



DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES
Carol Beatty, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Robert R. Neall, Secretary

**NOTICE - Access to Support for Patients with Disabilities in Hospital Settings
(May 11, 2020)**

In accordance with sections 19-308 and 19-342 of the Health-General Article, all licensed Maryland hospitals shall adopt visitation policies on or before May 22, 2020 that both comply with applicable U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and federal regulations and recognize the needs of individuals with disabilities. Such policies shall include, at a minimum:

- Provisions authorizing support persons to accompany to, visit, and stay in the hospital with individuals with disabilities.
- Provisions for the designation of support persons who may visit individuals with disabilities during their hospital stay.
- Provisions defining support persons as those who are legally authorized to make decisions for that individual, family members, personal care assistants, or disability service providers.
- Provisions establishing a process for individuals with disabilities to propose other reasonable accommodations that also comply with the hospital's infection control policy.

Hospitals shall also adopt policies regarding communications with families and caregivers of patients with disabilities who do not have a support person at the bedside. Hospitals shall explain these policies to patients' support persons, preferably before the patients arrive at the hospital.

All support persons shall be subject to screening for COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival at the hospital and periodically during their stay. Persons with COVID-19 symptoms shall not be permitted to serve as a support person and must immediately leave the hospital. In addition, all support persons shall be required to don appropriate PPE and comply with hospital policies regarding use and conservation of that PPE.

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