

## **The Patient Bill of Rights**

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry adopted the Consumer Bill of Rights and Responsibilities in 1998. Also known as the Patient's Bill of Rights.

The Patient's Bill of Rights was created with the intent to reach three major goals:

1. To help patients feel more confident in the U.S. health care system.
  - o The Bill of Rights:
    - Assures that the health care system is fair and it works to meet patient's needs.
    - Gives patients a way to address any problems they may have.
    - Encourages patients to take an active role in staying or getting healthy.
2. To stress the importance of a strong relationship between patients and their health care providers.
3. To stress the key role patients play in staying healthy by laying out rights and responsibilities for all patients and health care providers.

This Bill of Rights also applies to the insurance plans offered to federal employees. Many other health insurance plans and facilities have also adopted these values. Even Medicare and Medicaid stand by many of them.

### **The eight key areas of the Patient's Bill of Rights**

1. Information Disclosure
  - a. You have the right to accurate and easily understood information about your health plan, including diagnosis, treatment plan(s) & potential prognosis. You also have a right to your health care professional and health care facility's credentials. If you speak another language, have a physical or mental disability, or just do not understand something, help should be given so you can make informed health care decisions. In turn, you have the right to provide accurate information regarding your health care history, change in symptoms & medical directives such as an advanced directive.
2. Choice of Providers and Plans
  - a. You have the right to choose health care providers who can give you high-quality health care when you need it.

3. Access to Emergency Services

- a. You have the right to medical services if and when the need arises. Healthcare plans use a “prudent layperson” to determine coverage for this situation. You should be able to use these services whenever and wherever you need them, without needing to wait for authorization if you believe your health is in serious danger or you will be injured or disabled without care.

4. Participation in Treatment Decisions

- a. You have the right to know your treatment options and take part in decisions about your care. You also have the right to refuse treatment or certain aspects of your care. Parents, guardians, family members, or others that you select can represent you if you cannot make your own decisions. If you leave the facility against your physician’s advice, your physician is not responsible for any medical consequences that may occur.

5. Respect and Non-Discrimination

- a. You have a right to considerate, respectful care from your doctors, health plan representatives, and other health care providers that does not discriminate against you. All parties should show mutual respect. Discrimination is not tolerated as required by law.

6. Confidentiality of Health Information

- a. You have the right to talk privately with health care providers and to have your health care information protected. You also have the right to read and copy your own medical record(s). You have the right to ask that your doctor change your record if it is not correct, relevant, or complete.

7. Complaints and Appeals

- a. You have the right to a fair, fast, and objective review of any complaint you have against your health plan, doctors, hospitals or other health care personnel. This includes complaints about waiting times, operating hours, the actions of health care personnel, and the adequacy of health care facilities.
- b. Please contact the Vice President of Operations for Gastroenterology of the Rockies at 720-932-7721 to file a formal grievance.
- c. Alternatively, you can contact the State of Colorado at 303-894-7690. You can also visit the State of Colorado’s website at <http://www.dora.state.co.us/medical/complaints.htm>.
- d. You and your representative also have the right to contact the Colorado Department of Health & Human Services at 303.692.2800 or 1.800.886.7689 x 2800 or the Medicare Hotline at 1.800.633.4277 or visit them at [www.cmc.hhs.gov/center/ombudsman.asp](http://www.cmc.hhs.gov/center/ombudsman.asp).

## 8. Patient Responsibilities

- a. Given that the health care system established the above to protect patient rights, it is reasonable to expect patients to have some responsibilities.
  - i. Practice & maintain healthy habits (i.e. nutritious diet, no tobacco use, exercising)
  - ii. Be involved in your health care decisions, plans & treatments. Ask questions.
  - iii. Disclose all pertinent information & express your wants, needs & concerns.
  - iv. Know your coverage plan. If you have questions, contact your insurance company. For questions regarding our practice, contact the Billing Department at 303-604-5000
  - v. Fulfill your financial obligations
  - vi. Keep your appointment, be timely to office visits and/or appointments, and call your provider's office if you cannot keep your appointment. Be aware and honor the cancellation policy if applicable.
  - vii. Leave valuables at home.
  - viii. Show respect to health care workers, & other patients. Follow the facility rules & respect the facility.

## Additional Resources

- *Inclusions on this list do not imply endorsement by our organization.*
- National organizations and Web sites\* American Hospital Association
  - Toll-free number: 1-800-242-2626 Web site: [www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org)

## References

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) – HHS
  - Toll-free number: 1-800-633-4227
  - TTY: 1-877-486-2048
  - Web site: [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)
- Medline Plus
  - Web site: [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/patientrights.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/patientrights.html)
- President's Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection & Quality in the Health Care Industry. Patient's Rights & Responsibilities.
  - Available at <http://archive.ahrq.gov/hcqual/>
  - Accessed December 30, 2012.
- U.S. Office of Personal Management.
  - Patients' Bill of Rights and the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program. Available at <http://www.opm.gov> . Accessed December 30, 2012.