

# Patient Rights & Responsibilities

## **PATIENT RIGHTS:**

Huntsville Hospital Health System will respect, protect, and promote the following rights of every patient:

- Care shall be provided impartially without regard to age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity or expression, or source of payment.
- Patients are entitled to considerate, respectful and dignified care at all times.
- Patients have the right to receive care in a safe setting.
- Patients are entitled to personal and informational privacy as required by law. This includes the right to:
  - Refuse to see or talk with anyone not officially affiliated with the hospital or involved directly with his/her care;
  - Wear appropriate personal clothing, religious or other symbolic items which do not interfere with prescribed treatments or procedures;
  - Examination in reasonably private surroundings, including the right to request a person of one's own gender present during certain physical examinations;
  - Have one's medical records read and discussed discreetly;
  - Confidentiality regarding one's individual care and/or payment sources;
  - Data Privacy Rights as described in the *Notice of Privacy Practices*.
- Patients and/or patients' legally designated representatives have the right of access to information contained in the patient's medical record, within the limits of the law and in accordance with hospital policies.
- Patients of the Health System have the right to know the identity and professional status of all persons participating in their care.
- Patients are entitled to know the status of their condition including diagnosis, recommended treatment and prognosis for recovery.
- Patients have a right to share in decisions about their care, be told what to expect from their treatment, its risks and benefits, other choices they may have and what may happen if they are not treated. Information will be provided in a way tailored to the patient's age, language and in a manner he or she can understand.
- Patients have the right to be free from physical restraints which are not medically indicated or necessary.
- Patients have the right to have their family and physicians promptly notified of their admission to the hospital and, in collaboration with their physicians, to make decisions involving their health care, including the acceptance or refusal of medical care, treatment or services to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the medical consequences of such refusal.
- Patients are entitled to formulate advance directives or a health care power of attorney and appoint a surrogate decision maker to make health care decisions on their behalf, to the extent permitted by law

when a patient is unable to make decisions about their care:

- When a surrogate decision maker is responsible for making care, treatment and service decisions, the Health System will respect the surrogate decision maker's right to refuse care, treatment and services on the patient's behalf.
  - The Health System will involve the patient's family in care, treatment, and service decisions to the extent permitted by the patient or surrogate decision maker.
  - The Health System will provide the patient or surrogate decision maker with the information about the outcomes of care, treatment and services that the patient needs in order to participate in current and future health care decisions.
  - Patient or surrogate decision maker will be informed about unanticipated outcomes of care, treatment and services that relate to sentinel events.
- Patients are entitled to receive an itemized, detailed explanation of charges related to services rendered on their behalf by the Health System.
  - Patients will not be transferred to another facility or location without explanation of the necessity for such action.
  - A patient's guardian, next of kin, or legally authorized responsible person, may exercise, to the extent permitted by law, the rights delineated on behalf of the patient if the patient has been judged incompetent in accordance with the law, or is found by his/her physician to be medically incapable of understanding the proposed treatment or procedure, or is unable to communicate his/her wishes regarding treatment, or is a minor.
  - Patients have the right to appropriate assessment and management of pain.
  - Patients have a right to meet with the Ethics Committee, Chaplain or Patient Advocate to discuss any ethical issues and policies. The patient's rights to religious and other spiritual services will be respected.
  - Patients have the right to language interpreting and translation services which may include hospital-employed, contracted interpreting services, or trained bilingual staff, and may be provided in person, via telephone, or by video. The Health System provides information to patients who have vision, speech, hearing or cognitive impairments and presented in a manner that meets the patient's needs.
  - Patients have the right to the use of a service animal that has been trained to do work or perform a task for people with disabilities. More information about service animals is located in the Service Animals Policy.
  - Patients have a right to leave the hospital (as far as the law allows) even if advised against it. The Health System will not be responsible for any medical issues that may result.
  - Patients have a right to have their complaints handled fairly. Care will not be affected as a result of sharing any complaints with us.
  - The Health System will never ask a patient to waive his or her privacy rights as a condition of treatment.

## **PATIENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE for:**

- Providing the Health System and its practitioners with complete and accurate information regarding past and present illnesses and operations, hospitalizations, medications, insurance and other health-related issues, including any unanticipated changes in their condition.
- Following recommended treatment plans prescribed and/or administered by their primary practitioner or those assisting him/her, including keeping appointments relative to their care.
- Asking questions they may have about their treatment and what they need to do to take care of themselves. Patient should inform Health System clinicians if they are concerned or notice any changes in their condition.

- Ensuring prompt and complete payment of their hospital bills.
- Following hospital rules and regulations relative to patient care and conduct. This includes consideration and respect for the rights and property of other patients and hospital personnel.
- Providing any living will, power of attorney, or donor forms they may have.
- Contacting the Health System Compliance and Privacy Department if they are concerned about their privacy.
- Assuming responsibility for the consequences of their actions if the patient refuses prescribed treatments or does not follow their practitioner's instructions.

## **PATIENT QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:**

**Our goal is that you have an excellent experience during your stay at this Health System location. If at any time you have a question or concern, you may submit a verbal complaint following these steps:**

- Press the call button and ask to speak with your nurse.
- Ask to speak to the Charge Nurse, Unit Director, or Department Director on your nursing unit.
- If your needs remain unmet, contact the hospital **Nursing Office** office at **(256) 233-9162** (or extension **1162** if calling inside the hospital).
- After 4:00 p.m., and on weekends and holidays, please dial **0** and ask the operator to connect you to the **Nursing Supervisor**.
- Contact hospital administration at **(256) 233-9119**.

You may also submit a formal written complaint to:

**Athens-Limestone Hospital**  
700 West Market Street, Athens, AL 35611

Excellence is our goal! To report concerns about patient safety and quality of care, you may submit your complaint to one of the agencies listed below:

**Alabama Department of Public Health** · The RSA Tower      **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service** · KEPRO, the Quality Improvement Organization  
201 Monroe Street · Montgomery, AL 36104 · (800) 356-9596      5700 Lombardo Center Drive, Suite 100 · Seven Hills, OH 44131 · (844) 430-9504

**The Joint Commission** · Report concerns in any of the following ways:

At [jointcommission.org](http://jointcommission.org)

Using the "Report a Patient Safety Event" link in the "Action Center" on the home page of the website

By fax

(630) 792-5636

By mail to

The Office of Quality and Patient Safety, The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Boulevard · Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181