

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING PATIENTS' RIGHTS

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COHC

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SPECIFIC RIGHTS

PATIENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO....

Be provided care and treatment with dignity and respect as individuals who have personal needs, feelings, preferences, and requirements.

Impartial services and access to treatment, regardless of race religion, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability or source of pay.

Be treated by staff/providers communicating in a language/format they understand.

Voice Opinions, recommendations and grievances with respect to policies and services offered by any provider without fear of restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal so long as their conduct is not disruptive or threatening to the provider or any third party.

Receive information necessary to give informed consent prior to being involved in activities that include the use of tape-recorders, one-way observation mirrors, photography, closed circuit video monitoring, video recording, or any other special audio-visual techniques.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Patients have certain rights concerning their personal and private information relevant to their medical care. Those rights can be summarized into four categories and include the right to: **Give or withhold authorization to disclosures; Maintain privacy; Have autonomy; and be given information.**

Right to Give or Withhold Authorization of Disclosures

Patients must sign a specific waiver, to allow their health information to be used by a third party. A patient needs to give specific authorization to allow a third party to give access to his/her confidential information: To the extent possible, the patient has control over: who will receive any personal information, what type of information should be released to each requestor and the duration of the authorized release.

Patients have a right to refuse requests for information by third parties, as well as the right to limit the authorization in any way he or she wished except where disclosures are provided by law.

Right to Maintain Privacy

Personal information shared by the patient with his or her provider is considered privileged information. Providers have a responsibility to protect information revealed during the Clinic encounters, including all written or electronic records of the encounters.

Only those persons directly involved in the care of the patients' health problem should have access to private information.

We have a responsibility to be aware of patients' right to privacy in the collection, management and sharing of data on all patients.

Right to Have Autonomy

Patients have the right to determine what will be done with his or her body and personal information. When a patient follows a treatment plan recommended by a provider, the patient is said to have given his or her consent to that plan.

Informed consent is a patient's written consent to a medical procedure or other course of treatment, given after the provider has informed the patient about the potential benefits, risks, and alternatives involved. The concept of informed consent is based on the principle that health care workers have a duty to disclose information that allows the patient to make a reasonable decision regarding his or her own treatment.

Right to Be Given Information

The patient has a right to be given information about his or her medical diagnosis, treatment regimen, and progress. This allows the patient to make appropriate, informed decisions about his/her healthcare. For example, a patient with drug-resistant HIV has a right to know the therapeutic options available, the duration of treatment, potential side effects of the drugs, and the expected outcome or progress.

This information may be valuable to the patient not only for making health care decisions, but also for making other decisions about important issues such as employment, housing, or family issues.

Three Questions Every Staff Member Should Know



1. How are patients informed of their rights and responsibilities?



Patients are made aware of their rights and responsibilities through the use of brochures in patient waiting areas, and posted placards in the health center facilities specifying the patients' rights and responsibilities. Patients are given a written copy of their rights and responsibilities at their initial Clinic visit. Additional copies of the patient rights and responsibility are kept at the Front Desk. Staff members are made aware of patient rights and responsibilities in the initial orientation process, and periodically through in-service training thereafter.



2. What is informed consent and how is it obtained?



Informed consent is a patient's written consent to a surgical or medical procedure or other course of treatment, given after the physician or other practitioners have informed the patient about the potential benefits, risks and alternatives involved.

Every patient who undergoes a procedure or treatment with significant risk must have the risks and benefits explained by the physician before giving consent to proceed. Our physicians provide the information, and the patient and the physician sign a form to document the discussion.

In response to securing the consent, the health center will provide the patient with pertinent information that will fully inform the patient about his/her care. The following information will be provided to the patient: patient's conditions, proposed treatments, procedures, potential benefits or drawbacks of proposed treatment or procedures, problems related to recuperation, alternative treatments or procedures, the physician or other practitioner primarily responsible for the patient's care, others authorizing or performing procedures or treatments, and any business relationships among individuals treating the patient.

Upon receipt of the above information, it is the patient's right to consent to the treatment, or seek health care in another organization.



3. What are advance directives? What is COHC's policy on advance directives?



Advance directives are written or verbal statements that provide direction for caregivers regarding the patient's preference for care and treatment in case the patient loses the ability to speak for himself or herself.

In the ambulatory health care setting it is the patient's right to receive assistance in the formulation or development of an advance directive. Health center staff, whether registration staff or clinical staff, will make such information available as will assist the patient in this matter. An advance directive presented by the patient will be reviewed with the patient by appropriate clinical staff, and lodged in the patient's health record. Upon transfer for care at another site, the advance directive will accompany the patient.

When a patient brings an advance directive to the health center, or with the assistance of health center staff, the advance directive **will not** be honored when the patient is on the premises of the health center. Health center staff members are instructed to remind patients of this, and to respond to an emergent situation by providing appropriate care and transferring the patient to the closest tertiary care site.