

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

Eligible patients or their legal representatives can designate at least three support persons. Hospitals must allow eligible patients to have at least one support person with the patient at all times if necessary to facilitate care. Visitor hours do not apply to support persons. A hospital may have safety conditions such as limiting the number of support persons allowed to be present with the patient at a time.

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 a patient's request to have a support person present is denied or limited, including limits on the total number of support persons allowed to be present during the course of a day, the patient or support person can request a support care conference to discuss this decision with hospital staff.

If you or your support person has additional concerns, you can:

- 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.