

DESIGNATED SUPPORT PERSON (DSP) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can any patient have a DSP?

The DSP Program is available in all hospital and long-term care facilities in collaboration with the health care team. All hospitalized and long-term care patients who require emotional or physical support, help with their care, or assistance with decision making may have a DSP. Not all patients require additional support. If you feel your loved one may benefit from having a DSP, please speak to the patient's nurse manager.

Define emotional/psychological support.

This type of support can simply include being present. A family member's presence can assist in calming and reassuring a hospital or long-term care patient who may be agitated and scared.

What are the differences between a DSP and a social visitor?

- DSPs are active partners in care and can provide additional support to the hospital or long-term care patient. This support can include physical assistance or emotional care and can be very specific to the patient's needs.
- DSPs also can provide key patient information and assist with decision making.
- DSPs are **not limited** to visiting during general visiting hours and **do not** have to maintain distance between themselves and the patient they are supporting.
- Social visitors play an important role but do not participate as DSPs, who are active partners in care.
- A social visitor is not essential and is not involved in supporting the patient or assisting with emotional or physical support, patient care or decision making.
- Social visitors are only permitted to visit during visiting hours.
- Social visitors are required to practice hand hygiene, maintain distance from the patient and staff, and wear a mask when required.

The overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the respiratory illness activity levels within the hospital or long-term care facility and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors.

What if several family members are interested in becoming a DSP?

Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs.

What if a hospital or long-term care patient would like a DSP but they don't have a family member or friend who is capable or available?

A referral can be made to Volunteer Resources. If a volunteer is available, they can visit as part of our Friendly Visiting Program.

Can patients request to change their DSP?

Yes, DSPs can be changed. The overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the respiratory virus activity levels within the hospital or long-term care facility and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs.

Can an alternate DSP be identified in case the primary DSPs are unable to visit?

Yes. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs per patient.

Are DSPs allowed in units experiencing an outbreak?

Yes, DSPs are allowed in units experiencing an outbreak. Additional precautions including use of personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required and will be communicated to DSPs by staff.

Are DSPs allowed to visit 24/7?

Based on a hospitalized or long-term care patient's needs, the best time to visit and frequency and length of time of the visit will be determined in collaboration with the DSP, patient/substitute decision maker **AND** health care team.

Is there a limit to the number of DSPs/social visitors who can be present on a unit at one time?

Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors.

Where are DSPs allowed to visit with the hospital or long-term care patient?

DSPs are permitted to visit the patient in their room, and if approved by staff, outside the patient room. Please consult with the health care providers.

Where can a DSP go if a social visitor arrives?

Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors. If the number of individuals is above the allowable number, individuals will be required to leave the hospital or long-term care facility as there are currently no places where groups can gather.

Are DSPs and social visitors allowed to come and go to and from the hospital or long-term care facility throughout the day?

Social visitors are welcome only during visiting hours.

It is recommended that DSPs and social visitors limit the number of times they come and go in one day.

Are DSPs or social visitors allowed to eat/drink in the hospital or long-term care patient's room?

No, DSPs and social visitors *cannot* eat or drink in the patient's room. They must eat/drink in designated locations, such as the cafeteria.

Can a DSP/social visitor use the sink in the hospital or long-term care patient's room or bathroom?

No, due to infection prevention and control rules, DSPs and social visitors are required to use the public washroom. They cannot use the patient's sink or bathroom.

Can I stay overnight in the ER with my loved one?

In exceptional circumstances, this may occur for DSPs. Please discuss this request with the patient's health care team. Physical space requirements and safety will need to be considered.

Can I designate my pet as a DSP or have my pet brought in?

No, pets cannot be a DSP. Personal pet visitation may be permitted as part of social visitation. Please speak to your health care providers regarding the process.

How will potential DSPs who have technology and other barriers - i.e. no Internet access, lack of knowledge about online education, can't read, etc. - complete the online DSP education?

Horizon staff can assist with the required education. Please call **1-833-625-1653** or email DSP-PSD@horizonnb.ca to make an appointment for assistance.

How long does the DSP education take?

The online education takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Can a DSP who has completed the online education begin acting as a DSP right away?

No. After completing the mandatory online education, the DSP needs to call the toll-free number 1-833-625-1653, email DSP-PSD@horizonnb.ca, or speak to a health care worker to register. When a person is registering as a DSP, they will provide the following information:

- Confirmation they have completed the online education
- Their full name and contact number
- The patient's full name and birthdate
- The patient's location (i.e., hospital, long-term care facility AND health care unit)
- A description of how they wish to support the patient

Is the DSP program available at all Horizon facilities?

- The DSP program is available in all Horizon hospital and long-term care facilities. Mental Health/Addiction and Community-based services such as DETOX Treatment centres have visitation and family presence practices consistent with their clinical practice. Please contact the service for more details.
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Will the DSP program be extended to oncology patients and others receiving care as outpatients?

Most outpatients can have TWO DSPs accompany them to appointments based on physical space requirements. It is recommended you call ahead to ensure there are no physical space restrictions.

Will there be standardized documents given to the DSP?

Yes, an education completion email will be provided to the DSP when they have completed the mandatory online education. DSPs should keep a copy of their education completion certificate.

For further information about the DSP Program please call **1-833-625-1653** or email DSP-PSD@HorizonNB.ca