



Know Your Rights!

For disabled patients, having a caregiver present during medical events such as procedures, testing, treatments, doctor appointments and surgeries is an American right, even during the COVID-19 pandemic!

In the United States, there are legal mandates that state medical centers must follow existing guidelines in the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (RA)**, and **Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)**. North Carolina has recently passed legislation that mandates disabled patients have rights to have a caregiver with them during medical procedures, treatments, doctor appointments and surgeries, even during a pandemic, as stated in the **SB 730: No Patient Left Alone Act**.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights states specifically that hospitals must "keep in mind their obligations under laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability" and that the federal disability rights laws "remain in effect" even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states in Titles II and III that health care facilities are mandated to provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. These accommodations include the presence of a caregiver/patient advocate during medical events who can provide the patient with necessary support services, including communication with healthcare providers, support managing mental or physical health and other unique medical needs such as assistance with medical devices.

Legally, no medical facility can deny a disabled person's right to a caregiver/patient advocate present, even during the covid pandemic.

This content has been brought to you in collaboration with Adrenal Alternatives Foundation and Chronic Illness Advocacy & Awareness Group, who advocate for patient rights.