

Guidance on vaccination requirements for Designated Support Persons

Sept. 23, 2021

Designated support persons (DSPs) are different from a general, or social, visitor. A DSP is an active partner in care that provides physical and emotional support to the patient. DSPs are often a family member or close friend who has knowledge about the patient's health history, lifestyle and personal values.

At this time, **DSPs are not required to be fully vaccinated** to enter a Horizon hospital or health care facility.

DSPs, like visitors, must pass screening upon entry. Symptomatic visitors and DSPs (regardless of vaccination status) are not permitted to visit.

DSPs are also required to participate in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) education on topics such as hand hygiene, wearing a mask and physical distancing to mitigate the risk of the spread of COVID-19. Please refer to Horizon's [DSP Operational Plan](#) for details related to the level of education required.

The following inpatient populations are eligible for a DSP:

- End of Life - Palliative Care
- Obstetrics (Labour and Delivery, Postpartum)
- Neonatal
- Intensive Care / Critical Care Units
- Pediatrics
- Patients who have been in hospital for 14 days or longer
- Patients with cognitive / communication impairments (cognitive impairment leading to agitation and inability to console; communication impairment which affects care)

Eligible patients can identify / designate a maximum of two DSPs, but only one DSP is permitted by their bedside at one time.

For outpatients, the guidelines are as follows:

Emergency Departments

- Patients visiting **Emergency Departments** who require assistance may have **ONE** support person only - **ONLY** for patients who require assistance with decision-making, communication, physical and emotional support. No other visitors permitted. Only **ONE** person per pediatric patient is allowed (parent or caregiver only).

Outpatient Departments

- Patients visiting **Outpatient Departments** may have **ONE** support person - **ONLY** for patients who require assistance with decision-making, communication, physical and emotional support.
- There may be circumstances where physical distancing with other patients within clinical areas will not allow for a support person to be present. In this case, staff will communicate this to the patient and their support person, and discuss options based on patient need.
- Patients requiring **obstetrical ultrasounds** may have a support person present in the exam room for the second part of the exam (viewing).

For more information on the DSP program, please review Horizon's [DSP Operational Plan](#).

Please encourage your patients and loved ones to visit Horizon's public [website](#) for more information about the DSP program.