

Hospital Support Person Policy

Patients with disabilities who receive care at the Hospital may have a designated support person(s) present with them to support their disability needs as set forth in this policy.

Procedure:

1. Patients with disabilities* may have one designated support person** with them at any time they are in the Hospital for care and treatment to physically or emotionally assist them or to ensure effective communication during their stay at the Hospital, provided proper precautions are taken to contain the spread of infection.
2. When the period of time any such patient with disabilities will remain in the Hospital will be longer than one day, such patient or his or her family or caregiver may designate up to two support people, provided only one support person may be present at a time. This restriction must be explained to the patient and support person in plain terms, upon arrival or, ideally, prior to arriving at the Hospital. Hospital staff should ensure that the patient or his or her family or caregiver fully understands this restriction, allowing the patient to decide who he or she wishes to identify as his or her support person.
3. Any such support person must be asymptomatic for, or not have previously been confirmed positive for, COVID-19 or any communicable disease. Hospital staff must screen any support person for symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath, or potential exposure to individuals testing positive for COVID-19) and conduct a temperature check prior to entering the clinical area and every twelve hours thereafter. For other communicable diseases support staff will be screened based on Yale New Haven Health's infectious disease guidelines. Any support person suspected of having been exposed to COVID-19 or any other communicable disease, may be denied access where attendant risks of such access cannot be reasonably mitigated. The determination of potential exposure shall be based upon CDC Guidance, as updated, on Community Related Exposure.
4. The Hospital shall provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be worn by the designated support person as instructed by the Hospital for the duration of the visit. If the Hospital does not have PPE for the support person, PPE supplied by the support person that the Hospital finds adequate may be used.
5. The Hospital shall determine and inform the patient and the designated support person of any policy governing the designated support person attendance including the entrance and exit policy of the Hospital. Any such support person who leaves the Hospital shall be screened as provided in subsection (d) above upon his or her re-entry.
6. The support person shall comply with all reasonable requirements imposed by the Hospital to minimize the potential spread of infection.
7. Notwithstanding the foregoing, every effort shall be made to support the patient with disabilities employing virtual communication options whenever possible. Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as altering the Hospital's obligations to provide patients with effective communication supports or other required services, regardless of the presence of a designated support person or other reasonable accommodation, consistent with applicable federal or state law and regulations.
8. Notice of the Hospital's support person policy including the requirements contained herein shall be posted at patient entry points in the Hospital, on the Hospital's website and be provided to the patient at the time services are scheduled or initiated.

Definitions:

* "Patients with disabilities" may include, but is not limited to, altered mental status, physical, intellectual or cognitive disability, communication barriers or behavioral concerns, who need assistance due to the specifics of their disability.

** "Designated Support Person" means a family member, personal care assistant, similar disability service provider, or other individual knowledgeable about the management of their care.