



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

April 28, 2020

Re: Hospital and Emergency Department Visits

Dear Families and Guardians,

This letter is to provide communication on family members and guardians accompanying a loved one to a hospital admission or emergency department visit during the duration of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

DDS has been working in collaboration with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) to create a process that meets the needs of the individuals we support while providing the hospitals with the safeguards necessary to maintain the health and safety of their frontline staff and all the patients within the hospital. CHA's membership includes every acute care hospital.

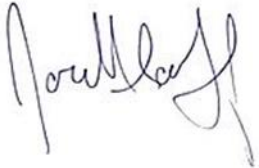
With these important factors in mind DDS, DPH and CHA are issuing the following guidance specific to individuals supported by DDS living in their own home or in their family home:

- CHA has agreed that it will provide this information to its member hospitals and will strongly recommend and work with hospitals to allow one support person to accompany an individual served by DDS to a hospital admission or emergency department visit, when the physical presence to assist the individual through the hospital or ED visit is necessary.
 - The necessity of the support person will be determined by the individual, their support person and the hospital.
 - The role of the support person will be to provide care and mitigate stressors for the individual throughout the duration of their stay in the hospital or ED.
- When arriving to the hospital or ED the support person must have the DDS Support Person- Hospital Admissions Emergency Department Notice (please see attached) completed and must present such form to the hospital staff.
- The hospital will provide an appropriate mask for the support person to wear, as instructed by the hospital, for the duration of the visit.
 - The hospitals will be provided with an allocation of masks from the statewide supply chain for this specific usage.

It is important to note that any support person in a hospital setting is bound to the guidelines and policies of that hospital and must follow such instructions to continue their presence in such setting.

For individuals that may not need a physical presence with them at a visit, the hospitals have made virtual communication options available for the family and loved ones of all hospital patients. This option should be utilized when the physical presence of a support person is not necessary for the care of an individual. We ask that families think through when a support person is truly a necessity and how virtual communication options may be a suitable alternative.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan A. Scheff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner
Department of Developmental Services