

SECTIONS

SUBSCRIBE
4 weeks for only 99¢

LOG IN

One person dead after shooting involving federal task force in Hartford



Norwalk police: two city cops arrested after they were found together in...



Committee recommends Connecticut's teachers, elderly, incarcerated peop...



ADVERTISEMENT

CORONAVIRUS

State issues order allowing people with disabilities companions in hospital settings, settling civil rights complaint

By EMILY BRINDLEY
HARTFORD COURANT | JUN 09, 2020



FEEDBACK



Hartford Hospital health care professionals wave to Hartford firefighters and police officers who drove past the hospital April 7 with their lights on in a show of support for health care workers. (Brad Horrigan / Hartford Courant)

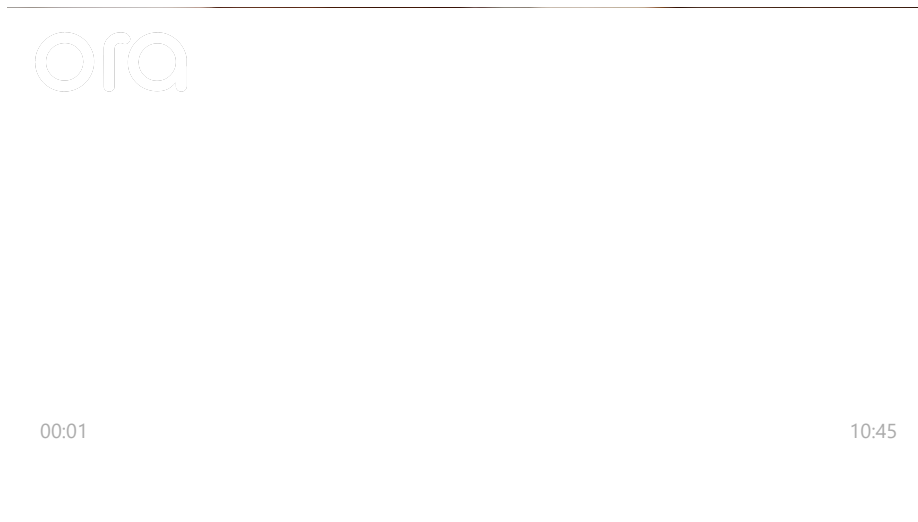
The state of Connecticut has issued an executive order that will ensure people with disabilities are allowed a companion in hospital settings, after a group of disability rights advocates filed [a civil rights complaint](#) last month.

Disability Rights Connecticut — which led the effort to file the complaint — said in a Tuesday press release that the state’s response marked “a significant victory for people with disabilities.”

FEEDBACK

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement



In May, Disability Right Connecticut and a number of other advocacy organizations **filed a complaint** with the Office for Civil Rights, which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The complaint argued that the state's strict hospital visitation policies, put in place as a result of the coronavirus, were effectively barring people with disabilities from accessing the interpreters and family members who typically allow them to communicate with medical staff.

By so doing, the complaint argued, the state was preventing people with disabilities from accessing appropriate medical care.

FEEDBACK



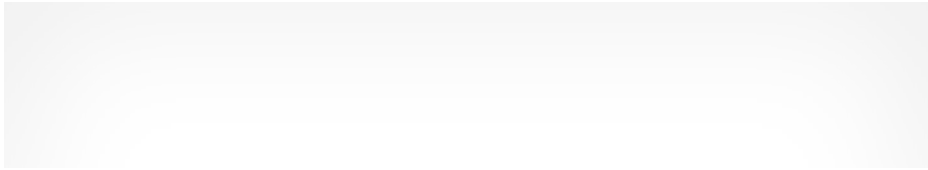
New Haven, Ct. - 05/27/2020 - With disinfectant spray beads on his face shield, John Grimes, a volunteer RN through the Connecticut Medical Reserve, seals a coronavirus test at a pop-up testing site on the New Haven Green. Photograph by Mark Mirko | mmirko@courant.com (Mark Mirko / Hartford Courant)

On Tuesday, just over a month after the complaint was filed, the Office for Civil Rights announced that it had mediated and resolved the complaint — and as a result, the state issued [an order](#) allowing all people with disabilities to have at least one support person accompany them into hospital settings.

Disability Rights Connecticut's interim executive director, Bob Joondeph, said in a statement that the complaint resolution ensures that people with disabilities will no longer face this type of discrimination in the hospital.

FEEDBACK

ADVERTISING



The Office for Civil Rights “persuaded our state to do what should have been done from day one – assure that every individual with a disability hospitalized in Connecticut has equal access to care,” Joondeph said. “Because the state now has a clear written policy, patients with disabilities can expect to have their rights upheld.”

In [the original complaint](#), Disability Rights Connecticut illustrated the injustice of the hospital visitor policy by describing three hospitalized patients who could not communicate with medical staff unless they had a companion with them. Susan Fandacone — whose mother Joan Parsons was described in the complaint — said she calls the state’s new policy “Joan’s Voice” in honor of her mother.

“This agreement gives individuals with disabilities something quite fundamental – a voice in their own care, and assurance that it will not be compromised or diminished,” Fandacone said in the release.

Breaking News Newsletter

As it happens

Get the latest updates on Coronavirus and other breaking news events happening across Connecticut

ENTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

As part of the mediation, the Office for Civil Rights also resolved a similar complaint against Hartford HealthCare. That hospital system [began loosening its visitor restrictions](#) for numerous types of patients even before the state’s order was issued.

FEEDBACK

The state’s order, signed by acting commissioner of the state Department of Public Health Dr. Deidre Gifford, was issued Tuesday but does not go into effect until June 15.

The order allows any person with disabilities to designate a support person to accompany them to the hospital, or two alternating people if the hospital stay will be longer than one day. Under the order, all support people must not have COVID-19 symptoms and must follow hospital rules on social distancing and protective gear.

The order adds that “every effort shall be made to support the patient with disabilities employing virtual communication options whenever possible.”

This story has been updated.

LATEST CORONAVIRUS

Emily Brindley can be reached at ebrindley@courant.com.

Daily coronavirus updates: COVID-19 hospitalizations up for second straight day, suggesting possible holiday uptick

New Haven students returning to classrooms Jan. 19 for first time since pandemic began; other districts resuming in-person classes after shorter breaks

Committee recommends Connecticut's teachers, elderly, incarcerated people for next wave of coronavirus vaccinations

Emily Brindley
Hartford Courant



Emily Brindley covers West Hartford and the Farmington Valley, as well as breaking news, for the Hartford Courant. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with degrees in psychology and nonfiction writing, and was previously a town reporter at the Journal Inquirer.

The genius trick every Amazon shopper should know

CAPITAL ONE SHOPPING | SPONSORED

Connecticut: Senior Homeowners Are in For a Big Surprise

FOR SAVE HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE | SPONSORED

The Most Successful Attorneys In Farmington - See The List

PERSONAL LAWYERS | SEARCH ADS | SPONSORED

Relieve Your Bowels Every Morning (Almost Immediately) - Top Surgeon Explains How

Connecticut Launches New Policy For Cars Used Less Than 50 Miles/Day

BRINDLEY INQUIRER SPONSORED



Daniel Arsenault, a former aide to Gov. Malloy, dies at 31



Family beset by COVID-19 at the center of Christmas Day murder-suicide in Windsor Locks

By **BANNETT HARTGARDER**, **JESSE LEAVENWORTH**



Prosecutors offer no motive for SUV driver accused of striking woman and her daughter, then circling back and hitting mother again, killing her

This Strategy Game Is The Best Training For Your Brain. No Install

FORGE OF EMPIRES | SPONSORED

Tommy Chong: Throw Away Your CBD Now

TOMMY CHONG | SPONSORED



UConn women will be featured in first-ever women's basketball game to air on Fox; UConn-South Carolina game to air on FS1



Say hello to Ivanka Trump's new neighbors: Tom Brady and Gisele Bündchen - Hartford Courant

By **REXAPORHOPPOU**

You May Like

Sponsored Links by Taboola

Connecticut Launches New Guidelines For Cars Used Less Than 50 Miles/Day

Smart Lifestyle Trends

Top Doctor Says Carbs Are Not The Problem (This Is)

Gundry MD Active Advantage Supplement

Many failed before. Will you complete the trial?

FEEDBACK

o Wars

is Is What New Hearing Aids Should Actually Cost

rClear

ADVERTISEMENT

CONNECT



TRIBUNE PUBLISHING

Chicago Tribune

New York Daily News

Sun Sentinel of Fla.

Daily Press of Va.

The Daily Meal

The Baltimore Sun

Orlando Sentinel

The Morning Call of Pa.

The Virginian-Pilot

BestReviews

COMPANY INFO

Careers

Manage Web Notifications

Local print ads

Terms of Service

About Our Ads

About Us

Classifieds

Place an Ad

Contact Us

Privacy Policy

FAQ

Copyright © 2021, Hartford Courant

FEEDBACK