



VISITATION GUIDANCE FOR HOSPITAL OPERATORS

MARCH 27, 2020

On March 18, 2020, the New York State Department of Health issued a health advisory regarding hospital visitation restrictions. On March 27, 2020, the Department issued this updated guidance.

Effective immediately, hospitals must suspend all visitation except for patient support persons, or family members and/or legal representatives of patients in imminent end-of-life situations.

OPWDD GUIDANCE

Hospitals are required to permit a support person by the patient's bedside for:

- Patients in labor and delivery
- Pediatric patients
- Patients for whom a support person has been determined to be essential to the care of the patient (medically necessary) including patients with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and patients with cognitive impairments including dementia.

It is understood a support person for patients described above can be an important support to avoid negative health outcomes. **The healthcare providers should:**

- Discuss the potential risks and benefits of a support person by the bedside with the patient (18+) and the support person.
- For those patients and support people who determine a support person at the bedside is essential, hospitals should develop protocols to minimize the risk of potential COVID-19 transmission.

LABOR AND DELIVERY

- One support person at a time throughout labor, delivery, and immediate postpartum period to include recovery is allowed. Can be a spouse, partner, sibling, Doula, or a person on their choosing.

PEDIATRIC PATIENTS

- One support person at a time essential to patient care in the emergency room or during hospitalization.
- If prolonged hospitalization is required, the patient or caregiver can designate two support people but only one can be present at a time.
- It is not encouraged that people 70 and older be a support person due to increased risk of COVID-19 infection.

PATIENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES OR COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS INCLUDING DEMENTIA

- One support person at a time essential to patient care in the emergency room or during hospitalization.
- If prolonged hospitalization is required, the patient or caregiver can designate two support people but only one can be present at a time.
- This support person can be the patient's family, caregiver, or another person they chose.
- It is not encouraged that people 70 and older be a support person due to increased risk of COVID-19 infection.



END OF LIFE SITUATIONS

- One support person (family member or legal representative) by the bedside.
- The patient or caregiver can designate two support people but only one can be present at a time.
- If the patient is a parent of a minor child, one adult family member and one child can be at the patient bedside.
- It is not encouraged that people 70 and older be a support person due to increased risk of COVID-19 infection

If a patient has or is suspected of having COVID-19 the support person will be required to wear and use specific personal protective equipment.

If the patient does not have or is not suspected to have COVID-19 the support person should wear a mask while in the hospital and remain in the patient's room.

Anybody considered a support person will be screened by hospital staff before being allowed in any clinical area. Discuss the potential risks and benefits of a support person by the bedside with the patient (18+) and the support person.

[View complete guidance here](#)

