

# Patient rights and responsibilities

## Your rights

As a patient you or your legally responsible party, have the right to receive care without discrimination due to age, sex, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, income, education, national origin, ancestry, marital status, culture, language, disability, gender identity or your ability to pay. As our patient, you have the right to considerate, respectful, and compassionate care at all times. As a patient you will have respect shown for your personal values, beliefs, and wishes. You will receive services and care that are medically suggested and within the hospital's services, its stated mission, and required law and regulation.

### **COMMUNICATION**

You have the right to:

- Receive information in a way that you understand. This includes interpretation and translation, free of charge, in the language you prefer for talking about your healthcare. This also includes providing you with needed help if you have vision, speech, hearing or cognitive impairments.
- Make reasonable use of telephones.
- Have a family member, another person that you choose, or your doctor notified when you are admitted to the hospital.
- Designate a support person, if needed, to act on your behalf to assert and protect your patient rights.
- Be fully informed of the scope of services available at the hospital, provisions for after-hours and emergency care and related fees for services.
- Be provided a list of protective and advocacy services when needed.
- Complete information, to the extent known by the physician, regarding diagnosis, treatment and prognosis, as well as alternative treatments

or procedures and the possible risks and side effects associated with treatment.

- Expect the hospital to establish a process for prompt resolution of patient grievances, informing each patient whom to contact to file a grievance. The hospital must also inform the patient that he or she may lodge a grievance with the state agency directly, and provide the patient a phone number and address for lodging a grievance with the state agency.

## **INFORMED DECISIONS**

You have the right to:

- Receive information about your current health, care, outcomes, recovery, ongoing healthcare needs and future health status in terms that you understand.
- Give informed consent before any nonemergency care is provided, including the benefits and risks of the care, alternatives to the care, and the benefits and risks of the alternatives to the care. You may need to sign your name before the start of any procedure and/or care. “Informed consent” is not required in the case of an emergency.
- Be involved in all aspects of your care and take part in decisions about your care, including making choices about your care based on your own spiritual and personal values.
- Request care. This right does not mean you can demand care or services that are not medically needed.
- Refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and be informed of the medical consequences of such a refusal. The patient accepts responsibility for his or her actions should he or she refuse treatment or not follow the instructions of the physician or hospital.
- Decide whether or not to take part in research or clinical trials for your condition, or donor programs that may be suggested by your doctor. Your participation in such care is voluntary, and written permission must be obtained from you or your legal representative before you participate. A decision to not take part in research or clinical trials will not affect your right to receive care.
- Be informed if the hospital has authorized other healthcare and/or educational institutions to participate in the patient’s treatment. The patient shall also have a right to know the identity and function of these

institutions, and may refuse to allow their participation in his or her treatment.

- Expect the hospital to get your permission before taking photos, recording or filming you, if the purpose is for something other than patient identification, care, diagnosis or therapy.

## **VISITATION**

You have the right to:

- Decide if you want visitors or not while you are here. The hospital may need to limit visitors to better care for you or other patients.
- Designate those persons who can visit you during your stay. These individuals do not need to be legally related to you.
- Designate a support person who may determine who can visit you if you become incapacitated.

## **ADVANCE DIRECTIVES**

You have the right to:

- Ask about and discuss the ethics of your care, including resolving any conflicts that might arise such as deciding against, withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining care.
- Appoint an individual of your choice to make health care decisions for you if you are no longer able to do so.
- Create or change advance directives such as a living will or healthcare proxy, which are legal papers that allow you to decide now what you want to happen if you are no longer healthy enough to make decisions about your care. You have the right to have hospital staff comply with these directives. A patient who has an advance directive must provide a copy to the hospital and his or her physician so that his or her wishes may be known.

## **CARE PLANNING**

You have the right to:

- Have a medical screening exam and be provided stabilizing treatment for emergency medical conditions and labor. If the necessary emergency care

is beyond the scope of the hospital, 911 will be called and you will receive prompt transfer to an appropriate acute care hospital.

- Participate in the care that you receive in the hospital.
- Receive reasonable continuity of care and to know in advance the time and location of appointments as well as the identity of the persons providing the care.
- Receive a prompt and safe transfer to the care of others when this hospital is not able to meet your request or need for care or service. You have the right to know why a transfer to another healthcare facility might be required, as well as learning about other options for care. The hospital cannot transfer you to another hospital unless that hospital has agreed to accept you.
- Receive instructions on follow-up care and participate in decisions about your plan of care after you are out of the hospital, including the opportunity to designate a caregiver to assist with the plan of care.

## **CARE DELIVERY**

You have the right to:

- Expect emergency procedures to occur without unnecessary delay.
- Be provided care in a safe environment free from all forms of abuse and neglect, including verbal, mental, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Receive kind, respectful, safe, quality care delivered with the highest quality of service.
- Know the names and roles of doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers providing care to you.
- Request a consultation by another healthcare provider.
- Be screened, assessed, and treated for pain. This includes consideration of potential limitations and side effects of pain treatment, and the right to request or reject any or all options to relieve pain, including opiate medication, if you suffer from severe chronic intractable pain. The doctor may refuse to prescribe the opiate medication, but if so, must inform you that there are physicians who specialize in the treatment of pain with methods that include the use of opiates.
- Receive care free from restraints and seclusion unless needed for safety.

- Receive efficient and quality care with high professional standards that are continually maintained and reviewed.

## **PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

You have the right to:

- Limit who knows that you are in the hospital.
- Have your personal effects be reasonably protected and respected.
- Be interviewed, examined and have discussions of care in places designed to protect your privacy.
- Be advised why certain people are present and to ask others to leave during sensitive talks or procedures.
- Expect full recognition of individuality, including privacy in treatment and in all communications and records related to care.
- Receive a copy of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Notice of Privacy Practices that explains how your personal health information will be used and shared with other healthcare professionals involved in your care.
- Review and request copies of your medical record unless restricted for medical or legal reasons.

## **HOSPITAL BILLS**

You have the right to:

- Receive information about your hospital and physician charges and ask for an estimate of hospital charges before care is provided and as long as patient care is not impeded.
- Review, obtain, request and receive a detailed explanation of your hospital charges and bills.
- Request information about any business or financial arrangements that may impact your care.
- Receive information and counseling on ways to help pay for the hospital bill.

If you have any questions about your rights, please talk to your doctor, nurse or case manager.

## COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

You and your family/guardian have the right to:

- Expect a timely response to your complaint or grievance from the hospital. Complaints or grievances may be made in writing, by phone or in person. The hospital has a duty to respond to these complaints or grievances in a manner that you can understand.
- Seek review of quality of care concerns, coverage decisions and concerns about your discharge.
- Tell hospital staff about your concerns or complaints regarding your care. This will not affect your future care.

Encompass Health is available to assist you with any questions or concerns about your hospital care. You may also contact the Department of Health. In addition, you can contact The Joint Commission, a hospital accreditation organization.

Contact information includes the following:

- At [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org), using the “Report a Patient Safety Event” link in the “Action Center” on the home page of the website.
- By fax to 630.792.5636.
- By mail to The Office of Quality and Patient Safety (OQPS), The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181.
- Maryland Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ):
  - At <https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq/Pages/Complaints.aspx>
  - By telephone at 410.402.8016
  - By toll-free number at 877.402.8218

## Your responsibilities

As a patient, family member or guardian, you have the right to know all hospital rules and what we expect of you during your hospital stay.

## PROVIDE INFORMATION

As a patient, family member or guardian, we ask that you:

- Provide accurate and complete information about current healthcare problems, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications and other matters relating to your health.
- Provide a copy of your advance directive, living will, durable power of attorney for healthcare, and any organ/tissue donation permissions to the healthcare professionals taking care of you.
- Report any condition that puts you at risk (for example, allergies or hearing problems).
- Report unexpected changes in your condition to the healthcare professionals taking care of you.
- Tell us who, if any, visitors you want during your stay.

## **RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION**

As a patient, family member or guardian, we ask that you:

- Be considerate of other patients and personnel and assist in the control of noise, smoking and other distractions.
- Comply with the hospital's no-smoking policy.
- Recognize and respect the rights of other patients, families and staff. Threats, violence or harassment of other patients and hospital staff will not be tolerated.
- Refrain from conducting any illegal activity on hospital property. If such activity occurs, the hospital will report it to the police.
- Respect the property of others and the hospital.

## **SAFETY**

As a patient, family member or guardian, we ask that you:

- Ask all hospital staff members to identify themselves.
- Be informed about which medications you are taking and why you are taking them.
- Make sure your doctor knows the site/side of the body that will be operated on before a procedure.
- Promote your own safety by becoming an active, involved and informed member of your healthcare team.

- Remind caregivers to wash their hands before taking care of you.
- Remind staff to check your identification before medications are given, blood/blood products are administered, blood samples are taken or before any procedure.

## REFUSING CARE

As a patient:

You are responsible for your actions if you refuse care or do not follow care instructions.

## CHARGES

As a patient:

- You are responsible for paying for the healthcare that you received as promptly as possible.
- You may be expected to pay for copies of your medical record, if requested, based on state regulations.

## COOPERATION

As a patient:

You are expected to follow the care plans suggested by the healthcare professionals caring for you while in the hospital. You should work with your healthcare professionals to develop a plan that you will be able to follow while in the hospital and after you leave the hospital.

*Patient rights and responsibilities were established with the expectation that observance of these rights will contribute to more effective patient care and greater satisfaction for the patient, family, physician and the hospital caring for the patient. Patients shall have these rights without regard to age, race, sex, national origin, religion, culture, physical handicap, personal values or belief systems.*

SOURCE: This guideline combines established patient rights and responsibilities provided in separate documentation by Encompass Health, Hospital & HealthSystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) and the California Hospital Association (CHA).