

Washington - Support Person Guidance: *Implications for Patients & Families*

It is important for patients with a disability to be aware that they have a right to the presence of a support person during their care in our Washington hospitals. A patient who needs assistance communicating with hospital staff, assistance in making medical decisions or needs help with daily activities due to a disability may designate at least two support persons.

One support person can be with the patient at all times in the emergency department, in physician offices and during the hospital stay, if necessary, to facilitate the patient's care.

Important elements of the Washington Support Person Guidance that you should know:

- Some patients with a disability have a right under the law to designate support persons and have a support person with them in the hospital.
- Unless a patient states otherwise, a hospital must make sure that a support person is present for any conversation where the patient is electing hospice care or to sign advanced planning forms, like an advanced directive.
- A hospital can require a support person to follow hospital safety protocols. Examples include wearing personal protective equipment and restricting physical access if they are sick or have flu like symptoms.

If you have a concern about your care, please bring it to the attention of your nurse, a nurse manager or the risk manager for the facility. Please give the hospital the opportunity to help resolve your concern about access to a support person and/or patient care.

A copy of the hospital's support person policy can found online here: peacehealth.org/patient-rights-and-responsibilities.

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