

PATIENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PURPOSE:

To define patient rights and responsibilities in the health care setting.

PROCEDURE:

Patients will be given information regarding their rights and responsibilities. This statement of rights and responsibilities, while not all-inclusive, is intended to convey our concern about the relationship between hospitals, health care providers and patients, and to emphasize the need for observance of the rights and responsibilities of patients.

YOUR PATIENT RIGHTS

1. Access to Care: Patients shall be accorded impartial access to services or accommodations that are available and medically indicated, regardless of race, creed, sex, age, national origin, disability, source of payment for care, diagnosis, or communication barriers.
2. Respect and Dignity: Patients have the right to considerate, respectful care at all times and under all circumstances, with the recognition of personal dignity. Since we have a strong commitment to respect the religious beliefs of all patients, we will address any concerns regarding care decisions. In all appropriate settings, pastoral counseling will be offered. Patients shall be free from mental, chemical, physical abuse. Chemical and physical restraints are used to protect the patient from injury to self or others only as authorized by their physician. The patient shall be assured of reasonable safety within the hospital. The individual dignity and privacy of each patient will be respected. Personal mail sent and received by the patient is unopened. The patient will have reasonable access to a telephone for confidential calls.
3. Privacy and Confidentiality: Patients have the right, within the law, to personal and informational privacy, including the right to:
 - Refuse to talk with or see anyone not directly involved in care;
 - Wear appropriate personal clothing, religious or other symbolic items, as long as they do not interfere with medical procedures or treatment;
 - Be interviewed and examined in surroundings designed to assure reasonable privacy;
 - Have the medical record read only by individuals directly involved in treatment or the monitoring of its quality, and by others only with written authorization by the patient or a legally authorized representative;
 - Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding confidentiality of medical records and patient information;
 - Be moved if another patient or visitor is unreasonably disturbing;
 - Be placed in protective privacy when considered necessary for personal safety; and
 - Communicate privately with persons of their own choice and participate in activities of social and religious groups at their own discretion. If married, they will be assured of privacy for visits with their spouse.
4. Personal Safety: Patients have a right to expect reasonable safety in the hospital/clinic practices or other health care settings, to be free from mental, physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, and emotional abuse or harassment or unnecessary restraints or seclusion, and to have access to protective services.
5. Identity: Patients will have the right to choose and know the identity of the medical practitioner primarily responsible for the patient's care and the identity and professional status of those providing care. The facility will assist the patient in finding an alternate medical practitioner when requested to do so.
6. Consent: Patients have the right to reasonably informed participation in decisions involving their health care, including information regarding organ-tissue donation procedures. Appropriate consent must be obtained for all treatments and for their voluntary participation in research programs. Patients and/or their legally authorized representatives will be informed by the physician about the risks, benefits, and alternatives to procedures, as well as those considered experimental.
7. Information: Patients and their family, if appropriate, have the right to obtain complete and current information concerning diagnosis and treatment from the attending physician and to participate in care decisions. The patient shall be informed regarding the risks and benefits of the treatment and the available alternatives. When it is not advisable or possible to give such information to the patient, the information will be made available to the patient's legal representative. Clinical decisions will be based upon identified health care needs and shall not be compromised in response to financial considerations. The grievance process may be utilized to address any issues of denial of care. Any marketing materials provided will accurately reflect the services available and the current level of licensure and accreditation. Patients have the right to have their own physician promptly notified of their admission. Patients have the right to have a family member or representative of their choice promptly notified of their admission. The patient has the right to access

information contained in their clinical records within a reasonable time frame. The hospital shall seek to meet requests for medical record information as quickly as the record keeping system permits within federal guidelines. Records shall be supplied at a cost not to exceed the community standard.

8. **Communication**: Patients have the right of access to people outside the hospital/clinic by means of personal visit, oral and written communication, unless their physician determines that this will hinder treatment. When the hospital/clinic determines that qualified interpreters and/or communication equipment are necessary for effective communication, it will be provided at no charge to the patient.
9. **Consultation**: Patients have the right to consult with a specialist at their request and at their own expense.
10. **Refusal of Treatment**: Patients may refuse, consent to, or limit treatment to the extent permitted by law. When refusal of treatment prevents the provision of appropriate care in accordance with ethical and professional standards, the relationship with the patient may be terminated upon reasonable notice. Ringgold County Hospital will address conflicts that may arise among patients, families, hospital/clinic staff and physicians concerning care decisions, including the withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment. No hospital/clinic will discriminate against a patient based upon the patient's decision to execute a living will or other advance directive to withhold care. Patients shall have the right to complete an advance directive or designate a representative to make health care decisions.
11. **Transfer and Continuity of Care**: Patients will not be transferred to another facility without a complete explanation of the need for transfer, the risks and alternatives to transfer, and the acceptance of the patient by the other facility. Patients have the right to be informed by the responsible health care provider of any continuing health requirements following discharge from a hospital/clinic/service.
12. **Billing Practices**: Patients will be billed only for services provided. Patients have the right to request and receive an itemized explanation of the entire bill, regardless of the source of payment. Patients also have the right to timely notice prior to termination of eligibility for reimbursement for the cost of care by any third party payer.
13. **Hospital/Clinic Rules/Regulations/Grievance Procedure**: Patients will be informed of the hospital/clinic rules and regulations. Ringgold County Hospital has an established mechanism for patients and family to express their concerns and access the hospital's grievance policy. Patients receiving any service can ask for assistance in this process by asking for the nursing supervisor. Patients can contact the State Ombudsman at 1-800-532-3213, State Department of Elder Affairs, 200 10th Street, Third Floor, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

YOUR PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Provision of Information**: Patients have the responsibility to provide, to the best of their knowledge, accurate and complete information about their present complaints, prior illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, changes in condition, and other matters relating to their health.
2. **Compliance with Instructions**: Patients are responsible for complying with applicable hospital/clinic rules and regulations, for following the treatment plan recommended by their approved and licensed independent practitioner, and for cooperating with health personnel as they carry out the coordinated plan of care ordered. Patients are also responsible for keeping appointments and notifying the practitioner, hospital, or clinic when able to do so.
3. **Refusal of Treatment**: Patients are responsible for providing copies of their living will or other advance directives to their health care practitioners. Patients are responsible for their actions if they refuse treatment or refuse to follow the practitioner's instructions.
4. **Health Care Charges**: Patients are responsible for assuring that the financial obligations of their health care are fulfilled as promptly as possible.
5. **Respect and Consideration**: Patients are responsible for being considerate of the rights of other patients and hospital/clinic personnel, and for assisting in the control of noise and the number of hospital visitors. Patients are also expected to respect the property of others and of the hospital/clinic.
6. **Personal Property**: Patients are responsible for any property/valuables kept in their possession. The patient or guardian is expected to manage his/her own financial affairs.

When the patient is not capable of understanding these rights, or when the patient is a minor child, all applicable patient rights and responsibilities pass to the next of kin, guardian, or authorized responsible person by law.