



**Origination:** 08/2020  
**Last Approved:** 08/2020  
**Last Revised:** 08/2020  
**Next Review:** 08/2022  
**Owner:** *Jamie Houck: Director of Nursing Services*  
**Policy Area:** *Nursing*  
**References:** *Hospital Nursing*

## Support Persons for Patients with Disabilities

### POLICY

The District will take all reasonable steps to inform patients with disabilities of their right to designate support persons to facilitate the patient's care and will involve support persons in the patient's care as required and requested by the patient.

### PROCEDURE

- A. The District will inform all patients with a disability orally and in writing of the patient's right to designate support persons to facilitate the patient's care at the time of admission to the hospital or at the time the patient is scheduled to receive services from the emergency department.
- B. A patient, or a patient's legal representative in collaboration with the patient, may designate a minimum of three support persons to assist with facilitating the patient's care including but not limited to when the patient:
  - 1. Has a cognitive, intellectual or mental health disability that affects the patient's ability to make medical decisions or understand medical advice;
  - 2. Needs assistance with activities of daily living and the hospital staff are unable to provide the same level of care or are less effective at providing the assistance;
  - 3. Is deaf, is hard of hearing or has other communication barriers and requires the assistance of a support person to ensure effective communication with hospital staff; or
  - 4. Has behavioral health needs that the support person can address more effectively than the hospital staff.
- C. Designated support persons will be listed in the "care team" tab of the District's electronic medical record.
- D. The District will:
  - 1. Allow at least one support person to be present with the patient at all times in the emergency department or during the patient's stay in the hospital;
  - 2. Require a support person designated by the patient, or patient's legal representative, to be present for any discussion, unless otherwise requested by the patient, in which the patient is asked to:
    - a. Elect hospice care;

- b. Sign an advance directive; or
  - c. Sign any other document allowing the withholding or withdrawing of life-sustaining procedures or artificially administered nutrition or hydration.
- E. The District will post this policy on its website and post a summary of the policy, with instructions on how to obtain the full policy, at entry points to the hospital. The posting at each entry shall be clearly visible to the public.
- F. The District may impose conditions, including infection prevention measures such as adherence to wearing hospital provided personal protective equipment and frequent handwashing, regarding the presence of a support person to ensure the safety of the patient, support person and staff as specified in SB 1606. The District may refuse to allow the presence of a designated support person who refuses to comply with the conditions. The District shall ensure that another designated support person is permitted to assist the patient.

## DEFINITIONS

- A. "Patient" means a patient admitted to a hospital or seeking medical evaluation and care in an emergency department who needs assistance to effectively communicate with hospital staff, make health care decisions, understand health care information, or engage in activities of daily living due to a disability, including but not limited to:
- 1. A physical, intellectual, behavioral or cognitive impairment;
  - 2. Deafness, being hard of hearing or other communication barrier;
  - 3. Blindness;
  - 4. Autism; or
  - 5. Dementia.
- B. "Support person" means a family member, guardian, personal care assistant or other paid or unpaid attendant selected by the patient to physically or emotionally assist the patient or ensure effective communication with the patient.
- C. "Advance directive" means a written instruction, such as a durable power of attorney for health care, recognized under state law (whether statutory or as recognized by the courts of the state), relating to the provision of health care when the individual is incapacitated.
- D. "Portable Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)" are designed to improve the quality of care people receive near the end-of-life. The POLST is based on effective communication of patient wishes, documentation or portable orders for life-sustaining treatments and promise by a health care professional to honor these wishes.

## CITATIONS

SB 1606

OAR 333-505-0033

## Attachments

[Support-Person-Notice-for-Posting-07-27-2020.pdf](#)

## Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
	Bob Houser: CEO	08/2020
Medical Staff	Russel Nichols: MD	08/2020
ER/Trauma Committee	Russel Nichols: MD	08/2020
	Jamie Houck: Director of Nursing Services	08/2020