Hospital Support Persons

A person with a disability has a right to a support person* if they are in an emergency department or admitted to a hospital. At this time, COVID-19 is forcing many hospitals to limit or not allow visitors. However, by state law, hospitals will welcome support persons for patients with disabilities. Visitors and support persons are different under Oregon law.

Support persons assist patients with disabilities who are admitted to the hospital or are in the emergency department who need help:

- Communicating
- Making health care decisions
- Understanding health care information, or
- Engaging in daily living activities

Support persons must follow safety standards to serve in this role, such as wearing a mask and taking other precautions that may include but not be limited to handwashing and social distancing.

If your support person has been told not to enter the hospital, you can:

- Ask to talk to the hospital’s patient rights advocate.
- Email the Oregon Health Authority COVID-19 Feedback Team at covid.19@dhsoha.state.or.us.
- Call the Oregon Health Authority COVID-19 Feedback Team at 503-945-5488.
- Contact Disability Rights Oregon at 503-243-2081.

*You can learn more about support persons on this fact sheet from OHA. “Support person” means a family member, guardian, personal care assistant or other paid or unpaid attendant selected by the patient to physically or emotionally assist the patient or ensure effective communication with the patient.