients – People (Patients) currently being treated at Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System.
6. CGT – Correctional Guard Therapeutic.
7. CRU – Crossroads Rehabilitation Unit.
8. DD- Dorothea Dix.
9. ELMHS – Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System.
10. ELMHS Visitor Pass No. 001 – Form completed by visitor and hospital staff regarding client being visited. (See Appendix A)
11. EH – Evangeline House.
12. Front Gate – The main entrance gate into Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System.
13. Immediate Family- Client’s parents, children, siblings and grandparents.

14. ITU – Intermediate Treatment Unit.
15. Medical Record Number – A numeric code assigned to clients upon admission and provided to client’s family by the client and/or direct care staff to facilitate communication and visitation during the client’s stay at ELMHS.
16. OC – Oakcrest Unit.
17. PA – Psychiatric Aide.
18. Sally Port – The security building at the entrance of the locked, secured client buildings (buildings enclosed by a security fence).
19. Treatment Team – consists of the client’s psychiatrist, social worker, nurse and recreational therapist.

II. PURPOSE

The nature of Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System (ELMHS) dictates that ELMHS takes every precaution in assuring that the safety of the clients, staff and public are protected. The Visitation Policy is an effort on the part of ELMHS to ensure that client rights are protected and carried out without jeopardizing the safety and security of the clients, staff and public.

III. SCOPE

The scope of this Policy is applicable to all inpatient divisions of ELMHS, excluding the Intermediate Care Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled (ICF/DD) Community Group Home and SFF program. All staff are responsible for complying with enforcing this Policy and Procedure.

IV. POLICY

All clients’ families, friends, clergy and attorneys are allowed to visit clients as outlined in Louisiana Revised Statutes, including but not limited to, La. R.S. 28:171 and La. R.S. 40:2180, *et seq.*, which in turn is in accordance with La. R.S. 40:2005 which states that any person eighteen years or older may designate those individuals who will not be denied access to visit in-person during any stay in any hospital, nursing home, or other healthcare facility with the State of Louisiana, with restrictions as set forth by the Administration of Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System and by Mental Health Standards.¹

¹ La. R.S. 2005. Hospital visitation

In addition, under La. R.S. 40:2180.2, licenses intermediate care facilities for people with developmental disabilities **may** allow any close family member to visit during any state of public health emergency. The client in a treatment facility shall be permitted unimpeded, private and uncensored communications by visitation, including nonsexual physical contact such as hand holding or hugging where appropriate, with the exception of ASSA. **These rights may be restricted if such visits are clinically contradicted by the Director of the treatment facility and sufficient cause exists and is documented in the client’s medical records. (See Appendix C).**

A. Visitation Times

*** If a client is on medical pass at another hospital, or Villa Sickbay, visitation shall follow that facility’s policy.*

Specific Unit hours for Visitation are as follows:

ASSA Consult Social Services for Scheduling ASSA Visitations.		
CRU, ITU CEDARVIEW	Monday-Friday Weekends and Holidays	1:00 PM - 4:00 PM 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM
OAKCREST	Monday-Friday Weekends and Holidays	2:00 PM - 4:00 PM 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM
EVANGELINE	Monday-Friday Weekends and Holidays	1:00 PM – 3:30 PM 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM
DOROTHEA DIX	Monday-Friday Weekends and Holidays	11:00 AM - 4:00 PM 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM
VILLA SICKBAY	Within Compliance with Villa Sickbay Rules.	

EXCEPTIONS to the Visitation Times include:

Attorneys: Clients shall have the right to communicate with his/her counsel, in private, at all times. Attorneys will be allowed to visit at any time. Upon arrival at the front and/or building security gate, attorneys providing legal advice or representing clients who have been admitted to ELMHS must provide the following:

- A. Any person eighteen years or older may designate those individuals who will not be denied access to visit him during any stay in any hospital, nursing home or other health care facility within the State of Louisiana.
- B. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit hospitals, nursing homes, or other health care facilities from restricting visits to standard designated hours, from restricting visits as the patient’s medical condition may require, or from enforcing an injunction barring an individual from entering the premises. (Emphasis added.)

1. Current and valid picture Identification.
2. Any State Bar Association Card, or documentation of current membership in good standing “*Certificate of Good Standing*” from the Louisiana Supreme Court.

In the event that the Bar Association status documentation is not available on the initial visit:

3. Current Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) status shall be confirmed using the Louisiana State Bar Association Membership Directory *via* the LSBA website at: <https://www.lsba.org/MD321654/MembershipDirectory.aspx>

If the current membership in a State Bar Association is not in “*Good Standing*” or cannot be verified, standard family and friends visitation policies will apply and entry may be denied until a later date.

Clergy: Outside Clergy will be allowed to visit under the Guidelines of Adult Visitors. Clergy visits shall be at the request or approval of the client. Clergy wishing to conduct services at the facility must obtain approval through the Rehabilitation Department’s Pastoral Services. In accordance with R.S. 40:2005 hospitals, nursing homes, and adult residential care homes may allow members of the clergy to visit patients or residents during a public health emergency whenever a patient or resident requests the visit. Special consideration shall be given to client/patients or residents receiving end-of-life care.

Regulatory Survey Staff: Clients shall have the right to communicate with Regulatory Survey Staff, in private if requested by the client and/or Regulatory Survey Staff, in accordance with established safety protocols.

By Attending Physician Order: In rare instances, clients may receive visitors outside of the normal visiting hours if prior approval is received from the clients attending Physician.

Civil Division RN Manager/Supervisor B: In rare instances, may allow for visiting outside established visiting hours. For example; unforeseen circumstances that prevent a visitor, who has traveled a great distance, from arriving within established visiting hours.

Forensic Division RN Manager/Supervisor B: In rare instances, may allow for visiting outside established visiting hours. For example; unforeseen circumstances that prevent a visitor, who has traveled a great distance, from arriving within established visiting hours.

B. Visitor Guidelines

Adults: A client is allowed visits from family and friends during regular visitation hours, unless otherwise indicated by the Treatment Team or the client. For reasons that may damage the integrity of the therapeutically secure and safe environment of clients, some restrictions may be placed on who may visit the client. These restrictions may occur with the recommendation of the client’s treatment team and with approval of the Chief

Executive Officer (CEO), if sufficient cause exists and is documented in the client's medical record.

Children: Children under the age of seventeen (17) years, other than the client's immediate family (children, grandchildren or siblings), are not allowed to visit, save for very rare instances. Those children who are not immediate family must be granted special, written permission by the CEO and/or Clinical Director of ELMHS. Visitors under the age of seventeen (17) years must be accompanied by and under the supervision of, the legal parent and/or guardian. The adult will complete an Attestation (*See Appendix B*) confirming he/she is the minor's legal parent and/or guardian. Clients with history of inappropriate sexual behavior with minors under the age of seventeen (17) years will not be allowed to receive visitors under the age of seventeen (17) years.

*****Note:*** *It is the responsibility of the RN on the Unit to determine if the client can receive visitors under the age of seventeen (17) years, based on history of inappropriate behaviors with minors.*

News Media: In the event a client requests a visit from a journalist, in their professional capacity, approval must be granted by the CEO. If the CEO cannot be reached, the media member will be referred to LDH Public Relations Office. ***No information is to be released from this facility.***

Visitor Limitations: Visitors to ELMHS are required to be appropriately dressed. Visitors will not be permitted to visit while wearing halter tops, exposed bare midriff, shorts (mid-thigh or above), tight/revealing bottoms or dresses. Shoes must be worn at all times.

Three (3) visitors per client will be allowed at one time.

Visiting is limited to a period of three (3) hours. Exceptions to the time limit may be made by the attending Physician or RN Manager/Supervisor B.

Visitors shall not be allowed to use facility telephones for non-emergency telephone calls, and are asked to make all calls before entering ELMHS Campus.

If an emergency telephone call must be made from an ELMHS telephone, staff members shall be present during the call.

Visitors who behave in a threatening, intoxicated, reckless or dangerous manner will be asked to leave or be removed by Nursing/Security.

No pets are allowed on ELMHS Campus.

Only prepackaged, factory sealed articles of food and drink are allowed in DD, EH, CV Units and Community Group Homes. Home prepared food and drink are not allowed for security purposes, as well as per LDH Health Standards Section. Any packages brought to

ELMHS are subject to inspection by the staff in the presence of the client. On ASSA, CRU, ITU and Oakcrest, visitors may not bring clients food items from outside. If desired, they can use the vending machines on ASSA, CRU, ITU and Oakcrest during the visit.

Cash is considered Contraband on all Units, with the exception of DD. (See LD-13_Contraband Visitors). Please see a staff member for procedures in depositing funds into client's account. (LD-11_Management of Client Funds).

Epidemiology Guidelines established by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control pertaining to nosocomial infections restrict visitation of persons with respiratory diseases or any sign of communicable infections, **these persons shall not be permitted to visit hospital clients.**

Contraband: Before entering visiting areas, visitors must present all items to be inspected by staff. All visitors, including children under the age of seventeen (17) years, are subject to searches, including the use of metal detectors/hand-held wands, and body searches. Though not all inclusive, the following items are considered Contraband and shall not be allowed in visiting areas:

- Glass bottles and containers
- Metal knives, forks, spoons and containers
- Drugs, alcohol and medications
- Tea bags
- Cigarettes, cigarette lighters, matches, vaping devices, e-cigarettes
- Cameras
- Cell phones
- Smart watches
- Cash
- Weapons of any kind, including mace and pepper spray

Weapons refer to any firearm, knife or device that could cause bodily harm. Weapons are never permitted on the hospital grounds. All visitors and law enforcement officials shall relinquish weapons and ammunition to front gate personnel for proper storage before entering ELMHS Campus. Local law enforcement is permitted to carry weapons on grounds during the performance of official duty; however, weapons are never permitted on client care buildings.

Other items that are considered Contraband by hospital staff will not be allowed inside the visitors' area. Contraband is any item that can be considered dangerous, injurious or viewed as a threat to the integrity or security of ELMHS.

In the event Contraband is found, visitation shall be terminated and the visitor(s) shall be escorted to the Main Gate.

V. PROCEDURES

All vehicles will be required to stop at the front gate. A valid driver's license or State identification card will be required of all adult visitors. Visitors will be identified by a visitors' badge, which will be received upon entering the front gate, worn in plain view at all times during the visit and returned to the front gate officer when exiting ELMHS Campus.

A vehicle identification pass will be given to all visitors to place in their vehicles. The vehicle identification pass must be clearly displayed on the vehicle's dashboard at all times.

Client's visitors will have the client's medical record number of who they are there to see. Clients and their social workers shall ensure that all expected visitors will be provided with this number prior to visitation. The officer assigned to the front gate shall be responsible for proper identification of all visitors entering or leaving the facility. In the event that a visitor does not have the client's medical record number, the front gate officer will not verify the client's presence in the facility to the visitor. The front gate officer will phone the client's unit, obtained from the census, and attempt to determine if the client would like to see the visitor.

Staff bringing visitors in with them in a vehicle, or escorting them on foot, are responsible for notifying front gate officer and acquiring a visitors badge for the visitors.

If in doubt about the identity of a visitor, the front gate officer shall not allow the person on ELMHS Campus grounds until identification has been verified.

The front gate officer will initiate an ELMHS Visitor Pass No. 001, noting the following information: date, arrival time, and purpose of entry. Visitors will be required to fill the section of the form regarding signature, address, driver's license, race, sex, name and ages of children visiting. Visitors who are unable to complete this task will be afforded assistance by the front gate officer as necessary. The front gate officer shall also inform the visitor of the requirement to keep the pass slip and ID badge at all times and to return these items to the front gate officer when leaving the grounds after completion of the visit.

After the visitor completes ELMHS Visitor Pass No. 001, the front gate officer will verify the visitor's destination. The front gate officer will phone the unit nurse to notify them of an approaching visitor.

Upon receiving a call and confirming the client's willingness to visit, the nurse is to inform the front gate officer as to whether the client can receive visitors under the age of seventeen (17) years.

The RN Manager is responsible for identifying and maintaining a list of all clients with a history of inappropriate sexual behavior with children under the age of seventeen (17) years. The list shall be updated weekly, and upon receipt of a new client, and kept in the nursing station of each building.

Front gate officers will maintain a log recording visitor name, time of entry, destination, and name of building staff notified. The visitor will go directly to the building of destination and have building staff complete their section of ELMHS Visitor Pass No. 001 upon arrival and departure. When visitors exit the front gate, the front gate staff will secure the ID badges, vehicle ID pass, and ELMHS Visitor Pass No. 001. The front gate officer will complete the form and the log. All completed forms will be forwarded to the Assistant Director of Nursing for review and further reference purposes.

The front gate officer will verbalize to all visitors their responsibilities regarding **La. R.S. 14:402.1 Taking of Contraband to State Owned Hospitals Unlawful: Part A and B** as captioned on ELMHS Visitor Pass No. 001, prior to entry onto the grounds.²

All visitors are subjected to be searched at any time. Visitors who refuse to consent to search prior to and after entry shall be denied visiting and instructed to leave ELMHS Campus grounds immediately. *See* LD-13_Contraband Policy.

For visitation with clients on DD, visitors will be required to check-in with unit staff who will check all articles which are to be taken in during the visit. For visitation with clients on all other units, visitors will be required to check-in with the Nursing/Security officer at the Sally Port who will check all articles which are to be taken in during the visit. Visitors are urged to only bring in those items that are deemed necessary.

All gifts and packages for clients shall be identified and inspected by Nursing/Security officers on EH and by the nurse supervisor/designee upon entering DD prior to being allowed to the visiting area. **At times, mailed or delivered packages are not allowed on ASSA, ITU, CRU and OC, based on safety and security reasons. Instead, families may add funds to the client's ELMHS Client Account allowing for purchases from the Canteen.**

A CGT or PA must be assigned to monitor the visitation area during all visits with clients. The CGT/PA, in the interest of providing the client with as much privacy as possible, does not have to sit with the client and visitors; however, they must maintain visual observation for the duration of the visit.

² La. R.S. 14:402.1 Taking of contraband to hospitals unlawful; penalty

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to introduce or attempt to introduce into or upon the grounds or buildings of any hospital or related facility, except through regular channels as authorized by the administrator of the hospital, any of the following articles which are hereby declared contraband for the purposes of this Section, namely: Any intoxicating beverage or beverage which causes or may cause an intoxicating effect, any controlled dangerous substance that has not been prescribed or recommended in accordance with the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law at R.S. 40:961 *et seq.*, and any firearm or other instrumentality customarily considered a dangerous weapon possessed by a person who is prohibited from possessing the firearm or instrumentality pursuant to State or Federal law.
- B. Whoever violates any provision of this Section shall upon conviction be imprisoned with or without hard labor for not more than three (3) years.

Visitors are not permitted to visit in the Recreation Hall, the Wards or any other client care areas. Clients are not permitted to get into vehicles with visitors and are not permitted to leave the hospital grounds / ELMHS Campus grounds, without a pass.

Issues of a problematic nature noted by the monitoring staff during the visit should be documented in the client's progress notes on their chart.

VI. REVISION HISTORY

DATE	SUMMARY OF REVISION
07/10/2023	Added language from Act 367
08/01/2024	Language added from La. R.S. 40:2180.2; Attachment of La. R.S. 40:2180.2 (formally Act 367); Changes in clients receiving cash; Addition of La. R.S. 40:2005 & La. R.S. 14:402.1 as footnotes; Addition to Contraband items; Changes in food items allowed; Additions to Definitions; Changes in V. Procedures; security to nursing/security; termination of visit in reference to Contraband

Appendix A – ELMHS Visitor Pass No. 001 Form

Appendix B – Attestation Form

Appendix C – La. R.S. 40:2180.2

ELMHS VISITOR PASS

ALL Visitors under 17 MUST be accompanied by an Adult

DATE	BLDG AND WARD:	OFFICER ON DUTY:
PATIENT NAME AND NUMBER:		HOSPITAL NAME AND LOCATION:
TIME OF ARRIVAL:		TIME OF DEPARTURE:

LOUISIANA R.S. 14:402.1 TAKING OF CONTRABAND TO STATE OWNED HOSPITAL UNLAWFUL; PENALTY:

A. It shall be unlawful for any person to introduce or attempt to introduce into or upon the grounds or building of any hospital or related facility, except through regular channels as authorized by the administrator of the hospital, any of the following articles which are hereby declared contraband for the purposes of this Section, namely: Any intoxicating beverage or beverages which causes or may cause an intoxicating effect; any controlled dangerous substance that has not been prescribed or recommended in accordance with the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law, at R.S. 40:961 *et seq.*, and any firearm or other instrumentality customarily considered a dangerous weapon possessed by a person who is prohibited from possessing the firearm or instrumentality pursuant to State or Federal law.

B. Whoever violates any provision of this Section shall upon conviction be imprisoned with or without hard labor for not more than three years.

BY SIGNING THIS FORM, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND/OR HAD READ TO ME AND FULLY UNDERSTAND LOUISIANA REVISED STATUTE 14:402.1.

VISITOR SIGNATURE: _____
PRINT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____
DRIVER LICENSE NO.: _____
R/S: _____

VISITORS WHO REFUSE CONSENT TO SEARCH PRIOR TO VISIT SHALL BE DENIED VISITATION PRIVILEGES

NAMES AND AGES OF CHILDREN VISITING:

Chief Executive Officer

Lori Guillory, Director of Nursing
Chief of Security Staff

EASTERN LOUISIANA MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

LD-21_ELMHS VISITATION POLICY

ATTESTATION

I ATTEST THAT I, _____, am the legal guardian of the minor child _____ and will be responsible for his/her supervision during visitation.

Visitor Signature

Date

Print Name

RS 40:2180.2

§2180.2. Promulgation of rules

The department shall promulgate, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, licensing standards, rules, and regulations regarding but not limited to the following:

- (1) Licensure application procedures and requirements.
- (2) Operational and personnel requirements.
- (3) Practice standards to assure quality of supports and services.
- (4) Survey and complaint investigations.
- (5) Initial and annual renewal of license investigations.
- (6) Issuance of a provisional license.
- (7) Denial, revocation, and non-renewal of licenses and the appeals thereof.
- (8) Planning, construction and design to ensure the health, safety, and comfort of persons receiving services.
- (9) Such other regulations of standards as will ensure proper care and treatment as may be deemed necessary for an effective administration of this Part.
- (10) The establishment of new or replacement facilities or reestablishment of facilities that have sustained substantial structural damage from a hurricane or substantial structural damage from flooding which are located in areas subject to hurricanes, tidal surges, or flooding. An architect or civil engineer registered in the state shall determine whether a facility has sustained substantial structural damage from a hurricane or substantial structural damage from flooding in accordance with the Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code. The regulations adopted by the department shall include but not be limited to:
 - (a) Requirements of building and construction codes and guidelines.
 - (b) Restrictions of locations of newly approved facilities that are subject to the provisions of the facility need review process.
 - (c) Provisions for the fair allocation of the Medicaid share of facility specific costs directly incurred by a facility as a result of compliance.
 - (d) Provisions for reasonable time periods for compliance, not to exceed three years, except when extensions are granted by the department for good cause.
- (11)(a) Provisions to allow any close family member of a resident of an ICF/DD to visit the resident during any state of public health emergency declared in accordance with R.S. 29:766 or to address the infectious respiratory disease known as COVID-19. The rules shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - (i) Authorization of visitation for close family members.
 - (ii) Minimum requirements for visitation, including length of visit, location of the visit, and the right to consensual nonsexual physical contact such as hand-holding or hugging.
 - (iii) Requirements for visitors, including health screenings, testing, and personal protective equipment. However, the rules may not require visitors to submit proof of any vaccination or immunization.
 - (iv) Limitations on visitation due to health, safety, and welfare issues, including limitations of visitation provided in an executive order of the governor of the state or an order of the state health officer due to the public health emergency.
 - (v) Prohibition of visitation by any close family member who is infected with COVID-19.
 - (vi) Provisions for off-site visitation, allowing a close family member to visit an ICF/DD resident away from the facility campus, including requirements for allowing the resident to return to the facility upon certain conditions including testing and isolation.
 - (vii) Provisions for determinations of dispute resolutions regarding deficiencies related to visitation during a declared health emergency or related to COVID-19, including provisions, subject to federal requirements, for determinations to be issued by the department within thirty-five days after receipt of the request by a facility for an informal dispute resolution of the deficiencies.
- (b) The rules promulgated pursuant to this Paragraph shall be preempted by any federal statute, federal regulation or guidance from a federal government agency that requires an ICF/DD to restrict resident visitation in a manner that is more restrictive than the rules adopted by the department pursuant to this Paragraph.

(c) For purposes of this Paragraph, "close family member" shall mean a parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, aunt, uncle, child, step-child, spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or legal representative of the ICF/DD resident.

(12) The Louisiana Department of Health shall develop and implement policies and procedures to require ICF/DD providers to notify new residents and their families and guardians of sex offenders living in their facilities upon admission. The notification shall continue for as long as the information is considered a public record. During the annual licensing process, health standards surveyors shall verify the providers' compliance with the policy.

Acts 2005, No. 128, §1, eff. June 22, 2005; Acts 2005, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 41, §1, eff. Dec. 6, 2005; Acts 2008, No. 409, §1, eff. June 21, 2008; Acts 2020, 2nd Ex. Sess., No. 27, §1, eff. Oct. 28, 2020; Acts 2022, No. 531, §1; Acts 2023, No. 367, §1.