



The Patient Care Partnership

Understanding
Expectations,
Rights, and
Responsibilities



Southern Maine
Health Care
MaineHealth

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The medical doctors, nurses and health care team at our hospital are committed to working with you and your family to meet your health care needs. Our dedicated team 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.

This booklet explains how you can expect to be treated during your hospital stay. It also covers how you can be involved in your care. If you have questions at any time, please ask. 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 the care you need, when you need it, with skill, compassion, and respect. Please tell your caregivers if you have concerns about your care or if you have pain. You have the right to know the identity of medical doctors, nurses and health care team members involved in your care. You also 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.

How we expect to partner with you

We must work to keep patients and visitors safe during their stay at Southern Maine Health Care. If your behavior is disruptive and your health care team feels they cannot give you safe and effective care, you may be asked to leave the hospital. This request is called Administrative Discharge. While you are in the hospital, we expect you and your visitors to:

- Treat all hospital staff with respect.
- Treat other patients and visitors with respect.
- Respect others' personal belongings. Do not touch or move belongings that aren't yours.

- Take responsibility for the consequences of not following directions or refusing care.
- Not take pictures, video or recordings without permission from hospital staff.
- Wear your ID band at all times.
- Control your behavior if you are feeling angry. No disruptive behavior, such as yelling, throwing things, hitting, swearing or threatening.
- Not bring weapons, medication, drugs, alcohol or valuables such as cash and jewelry with you into the hospital.

Involvement in your care

You and your health care team 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 health care team, 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 uninsured or uncovered services or out-of-network providers.

Please tell your health care team 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 is called informed consent. Informed consent ensures that you understand the risks and benefits of recommended medicines, treatments, or research studies. It protects your right to consent to or refuse treatment or participation in research studies. 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 health care team need complete and correct information about your health and insurance 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 health care team, your family, and your care team know your wishes. You can document these in an advance directive.

Understanding who should make decisions when you cannot. If you have a signed health care power of attorney or an advance directive, give copies to your health care team and your family. A health care power of attorney states who should speak for you if you become unable to make health care decisions for yourself. An

advance directive (also called a living will) states your wishes about end of life care. If you or your family need help making difficult decisions, counselors, chaplains, ethics consultants, and others are available to help.

Your right to visitors

Southern Maine Health Care recognizes that all patients have the right to visits from loved ones and friends while in the hospital. Please check with our staff for visitor information specific to the department you are staying in. 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

Your privacy is important to us. State and federal laws and hospital policies protect the privacy of your medical information. You will receive a Notice of Privacy Practices that describes the ways that we use, share and protect your information. It also explains how to file a privacy complaint and how to obtain a copy of your medical records.

Sharing your health information with others

If you want us to share your health information with others, you can name a contact person, also called an advocate. Your advocate can ask questions for you when you are not able. They can help you make decisions and receive information about your health care conditions and clinical updates. In most circumstances, only a legal guardian or a health care power of attorney may make decisions for you.

Preparing you and your family for when you leave the hospital

You and your family 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 health care team will give you information and teach you how to care for yourself when you go home. You may need help from your family or other caregivers.

Your health care team may work with other professionals in your community to make sure you have the care you need when you leave the hospital. If you give us permission to share information about your care, we can help arrange for follow-up care and referrals. You can expect us to let you know if our hospital has a financial interest in any referrals.

Help with your bill and filing insurance claims

We will file claims (bill) for you with health insurers including Medicare and Medicaid. 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.

Hospital bills and insurance coverage are often confusing. If you have questions about your bill contact our business office.

If something goes wrong during treatment, you have the right to an honest explanation.

Health care facilities like Maine Medical Center cannot charge you, your insurer or your employer for health care services that are required as the result of or to correct certain preventable mistakes and adverse events defined by state law.

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 Southern Maine Health Care Patient Relations, at 207-283-7906.

If your grievance is related to concerns that you have been discriminated against on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, you are encouraged to file the grievance in writing. Send it to:

Southern Maine Health Care
Patient Relations Department
1 Medical Center Drive
Biddeford, ME 04005

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 800-383-2441 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

Email: dhrs.complaint@maine.gov

If your complaint or grievance pertains to discrimination on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, you may also file your grievance with the:

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 filed within 180 days of becoming aware of the alleged incident of discrimination. You can file a grievance in person, by mail, phone or email.

Phone 800-368-1019 or 800-537-7697 TDD. Complaint forms available at hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html.

You can also electronically file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights at ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf.

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 ethical issues in health care. You may contact us with questions about the ethical aspects of the care you receive. We are available to help you talk with your doctor, nurse, and other caregivers about your health care goals and values. We can also help you prepare an Advance Directive. You may 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 members, 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 with someone from the Office of Clinical Ethics, you may call 207-662-3131 or ask your health care team to contact us on your behalf.

Patient Rights: You have the right to:

- Be treated with respect
- Be informed about your care
- Privacy
- Get information about your care in your preferred language
- Make decisions about your care, including accepting or refusing care
- Safe care, free from abuse
- Pain management
- Know the progress and details about your care
- Ask questions
- Access to medical records, as appropriate
- Receive care any time of day, as appropriate
- Be provided information about your rights
- To receive care and services. If our health care team/providers deem additional services or treatments are necessary for your care, you have the right transfer your care to another hospital.

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:

Southern Maine Health Care
Patient Relations
207-283-7906



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