



# The Patient Care Partnership

**Understanding  
Expectations,  
Rights, and  
Responsibilities**



Maine Medical Center  
MaineHealth

# Contents

## What to expect during your hospital stay:

- High quality hospital care.
- A clean and safe environment.
- Involvement in your care.
- Protection of your privacy.
- Help when leaving the hospital.
- Help with your billing claims.
- Answers to questions, concerns, complaints & grievances.
- An opportunity to tell us how we're doing.
- Ethical care.

Speak Up™: Know your rights

When you need hospital care, your doctor and the nurses and other professionals at our hospital are committed to working with you and your family to meet your health care needs. Our dedicated doctors and staff serve the community in all its ethnic, religious, and economic diversity. Our goal is for you and your family to have the same care and attention we would want for our families and ourselves.

The sections explain some of the basics about how you can expect to be treated during your hospital stay. They also cover what we will need from you to care for you better. If you have questions at any time, please ask them. Unasked or unanswered questions can add to the stress of being in the hospital. Your comfort and confidence in your care are very important to us.

# What to expect during your hospital stay

## High quality hospital care

Our first priority is to provide you the care you need, when you need it, with skill, compassion, and respect. Tell your caregivers if you have concerns about your care or if you have pain. You have the right to know the identity of doctors, nurses, and others involved in your care, and you have the right to know when they are students, residents, or other trainees.

## A clean and safe environment

Our hospital works hard to keep you safe. We use special policies and procedures to avoid mistakes in your care and keep you free from abuse or neglect. If anything unexpected and significant happens during your hospital stay, you will be told what happened, and any resulting changes in your care will be discussed with you.

## Expectation of our partnership with you

### **Behavior should include:**

- Treat all hospital staff with dignity and respect.
- Treat other patients and visitors with dignity and respect.
- Be considerate of others' personal belongings.
- Control your behavior if you are feeling angry. No disruptive behavior on hospital property.
- Take responsibility for consequences of refusing care or not following directions.

- Do not take pictures, video or recordings without permission from hospital staff.
- **Wear your ID band** at all times.
- **Ask questions** about your care

Our job is to keep patients safe during their stay at Maine Medical Center. If your behavior is disruptive enough that your health care team feels they cannot give you safe and effective care, you may be asked to leave the hospital. This is called Administrative Discharge.

## Involvement in your care

You and your doctor often make decisions about your care before you go to the hospital. Other times, especially in emergencies, those decisions are made during your hospital stay. When decision-making takes place, it should include:

**Discussing your medical condition and information about medically appropriate treatment choices.** To make informed decisions with your doctor, you need to understand:

- The benefits and risks of each treatment.
- Whether your treatment is experimental or part of a research study.
- What you can reasonably expect from your treatment and any long-term effects it might have on your quality of life.
- What you and your family will need to do after you leave the hospital.
- The financial consequences of using uncovered services or out-of-network providers.

Please tell your caregivers if you need more information about treatment choices.

**Discussing your treatment plan.** When you enter the hospital, you sign a general consent to treatment. In some cases, such as surgery or experimental treatment, you may be asked to confirm in writing that you understand what is planned and agree to it. This process protects your right to consent to or refuse a treatment. Your doctor will explain the medical consequences of refusing recommended treatment. It also protects your right to decide if you want to participate in a research study.

**Getting information from you.** Your caregivers need complete and correct information about your health and coverage so that they can make good decisions about your care. That includes:

- Past illnesses, surgeries, or hospital stays.
- Past allergic reactions.
- Any medicines or dietary supplements (such as vitamins and herbs) that you are taking.
- Any network or admission requirements under your health plan.

**Understanding your health care goals and values.** You may have health care goals and values or spiritual beliefs that are important to your well-being. They will be taken into account as much as possible throughout your hospital stay. Make sure your doctor, your family, and your care team know your wishes.

**Understanding who should make decisions when you cannot.** If you have signed a health care power of attorney stating who should speak for you if you become unable to make health care decisions for yourself, or a “living will” or “advance directive” that states your wishes about end-of-life care, give copies to your doctor, your family, and your care team. If you or your family need help making difficult decisions, counselors, chaplains, ethics consultants, and others are available to help.

## Your right to visitors

Maine Medical Center recognizes that all patients have the right to visits from loved ones and friends while under our care, treatment, and service. Please note that visits may be restricted, limited, or denied if the visit interferes with necessary medical care, is disruptive, is physically necessary, or is clinically contraindicated. Please check with our staff for department-specific information for visitors. Please note that visits may be restricted, limited, or denied if the visit interferes with necessary medical care or is disruptive.

## Protection of your privacy

We respect the confidentiality of your relationship with your doctor and other caregivers, and the sensitive information about your health and health care that are part of that relationship. State and federal laws and hospital operating policies protect the privacy of your medical information. You will receive a Notice of Privacy Practices that describes the ways that we use, disclose, and safeguard patient information, and that explains how you can file a privacy complaint or obtain a copy of information from our records about your care.

## Preparing you and your family for when you leave the hospital

Your doctor works with hospital staff and professionals in your community. You and your family also play an important role in your care. The success of your treatment often depends on your efforts to follow medication, diet, and therapy plans. Your family may need to help care for you at home.

You can expect us to help you identify sources of follow-up care and to let you know if our hospital has a financial interest in any referrals. As long as you agree that we can share information about your care with them, we will coordinate our activities with your caregivers outside of the hospital. You can also expect to receive information and, where possible, training about the self-care you will need when you go home.

## Help with your bill and filing insurance claims

Our staff will file claims for you with health care insurers or other programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. They also will help your doctor with needed documentation. Hospital bills and insurance coverage are often confusing. If you have questions about your bill, contact our business office. If you need help understanding your insurance coverage or health plan, start with your insurance company or health benefits manager. If you do not have health coverage, we will try to help you and your family find financial help or make other arrangements. We need your help with collecting needed information and other requirements to obtain coverage or assistance.

## Answers to questions, concerns, complaints, & grievances

**If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about your care or safety, or experience situations that raise ethical questions,** please discuss them with the nurse manager, attending physician, or other member of your health care team. If these approaches do not lead to a satisfactory result, or if you would prefer not to discuss your concerns with these individuals, you may seek further help by calling Maine Medical Center Patient & Guest Relations, at 207-662-2983.

**If your grievance is related to concerns that you have been discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, ethnic origin, citizenship status, or sexual orientation,** you are encouraged to file the grievance in writing within 30 days of becoming aware of the situation. Send it to:

Maine Medical Center  
Patient & Guest Relations Department  
22 Bramhall Street  
Portland, ME 04102-3175

Patient & Guest Relations staff can assist you in obtaining information.

Your grievance must give your name and address and it must briefly state the discriminatory act. Our staff will investigate your complaint, coordinate resolution of the complaint, and issue a written decision on the validity of the complaint, including any action taken, most often within 7 work days of receipt of the grievance.

**You also have the right to contact the Maine State Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Licensing and Certification** at 1-800-791-4080 or (207)287-9300 (voice) or TDD Number Maine relay 711. You can reach them by mail at:

Dept. of Health & Human Services  
Division of Licensing & Regulatory Services  
41 Anthony Avenue  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0011

**If your complaint or grievance pertains to discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, sex, or religion, you may also file your grievance with the:**

Office of Civil Rights  
Centralized Case Management Operations  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Room 509F HHH Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Your complaint must be in writing and filed within 180 days of becoming aware of the alleged incident of discrimination. You may file a complaint by email at [OCRcomplaint@hhs.gov](mailto:OCRcomplaint@hhs.gov); or download the Discrimination Complaint Form in PDF format at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr>.

**The Joint Commission is also a resource, particularly if your concerns have not been resolved through the hospital's grievance process.** If you have questions about how to file your complaint, you may contact the Joint Commission at 1-800-994-6610, 9:30 am to 5 pm weekdays; visit their website at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org); or email them at [complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:complaint@jointcommission.org). You may contact them by mail at:

Office of Quality & Patient Safety  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Blvd.,  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
[www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)  
or fax to:  
630-792-5636

## An opportunity to tell us how we're doing

After you are discharged, you may receive a survey form in the mail. The patient survey is our tool to know what we are doing well and where we need to improve. It is your tool to let us know how we cared for you. Your response is important to us. If you receive a patient survey, we encourage you to complete it honestly and return it in the envelope provided.

## Ethical care

The Office of Clinical Ethics is a resource for patients, family members, and health care providers who have questions about the ethical issues in health care. You may contact us with questions you have about the ethical aspects of the care you receive at Maine Medical Center. We are available to help you talk with your doctor, nurse, and other caregivers about your health care goals and values, and we can also help you prepare an Advance Directive. You may also request an ethics consultation, which is a free and confidential hospital service. In a consult, members of the Ethics Consult team meet with patients, family, and the healthcare team to help answer questions arising from conflicts of value or ethical concerns. Opinions from the Ethics Consult team are advisory only. To request to speak to someone from the Office of Clinical Ethics, you may call 207-662-3131 or ask your nurse or social worker to contact us on your behalf.

# Speak Up™ : Know your rights

The goal of the Speak Up™ program is to help patients become more informed and involved in their health care.

You have rights regarding your treatment and care. This brochure has questions and answers to help you find out about your rights as a patient. Knowing your rights can help you make better decisions about your care.

## What are your rights?

- You have the right to be informed about the care you will receive.
- You have the right to get information about your care in your own language.
- You have the right to make decisions about your care, including refusing care.
- You have the right to know the names of the caregivers who treat you.
- You have the right to safe care.
- You have the right to have your pain treated.
- You have the right to know when something goes wrong with your care.
- You have the right to get an up-to-date list of all your current medications.
- You have the right to be listened to.
- You have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.

Ask for written information about all of your rights as a patient.

## **Can your family or friends help with your care?**

Find out if there is a form you need to fill out to name your personal representative, also called an advocate. Ask about your state's laws regarding advocates.

## **How can an advocate help with your care?**

They can get information and ask questions for you when you can't. They can remind you about instructions and help you make decisions. They can find out who to go to if you are not getting the care you need.

## **Can your advocate make decisions for you?**

No, not unless they are your legal guardian or you have given them that responsibility by signing a legal document, such as a health care power of attorney.

## **Can other people find out about your disease or condition?**

The law requires health care providers to keep information about your health private. You may need to sign a form if you want your health care providers to share information with your advocate or others.

## **What is “informed consent?”**

This means that your health care providers have talked to you about your treatment and its risks. They have also talked to you about options to treatment and what can happen if you aren't treated.

## **What happens if something goes wrong during treatment or with my care?**

If something goes wrong you have the right to an honest explanation. This explanation should be made in a reasonable amount of time.

Health care facilities like Maine Medical Center are not allowed to receive payment for serious harm that results from preventable mistakes and adverse events as defined by state law.

## **How do you file a complaint?**

First, call the hospital or health system so that they can correct the problem. Next, if you still have concerns, complaints can be sent to the licensing authority or to The Joint Commission. The Joint Commission provides a complaint form on its website at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org). Learn more in the questions and concerns section of this booklet.

## **Questions to ask before you enter the health care facility**

- Can you have an advocate? Do you need to sign a document so your advocate can get important information about your care?
- What will be done to make sure you don't get an infection?
- Is there a form you need to sign about life-saving actions, like resuscitation?
- Is there a form you need to sign about life support?
- Does the organization allow members of your religion to visit and pray with you?

- What kind of security does the facility have? Is there a 24-hour guard or alarm system?
- Whom do you speak to if a problem arises? How does the organization handle complaints?
- Are there any procedures that cannot be done at this facility for religious reasons
- Can you get a copy of your medical record and test results?

### **Questions to ask your doctor**

- How often will your doctor see you during your stay?
- Who is responsible for your care when the doctor is not available? For example, on weekends and late at night.
- What happens to you if life-saving actions are taken?
- If your test or procedure shows that you need another procedure right away, can you get it done here? Or will you need to go to a different facility?

### **Resources**

Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality, [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov), “Questions Are The Answer” campaign and “20 Tips To Help Prevent Medical Errors”



While you are here, you will receive more detailed notices about some of the rights you have as a hospital patient and how to exercise them. We are always interested in improving.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please contact:

**Maine Medical Center**  
**Patient & Guest Relations Department**  
**207-662-2983**



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