



Patient Rights and Responsibilities

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I. Description

Describes rights and responsibilities of inpatients and outpatients (collectively, a "patient" or "patients") at UNCHCS

II. Rationale

UNCHCS recognizes that each patient is an individual with unique health care needs. Care should be focused upon each patient's needs and provided in a manner that is considerate and respectful of each patient's personal dignity. Similarly, UNCHCS expects each patient to treat its providers and staff in a manner that is considerate and respectful. It is in recognition of these factors that UNCHCS affirms the following rights and responsibilities for its patients. When a patient is incompetent or without capacity to make his/her own decisions, UNCHCS

recognizes the patient's authorized representative as the patient's decision-maker.

Patient complaints or grievances should be addressed in the manner described in UNCHCS Policy "Patient Complaints/Grievances."

III. Policy

A. Patient Rights

1. Respectful Treatment

- a. A patient has the right to be treated in a dignified and respectful manner, free from neglect, exploitation or abuse, with good quality care using high professional standards provided by competent personnel in a safe environment.

- b. A patient has the right to medical care without discrimination based upon age, race, ethnicity, color, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity (or expression), national origin, expression, or source of payment.
- c. Except as medically necessary, a patient has the right not to be awakened, to be free from duplicative procedures, and to avoid treatments that cause discomfort.
- d. UNCHCS will accommodate a patient's right to religious and other spiritual services, to the extent practicable.
- e. A patient has the right to have all records pertaining to his/her medical care treated as confidential, except as

otherwise provided by law or third party contractual arrangements. A patient may access his/her records, requests amendments, and obtain information on disclosures, as required by law and pursuant to procedures established by UNCHCS.

- f. A patient has the right to an environment that preserves privacy and dignity, including a right to privacy during treatment and personal hygiene activities. Case discussion, consultation, examination, and treatment are considered confidential and should be conducted discreetly.
- g. A patient who presents to the Emergency Department has the right to receive at least a medical screening exam, regardless of the patient's ability to pay, and the right to have any emergency medical condition stabilized or to be transferred appropriately.

- h. UNCHCS honors a patient's right to give or withhold informed consent to produce or use recordings, films, or other images of the patient for purposes other than his/her care.
- i. A patient has the right to receive or refuse visitors whom he/she designates, regardless of legal relationships. Patient visitation is only restricted by hospital personnel when a visitor is disruptive, interferes with staff or patient care, or is medically or therapeutically contraindicated for the patient.

2. Communication, Information and Participation in Care Decisions

- a. A patient has the right to effective communication in understandable terms concerning his/her diagnosis, treatment and prognosis, including information about alternative treatments and possible complications, in

order to make informed decisions about his/her care plan. An interpreter, or appropriate auxiliary aids and services, will be provided free of charge when necessary so that a patient can effectively communicate with his/her health care providers.

- b. A physician must obtain informed consent prior to any procedure or treatment, except in an emergency.
- c. A patient has the right to have his/her family and physician promptly notified of his/her admission to the hospital.
- d. A patient has the right to refuse drugs, treatments and procedures and will be informed by the physician of the medical consequence of that refusal. A patient may be discharged if such decisions render it impossible for UNCHCS to provide meaningful care.

- e. A patient has the right to assistance in obtaining consultation with another physician (at the patient's expense). If medically safe to do so, the patient has the right to transfer to another facility if the new facility has accepted the patient and the patient has been provided information of the risks and alternatives.
- f. A patient has the right to participate in the development and implementation of his/her discharge plan, which includes being informed of his/her continuing health care requirements following discharge and the means for meeting them.
- g. A patient has the right, upon request, to be given the name of the physician who has primary responsibility for his/her care, as well as the names of other physicians and health care providers who directly participate in his/her care.

- h. A patient has the right to information about advance directives, to formulate advance directives, and to have staff and health care personnel comply with these directives, within the limits of law.
- i. UNCHCS documents a patient's wishes concerning organ donation when he or she makes such wishes known, in accordance with law and regulation.
- j. A patient has the right to consent to or refuse participation in research, investigation, or clinical trials. In order to make that decision, the patient will be informed of the purpose and duration of the research, the procedures involved, the potential risks and benefits, and alternative care and treatment available. (An Institutional Review Board may waive or alter the consent requirement consistent with applicable laws and regulations.) A patient's refusal to

participate in research, investigation or clinical trials, or discontinuing participation at any time, will not jeopardize his/her access to care, treatment and services unrelated to the research.

- k. A patient has the right to access protective and advocacy services authorized to act on the patient's behalf, and UNCHCS will provide contact information for patient advocacy groups when requested.
- l. A patient has the right to be informed about unanticipated outcomes of care, treatment and services.
- m. A patient has the right to receive a detailed explanation of his/her bill.

- n. A patient has a right to information and counseling on the availability of known financial resources for his/her health care.

3. Complaints and Grievances

- a. A patient cannot be denied the right of access to an individual or agency that is authorized to act on his/her behalf to assert or protect the rights set out in this document.
- b. A patient has the right to file a grievance through the Patient Relations Department when the patient believes any of the above rights have been violated. See UNCHCS Policy "Patient Complaints/Grievances".

- c. A patient has the right to file a complaint with the North Carolina Division of Health Services Regulation (DHSR) and The Joint Commission.

B. Patient Responsibilities

1. A patient has the responsibility to treat UNCHCS providers and staff with consideration and respect, without regard to age, race, ethnicity, color, religion, culture, language, disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity (or expression), or national origin. This includes refraining from inappropriate, discriminatory, harassing or abusive language and behavior.
2. A patient has the responsibility to treat other patients and visitors with consideration and respect, including keeping conversations (in person and by phone),

television and music devices at low levels to avoid disturbing others.

3. A patient has the responsibility to follow UNCHCS policies, rules and regulations. This includes the patient's responsibility not to use tobacco products, alcohol or any drugs or medication other than medications administered by UNCHCS providers.
4. A patient has the responsibility to cooperate with his/her providers and to provide accurate and complete health information in order to facilitate his/her care and treatment. A patient is expected to ask questions and is responsible for telling caregivers if he/she does not understand his/her care or treatment.

5. A patient will not demand and UNCHCS will not provide treatment or services deemed medically unnecessary or inappropriate.

6. A patient has the responsibility to assure that the financial obligations for his/her health care are fulfilled in a reasonable period of time.

IV. Related Policies

UNCHS Policy "Patient Complaints/Grievances"