

Tips On How To Advocate For Changes To COVID 19 Hospital Visitation & Support Policies In Your State

Self-Advocacy Association of New York State
<https://sanys.org/>

1. Find out if your state's Government Office that regulates DD services is hosting stakeholder phone/video conference sessions:

- a. They should be holding sessions with stakeholders in DD services both to update them about how COVID 19 affects them and the service system as well as to hear about their needs.
- b. If they are hosting sessions, get a group of advocates to participate in that call.
- c. If they are not hosting sessions get self-advocates and other stakeholders to make calls and send e-mails to get one set up.
- d. If your state does not set up stakeholder calls despite your requests, don't wait to advocate make phone calls to relevant government septs. (Health, DD services, Governor's Office) and advocate for both the hospital guidance and the need for the stakeholder calls.

2. Collaborate with other stakeholder groups:

- a. Parents are ideal allies on this issue because many of them want to be there for their children if they should need to go to the hospital.
- b. Think about the best connections to make within the advocacy network in your state, more voices = more influence.

3. Coordinate your message:

- a. Try to have all stakeholders use the same language to describe what you want.
- b. You may want to work together to draft the language you would like your state to use and share that in the name of the different stakeholder groups/organizations.

4. Be respectfully assertive and persistent:

- a. Make sure that you are telling the people working for your state that this is necessary; It is not just something that we want, it is something we need.
- b. Be assertive but respectful.
- c. Continue to advocate for the hospital guidance at least several times a week, via phone calls, e-mails, letters and meetings.
- d. If you are not getting cooperation, keep thinking for ways you can broaden your efforts (other stakeholders, social media, speaking with legislators etc....)
- d. Don't give up until you have the guidance/policy change.