

Patient Rights & Responsibilities

Patient Rights

By the very nature of their chosen professions, the healthcare professionals at Halifax Regional Hospital show their concern for human life and dignity. However, to do their jobs, they have to expect certain behavior on the part of each patient. Restoring the human body is a task that takes more than just a concern for human relations; it takes the joint efforts of the healthcare team and the patient. It is in this spirit that the following statements of Patient Rights and Responsibilities have been included. Newborns, children, and adolescents are entitled to the same rights as the adult patient. Concerns may be expressed by family members or legal guardians.

Access to Care

Patients at Halifax Regional Hospital have equal access to treatment regardless of race, creed, sex, religion, national origin or source of payment. Through all examinations, testing and treatment, you will be treated in a fair and considerate manner.

Your Privacy

Our hospital considers the right to privacy to be a primary concern in all patient communications and examinations. At your request, a selected family member, friend and your physician will be informed of your admission. You may refuse to see or talk to anyone not associated with the hospital, including visitors, mail, telephone calls or other forms of communications. Limitations to privacy are evaluated for therapeutic reasons and discussed fully with the patient and his or her family. Chart discussion and consultation as well as source of payment for treatment are confidential and will be conducted discreetly.

Safety

Patients who enter this hospital can expect an environment that meets or exceeds all state safety standards and codes. You may also expect to receive care in a safe setting, free from verbal or physical abuse or harassment. Patients may expect all staff members to identify themselves at the time of treatment. If you are uncertain about the identity of a particular person, you have the right to ask that person for proper identification.

Your Consent

You have the right to participate in the development and implementation of your plan of care. You will be asked to participate in the decision-making process regarding your care and have the opportunity to consent to any procedures. Should you be unable to consent to treatment, your legally authorized representative will be asked to consent on your behalf. You or your representative has the right to refuse treatment as allowed by law.

Access to Information

Our medical and nursing staffs will make every effort to ensure that current information concerning your diagnosis, treatment and prognosis is explained in terms that can be reasonably understood. When appropriate, you or your authorized representative will be informed of any outcomes of care, to include unanticipated outcomes. As a patient, you have the right to know by name, the physician responsible for your care and, at your request and expense, to consult with a specialist or obtain a second opinion by another physician.

Hospital Policies

Patients have the right to full disclosure of any financial aspects of their hospital stay, including timely notice prior to discharge. Patients may expect appropriate, straightforward, and honest responses to questions, complaints or disagreements regarding their bills. Occasionally it becomes necessary to transfer a patient to another healthcare facility. If this is necessary, a patient has the right to a full explanation concerning the transfer.

Advance Directives

You have the right to have an advance medical directive such as a "living will" or a "durable power of attorney for health care" with the expectation that the hospital will honor the intent of this directive to the extent permitted by law and hospital policy. These documents express your choices about your future care or name someone to decide if you are unable to communicate such information for yourself. Complaints concerning noncompliance regarding Advance Directives may be filed with the Virginia State Department of Health, Office of Licensure and Certification, 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 401, Richmond, VA 23233-1463; telephone number 1-800-955-1819.

The patient and his or her family also have the right to access a hospital mechanism for addressing ethical issues and may do so by contacting his or her physician, the Guest Relations Coordinator, or the Nurse Manager.

Medical Records / Confidentiality

Patients have the right to confidentiality of records and access to this information within a reasonable time. Requests for specific information should be made to our Health Information Department and provisions will be made per hospital policy.

Supportive Care

You have the right to supportive care which includes appropriate and timely assessment and management of pain, treatment of uncomfortable symptoms, and support of psychological and spiritual needs. As a patient, you can expect information about pain and pain relief measures.

Values and Beliefs

Your rights include expression of personal, cultural and spiritual values and beliefs that are not harmful to others nor interfere with the planned course of medical treatment.

Treatment, Referral or Transfer

You have the right to expect that the hospital will give you necessary health services to the best of its ability. Patients have the right to be free from restraints and seclusion of any form used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience or retaliation by staff. If transfer or referral is recommended or requested, you will be informed of risks, benefits and alternatives. You will not be transferred until another institution agrees to accept you. You have the right to know if this hospital has relationships with outside parties that may influence your treatment and care. These relationships may be with educational institutions or other health care providers or insurers. You have the right to know that our medical decisions, including referrals, admissions, transfers, discharges and care provided will not be affected by goals, incentives or other financial arrangements we have with our administrators, managers, staff and independent practitioners. You have the right to know that our medical decisions, including referrals, admissions, transfers, discharges and care provided will not be influenced by the nature of Halifax Regional Health System's relationship with other providers, payors, health plans or educational institutions, nor will our medical decisions be influenced by the personal involvement of key individuals with these organizations. We will avoid steering patient/residents to or away from other organizations because of our business relations with them, and when available, we will provide options to patients/residents and disclose any business relationships. You also have the right to decline or participate in research studies affecting care and treatment or requiring involvement and you have the right to have these studies fully explained prior to your consent. When hospital care is no longer reasonable, the patient will be provided information and other options for appropriate discharge placement. We will provide information/choices on healthcare providers or services based on the needs of the patient with the final decisions resting with the patient.

Protective Services

Patients have the right to access human service agencies which are licensed by the State of Virginia to protect, ensure, and guarantee that all vulnerable individuals are free from neglect, abuse and exploitation. Information may be obtained from the hospital's Social Services Department at ext. 3422 or you may contact the State Survey Agency's Complaint Toll-Free Telephone Number, 1-800-955-1819.

Communications

Patients requiring special communications devices (picture boards, translators, TDD devices, telephone amplifiers, etc.) should notify the nurse in charge.

Patient Responsibilities

Rules and Regulations

You have a responsibility as a patient to follow hospital rules and regulations which are designed to help this organization meet its obligations for providing efficient and equitable care for all patients in the region. Patients and their family members are responsible for making reasonable accommodations to the needs of the hospital, other patients, medical staff and hospital employees. You are responsible for providing information about past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other matters related to your health. You have a responsibility to discuss pain and pain management options with your physician or nurse and to keep staff informed of the intensity of your pain as well as the need for pain relief. You are also responsible for providing information for insurance purposes and for working with the hospital to arrange payment when necessary.

Making Your Wishes Known

As a patient, you are responsible for asking questions when you do not understand information or instructions. You are responsible for providing the hospital with a copy of an advance directive if one exists. If you believe that you will be unable to follow through with your treatment, you are responsible for informing your physician and other caregivers.

To Resolve Complaints

Patient concerns, grievances, and complaints will be reported to the Guest Relations Coordinator in order that an appropriate solution may be found. The Coordinator may be reached at ext. 3318, or by calling "O" for operator paging. If the Coordinator is not available, the House Supervisor or Department Manager will be made aware of the concern. The Supervisor or Manager may be reached through the hospital operator. Upon receipt of the complaint/concern, the Coordinator will begin an investigation. Patient or patient's representative will receive a follow-up (either verbal or written) regarding status of investigation within 5 working days. Should the issue not be resolved to patient's satisfaction, a Grievance Committee, consisting of representatives from administration, management, risk, and, if appropriate, a representative from the medical staff, will be convened. The Grievance Committee will review the complaint and make a recommendation for resolution within 30 days. Upon completion of the Grievance Committee's investigation, a written notice of resolution will be sent to the patient or patient's representative. This written notice will include the Grievance Committee's decision, the name of the hospital contact person, the steps taken to investigate the concern, the results of the grievance process and the date of the completion of the grievance process. If you have unresolved quality of care or patient care issues, your written complaint may be sent to: Division of Accreditation Operations, Office of Quality Monitoring, The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181, or by fax to Office of Quality Monitoring (434) 630-792-5636, or by e-mail to complaint@jcaho.org.