

# Health and Welfare Alert



Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02 requires all developmental disabilities employees to review Health and Welfare Alerts released by the department as part of annual training. All previous alerts are listed on the department's website.

## Unscheduled Hospitalizations #60-9-18

As thousands of Ohioans with developmental disabilities visit the hospital every year, direct service providers need to communicate a person's important medical information during an emergency and understand discharge orders.

### Know person's medical information

Direct service providers should be ready to support someone they serve who has trouble communicating verbally by explaining their symptoms, when their symptoms began, any related medical history, and what actions were taken before emergency staff arrived.

Be prepared for unscheduled hospitalizations by keeping a list of the person's medications, any allergies, any current medical conditions, insurance information, and contact info of a family member or guardian.

Fully understand discharge orders, such as any referrals to specialists, follow-up appointments, new medications, diets, or treatments.



### Remember prevention first

Routine preventative health care is critical to avoiding hospitalizations, including addressing chronic medical needs in the person's plan.

### People with disabilities are at a higher risk when in the hospital

Tell hospital medical staff

- how best to communicate with the person and how to know they are in pain,
- if they are at risk for falls,
- if they have a modified diet or need monitoring or adaptive equipment when eating,
- and if items in their hospital room could pose a health risk.

### Keep person comfortable

Take the person's favorite book or game to ease stress during a hospital visit.



### Fast Facts

In 2017, there were **5,769** hospitalizations of Ohioans with developmental disabilities. The top three reasons people went to the hospital were



**970** infection



**860** pneumonia and influenza



**284** seizure

- DODD Incident Tracking System