



State of Wisconsin

Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities

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Issue: Disability Support Persons Not Allowed to Accompany Individuals with Disabilities to Medical Treatments

In many healthcare settings, a common policy designed to control the spread of COVID-19 has unfairly infringed upon the rights of people with disabilities; specifically, not allowing a disability support person (paid or unpaid) to accompany a person with a disability during medical consultation and treatments. This is much more poignant during a health emergency as the need to understand diagnoses, treatments, and ways to stay safe are critical. Individuals who are on Medicaid are much more likely to have lower health literacy than the general population and are at higher risk of hospitalization.

Recommendation:

- In order to help ensure the equal access to healthcare, we recommend that Wisconsin issues state policies or guidance that includes exemptions for no-visitor policies for disability support persons. This will ensure disability support persons will be allowed to accompany a person with a disability during medical evaluation and treatment and ensure healthcare providers recognize this a reasonable accommodation.

Many states have issued state policies and guidance that includes exemptions for no visitor policies for disability support persons including California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island (More information on state guidance issued is available at: <https://communicationfirst.org/covid-19/covid-19-guidance>).