



The Right to Have a Support Person in Hospitals

When infectious disease cases such as COVID are high, hospitals may limit or even prohibit visitors, but you don't need to go to the hospital alone! Virginia law protects people with disabilities by allowing them to have a support person when they go to the hospital.¹

Who can have a support person?

People who have a disability that limits one or more daily living activities. The disability can be physical, sensory, intellectual, or emotional.

Where can I have a support person?

Hospitals, hospice, outpatient surgical care

Who can be a support person?

You can pick any adult who knows how to help you with things you can't do for yourself.

How many support people can I have?

If you are at the hospital less than a day, you can have one person. If you are at the hospital for more than a day, you can have more than one person. But only one person can be with you at a time.

What does a support person do?

They help you with bathing, getting dressed, going to the bathroom, getting out of bed, eating, speaking, making choices, and anything else you might need.

Do support people have to follow the hospital's visitor hours?

No! But support people do have to follow health and safety rules.

Can a hospital ask for proof of disability?

Yes, but if there is none, then the hospital can do an assessment.

Can I have a support person and communication services?

Yes! The hospital still has to provide accommodations.

Where can I find out more?

The Virginia Department of Health website or the website of the hospital that you are going to.

¹ §32.1-137.08. Medical care facilities; persons with disabilities; designated support persons