

Patient Rights

Access to Care: Patients have the right to impartial access to medically indicated treatments or accommodations, regardless of age, race, creed, sex, national origin, religion, source of payment, or presentation of complaints. The patient has the right to expect emergency procedures to be implemented without unnecessary delay.

Respect: Patients have the right to considerate and respectful care given by competent personnel.

Dignity: Patients have the right to dignity including consideration of psychosocial, spiritual, and cultural variables that influence perceptions of their illness.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Patients have the right, within the law, to personal and informational privacy, including to:

1. Refuse to talk with or see anyone not officially connected with the hospital, or persons officially connected with the hospital but not directly involved with their care;
2. Wear appropriate personal clothing and religious or other symbolic items as long as they do not interfere with diagnostic procedures or treatments;
3. Be interviewed and examined in surroundings designed to assure reasonable audiovisual privacy. This includes the right to have a person of one's own sexual preference present during a physical examination, treatment, or procedure performed by a health professional;
4. Expect that any discussion or consultation involving their care will be conducted discreetly, and that individuals not directly involved in their care will not be included without the patient's permission; have their medical record read only by those individuals directly involved in their treatment or the monitoring of its quality, and by other individuals only on their written authorization or that of their legally authorized representative and;
5. Expect all written communications and other records pertaining to their care, including the source of payment, to be treated as confidential.

Personal Safety:

- Patients have the right to expect reasonable safety in terms of hospital practices and the environment in which care is provided, including the expectation of an environment designed to reduce risks to patient safety and to prevent abuse, neglect or harassment from staff, other patients or visitors.
- Patients have the right to good quality care and the maintenance of high professional standards. This is best assured by involving patients as active members of the care team.
- During hospitalization, it is also expected that patients, their families and visitors will have reasonable and responsible behaviors.
- Smoking is not permitted within the hospital. When a patient smokes inside the building, it poses a fire risk to all and appropriate measures to assure the risk of fire is minimized and will be taken.
- Patients have the right to be free from restraints of any form that are not medically necessary or are used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience or retaliation by staff. The term "restraint" includes either a physical restraint or a drug that is being used as a restraint. A physical restraint is any manual method or physical or mechanical device, material, or equipment attached adjacent to the patient's body that he or she cannot easily remove that restricts freedom of movement or normal access to one's body. A drug used as a physical restraint is a medication used to control behavior or restrict the patient's freedom of movement and is not a standard treatment for the patient's medical or psychiatric condition.

Identity: Patients have the right to know the identity, professional status, and professional relationships of individuals providing services, and to know which physician or other practitioner is primarily responsible for their care. Participation by patients in clinical training programs or in the gathering of data for research purposes is voluntary.

Information: Patients have the right to be informed about the outcomes of their care, including unanticipated outcomes. Upon request, patients, or the patient designee, shall be provided access to all information contained in the patient's medical records. A patient's access to medical records may be restricted by the patient's attending physician. If the physician restricts the patient's access to information in the patient's medical record, the physician shall record the reasons on the patient's medical record. Access shall be restricted only for sound medical reason. A patient's designee may have access to the information in the patient's medical records even if the attending physician restricts the patient's access to those records. This information shall be communicated in terms patients can be expected to understand.

Communication: Patients have the right to verbal and written communications and access to people outside the hospital including visitors. When the patient does not understand the predominant language of the community or is hearing impaired, access to an interpreter will be provided. Other impaired individuals have the right to assistive devices or animals. Patients have the right to have a family member or representative of his or her choice and his or her own physician notified promptly of his or her admission to the hospital.

Consent: Patients (18 years of age or emancipated minors) have the right to informed participation in decisions involving their healthcare.

- To the degree possible, this should be based in a clear, concise explanation of their conditions and of all proposed technical procedures, including the possibilities of any risk of mortality or serious side effects, problems related to recuperation, and probability of success.
- Patients will not be subjected to any procedure without their voluntary, competent, and understanding consent, or that of their legally authorized representative.
- Where medically significant alternatives for care or treatment exist, patients will be informed. Patients may wish to delegate decision-making to specific

persons. To the degree permitted by state law and to the maximum extent practicable, the hospital will respect the patient's wishes.

- Patients have the right to know who is responsible for authorizing and performing procedures or treatments. Patients will be informed if the hospital proposes to engage in or perform human experimentation or treatment, and have the right to refuse to participate

Consultation: Patients have the right to consult with a specialist.

Participation in the Plan of Care: Patients have the right to participate in the development, implementation and revision of his/her plan of care. Patients may refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and are informed of the medical consequences of such refusal.

Knowledge of Continuing Care Needs: Patients may not be transferred to other facilities unless they have received complete explanation of the need for the transfer and the transfer is acceptable to the patient and the other facility. Patients have the right to be informed by the responsible practitioner or their delegate of any continuing health care requirements following discharge from the hospital and the means for meeting them.

Comfort: Patients have the right to reasonable response to reports of pain and interventions directed to optimize pain management. Patients have the right not to be awakened by hospital staff unless it is medically necessary. Patients have the right to medical and nursing treatment that avoids unnecessary physical and mental discomfort and to be free from needless duplication of medical and nursing procedures.

Financial Explanation: Patients have the right to request and receive an itemized and detailed explanation of their total bill for services rendered in the hospital. Patients have the right to full information and counseling on the availability of known financial resources for his health care. Patients have the right, when possible, to timely notice prior to termination of eligibility for reimbursement by the third party payer for the cost of his care.

Hospital Rules and Regulations: Patients have the right to access to the hospital rules and regulations applicable to their conduct as a patient. Patients are entitled to information about the hospital mechanism for the initiation, review, and resolution of patient complaints.

Grievances: Patients have the right to expect that care and services are provided in a timely, reasonable, and consistent manner. When a patient issue cannot be resolved promptly by the staff present, the patient has the right to file a formal, written or verbal grievance.

Children and Teens: Children and teens have the right to make choices and let our staff know how they want to be involved in their care. They are also entitled to treatment by health care professionals who are knowledgeable about caring for children and teenagers. Children's right to grow, play, learn, rest and feel secure will be respected. An adult family member will be allowed to spend the night in the hospital with them.

Parents and guardians are responsible for providing the hospital with information about their child's health including the present complaint, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other matters relating to the health of the child. They are encouraged to take part in the child's care and ask questions if they do not understand something about their child's treatment.

Catawba Valley Medical Center: Catawba Valley Medical Center protects the rights of patients and addresses all complaints in a timely manner. Patients and/or legal representatives are given a copy of these rights on admission. Should a real or perceived violation of those rights take place, ask to see the Director or designee of this department.

This department is licensed and regulated by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Facility Services. This state agency is responsible for the enforcement of rules applicable to hospitals. If a patient and/or patient's designee wishes, the agency may be contacted as listed below.

For psychiatric services, contact:
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Facility Services
Mental Health Licensure and Certification Section
2718 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2718
Phone: 800-624-3004

For acute care and rehabilitation services, contact:
Acute and Home Care Branch
Division of Facility Services
2712 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2712
Phone: 919-733-1610

Also, the Governor's Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities has the power to investigate complaints at any 24-hour behavioral health facility in the state.
Phone: 800-821-6922

Along with patient rights come patient responsibilities. These include respecting the rights of other patients by abiding by hospital and office policies. Patients also have the responsibility to actively participate in their care and to provide accurate and complete information. See Catawba Valley Medical Group Policy GO-13 for additional detail.

