

Notice of Patient Rights Regarding Designated Support Persons

Virginia state law requires all hospitals (except long-term acute care and specialty rehabilitation), ambulatory surgical centers, and hospice facilities to allow a person with a disability who requires support and assistance due to the disability to be accompanied by a designated support person when health care services are being provided. If services last more than 24 hours, the patient may designate more than one designated support person to accompany the patient at different times throughout the stay.

What is a person with a disability?

For purposes of the law, person with a disability means a person who, prior to admission to a medical facility, had a physical, sensory, mental, or emotional impairment that substantially limits one or more activities of daily living or has a record of such impairment.

What is an activity of daily living?

An “activity of daily living” means a personal care task such as bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, and eating or feeding.

Can a hospital, ambulatory surgical center, or hospice facility limit access to designated support persons under its visitation policies?

For purposes of the law, designated support persons are not considered visitors and are not subject to any restrictions on visitation adopted by a medical care facility. However, designated support persons may be required to comply with various requirements adopted to protect the health and safety of patients, the designated support person, staff, and visitors. Also, the designated support person may not be able to enter into specified areas of the facility, such as an operating room, and movement around the premises may be limited where necessary to protect health and safety.

If you have questions about the specific requirements that apply to designated support persons, ask your medical care facility.

Where can I find more information about the rights of a person with a disability to be accompanied by a designated support person?

If you have questions or need more information about the right to be accommodated by a designated support person, ask your medical care facility. They will provide you with specific information on any policies related to designated support persons. The medical care facility is also required to post information about the rights of patients to be accompanied by a designated support person on its website.