

# Care Partner Visitation Guidelines During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency for People with a Disability

The following guidelines are for care partners accompanying patients with a disability to a Johns Hopkins Medicine care center. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

## Care Partners

A care partner or support person is anyone who the patient authorizes to assist in making decisions. Care partners must be age 18 or older unless they are parents of patients. The care partner is allowed to accompany, visit and stay with patients with disabilities during their visits with health care providers, including hospital admissions. Patients who need a care partner but do not have one who can be there in person should contact their health care team to understand the options for communicating remotely with family members and caregivers.

## Inpatient and Emergency Room Guidelines

Johns Hopkins Medicine uses a visitation risk level system in its emergency rooms and hospitals. The system has three color-coded risk levels: red, yellow and green. These levels are based primarily on COVID-19 activity in the community. Red is the most limited. Green is the most open.

**At all times, regardless of the risk level color, one care partner may accompany a patient with a disability who needs assistance. The patient may identify two care partners so they can take turns being with the patient.**

## Outpatient Guidelines

The following guidelines are for care partners accompanying patients to a Johns Hopkins Medicine care center who do not require an overnight stay. This includes for surgery or a procedure at an ambulatory center, as well as a visit to a specialty or primary care provider's office.

**At all locations, one care partner may accompany a patient with a disability who needs assistance. The patient may identify two care partners so they can take turns being with the patient.**

## Contact Us

If you have questions, please call 410-955-2273 to speak with your care location's patient relations team. For more information, visit [hopkinsmedicine.org/patient\\_care/patients-visitors/patient-feedback.html](https://hopkinsmedicine.org/patient_care/patients-visitors/patient-feedback.html).



**DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES**

*Carol Beatty, Secretary*

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

*Robert R. Neall, Secretary*

## **NOTICE – SUPPORT PERSONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (SEPTEMBER 24, 2020)**

State and federal law prohibits discrimination against individuals based on disability. In addition, the Secretary of Health and the Secretary of the Department of Disabilities require all licensed Maryland hospitals, related institutions, freestanding medical facilities, freestanding ambulatory care facilities, chronic disease centers, hospice care facilities, comprehensive rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, and assisted living programs (collectively health care providers) to adopt policies allowing support persons for individuals with disabilities to stay with those persons during visits to health care providers (the Access Notice).

If you believe that one of the listed health care providers is violating the Access Notice, you may file a complaint with the Maryland Department of Health's Office of Health Care Quality by following the process described here:

<https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq/Pages/Complaints.aspx>.

If you believe that you are a victim of discrimination because of your disability, you may file a complaint with any of the following:

Effective October 1, 2020, you may file a complaint with MDH's Office of Equal Opportunity, Equal Access Compliance Unit and/or the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.

Office of Equal Opportunity Programs  
Maryland Department of Health  
201 W. Preston Street, Suite 422  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Phone: 410-767-6600

Fax: 410-333-5337

MD Relay: 711

Email:

Delinda Johnson Blake, Equal Access Compliance Manager at  
[delinda.blake@maryland.gov](mailto:delinda.blake@maryland.gov)

Andrea Gillespie, Equal Access Compliance Officer at  
[andrea.gillespie@maryland.gov](mailto:andrea.gillespie@maryland.gov)

AND/OR

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR)

6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900

Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: 800-637-6247 | 410-767-8600

MD Relay: 711

Online: <https://mccr.maryland.gov/Pages/Intake.aspx>

You also may file complaints with the following federal agencies if you believe you have been subject to discrimination by a health care provider:

U.S. Department of Justice (via mail)

Civil Rights Division

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

4CON, 9th Floor

Washington, DC 20530

Online: <https://civilrights.justice.gov/report/>

Fax: (202) 307-1197

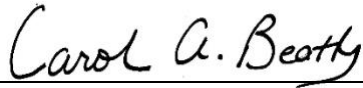
More information on the DOJ complaint process may be found by visiting:

[https://www.ada.gov/filing\\_complaint.htm](https://www.ada.gov/filing_complaint.htm)

**AND/OR**

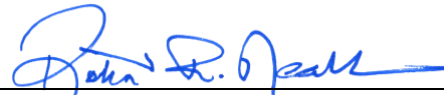
Centralized Case Management Operations  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (via mail)  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Room 509F HHH Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
Email to [OCRComplaint@hhs.gov](mailto:OCRComplaint@hhs.gov)  
Online: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>

More information on the HHS complaint process may be found by visiting:  
<https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/filing-a-complaint/complaint-process/index.html>



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Carol A. Beatty  
Secretary, Department of Disabilities



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Robert R. Neall  
Secretary, Department of Health