

**STEPHENS COUNTY HOSPITAL  
TOCCOA, GEORGIA**

**AOP 23A**

**TITLE:** Patient Rights and Responsibilities

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April, 1977

**LATEST REVISION DATE:** November, 2010

**LATEST REVIEW DATE:** January, 2016

Our policy regarding patient rights and responsibilities is based on the Hospital Authority's philosophy and belief that the basic rights of human beings for independence of expression, decision, action, and concern for personal dignity and human relationships are vitally important in the survival and recovery of a patient. Because of this belief, it is a prime responsibility of Stephens County Hospital to assure that these rights are preserved in our patients. In providing care, Stephens County Hospital has the right to expect behavior on the part of patients and their relatives and friends which, considering the nature of their illness, is reasonable and responsible. In this policy, the term "patient" also includes the parents of a neonate, child, or adolescent as well as the legal guardian of any patient.

## **PATIENT RIGHTS**

### Access to Care

Individuals shall be accorded impartial access to treatment or accommodations that are available or medically indicated, regardless of race, creed, sex, national origin, or sources of payment for care.

### Respect and Dignity

The patient has the right to considerate, respectful care at all times and under all circumstances, with recognition of his personal dignity.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

The patient has the right, within the law, to personal and informational privacy, as manifested by the following rights:

- To refuse to talk with or see anyone not officially connected with the Hospital, including visitors, or persons officially connected with the Hospital but not directly involved in his care.
- To wear appropriate personal clothing and religious or other symbolic items, as long as they do not interfere with diagnostic procedures or treatment.

- To be interviewed and examined in surroundings designed to assure reasonable visual and auditory privacy. This includes the right to have a person of one's own sex present during certain parts of a physical examination, treatment, or procedure performed by a health professional of the opposite sex and the right not to remain disrobed any longer than is required for accomplishing the medical purpose for which the patient was asked to disrobe.
- To expect that any discussion or consultation involving his case will be conducted discreetly and that individuals not directly involved in his care will not be present without his permission.
- To have his medical record read only by individuals directly involved in his treatment or in the monitoring of its quality. Other individuals can only read his medical record on his written authorization or that of his legally authorized representative.
- To expect all communications and other records pertaining to his care, including the source of payment for treatment, to be treated as confidential.
- To request a transfer to another room if another patient or a visitor in the room is unreasonably disturbing him by actions affecting medical condition.
- To be placed in protective privacy when considered necessary for personal safety.
- To appropriate assessment and management of pain.
- To refuse to be recorded or filmed for external purposes where such recording would be heard or seen by the public. This includes being recorded or filmed by news media and other entities. Furthermore, patients have the right to rescind consent for use of the recording or filming up until a reasonable time before the recording or film is used.

### Personal Safety

The patient has the right to expect reasonable safety insofar as the Hospital practices and environment are concerned.

### Identity

The patient has the right to know the identity and professional status of individuals providing service to him and to know which physician or other practitioner is primarily responsible for his care. This includes the patient's right to know of the existence of any professional relationship among individuals who are treating him, as well as the relationship to any other health care or educational institutions involved in his care. Participation by patients in clinical training programs or in the gathering of data for research purposes should be voluntary.

Information

The patient has the right to obtain, from the practitioner responsible for coordinating his care, complete and current information concerning his diagnosis (to the degree known), treatment, and any known prognosis.

Patients and, when appropriate, their families are informed about the outcomes of care, including unanticipated outcomes.

This information should be communicated in terms the patient can reasonably be expected to understand. When it is not medically advisable to give such information to the patient, the information should be made available to a legally authorized individual.

Communication

The patient has the right of access to people outside the Hospital by means of visitors and by verbal and written communication.

When the patient does not speak or understand the English Language, efforts will be made to provide an interpreter.

Patients have the right to have accommodations for their disability.

The patient has the right to identify a support person to be present during the hospital stay unless the presence of the support person infringes on others rights, compromises safety, or is medically or therapeutically contraindicated. The purpose of the support person is to provide emotional support, give comfort and alleviate fear during the patient's hospital stay.

The patient has the right to designate a surrogate decision maker.

The patient has the right to request pastoral care or other religious services.

Consent

The patient has the right to reasonable informed participation in decisions involving his health care. To the degree possible, this should be based on a clear, concise explanation of his condition and of all proposed technical procedures, including the possibilities of any risk of mortality or serious side effects, problems related to recuperation, and probability of success. The patient should not be subjected to any procedure without his voluntary, competent, and understanding consent or the consent of his legally authorized representative. Where medically significant alternatives for care or treatment exist, the patient shall be so informed.

The patient has the right to know who is responsible for authorizing and performing the procedures or treatment.

The patient shall be informed if the Hospital proposes to engage in or perform human experimentation or other research/educational projects affecting his care or treatment; the patient has the right to refuse to participate in any such activity.

Pain Management

Patients have the right to appropriate assessment and management of pain. Pain can be a common part of the patient experience; unrelieved pain has adverse physical and psychological effects. Each patient's right to pain management is respected and supported.

Consultation

The patient, at his own request and expense, has the right to consult with a specialist.

Refusal of Treatment

The patient may refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law. When refusal of treatment by the patient or his legally authorized representative prevents the provision of appropriate care in accordance with professional standards, the relationship with the patient may be terminated upon reasonable notice.

Transfer and Continuity of Care

A patient may not be transferred to another facility or organization unless he has received a complete explanation of the need for the transfer and of the alternatives to such a transfer and unless the transfer is acceptable to the other facility or organization. The patient has the right to be informed by the practitioner responsible for his care, or his delegate, of any continuing health care requirements following discharge from the Hospital.

Hospital Charges

Regardless of the source of payment for his care, the patient has the right to request and receive an itemized and detailed explanation of his total bill for services rendered in the Hospital. The patient has the right to timely notice prior to termination of his eligibility for reimbursement by any third-party payer for the cost of his care.

Hospital Rules and Regulations

The patient should be informed of the Hospital rules and regulations applicable to his conduct as a patient. Patients are entitled to information about the Hospital's mechanism for the initiation, review, and resolution of patient complaints.

Patient Grievances

The patient or the representative of the patient has the right to lodge a grievance regarding the patient's care or perceived abuse or neglect. Grievances may be lodged

either verbally or in writing to the attending nurse or other employee involved in care of the patient or to the Nursing Supervisor on duty. Grievances may also be lodged with the Administrator by calling extension 4250 while in the hospital or 706-282-4250 if outside the hospital. Grievances may also be mailed to the Administrator.

Medicare beneficiaries have the right to file a grievance for coverage issues and coverage limitations per Medicare policy.

Patient grievances may also be lodged by contacting the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Office of Regulatory Services at 404-657-5726 or (800) 878-6442.

An individual with concerns about patient care and safety at Stephens County Hospital that is not addressed by hospital management may contact the Joint Commission at 800-994-6610.

### Restraints

The patient has the right to be free from unnecessary restraint and seclusion.

## **PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Provision of Information

A patient has the responsibility to provide, to the best of his knowledge, accurate and complete information about present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other matters relating to his health. He has the responsibility to report unexpected changes in his condition to the responsible practitioner. A patient is responsible for reporting whether he clearly comprehends a contemplated course of action and what is expected of him.

### Treatment Plan Compliance

A patient is responsible for following the treatment plan recommended by the practitioner primarily responsible for his care. This may include following the instruction of nurses and allied health personnel as they carry out the coordinated plan of care, implement the responsible practitioner's orders, and enforce the applicable Hospital rules and regulations. The patient is responsible for keeping appointments and, when he is unable to do so for any reason, for notifying the responsible practitioner of the Hospital.

### Refusal of Treatment

The patient is responsible for his actions if he refuses treatment or does not follow the practitioner's instructions.

### Hospital Charges

The patient is responsible for assuring that the financial obligations of his health care are fulfilled as promptly as possible.

Hospital Rules and Regulations

The patient is responsible for following Hospital rules and regulations affecting patient care and conduct.

Respect and Consideration

The patient is responsible for being considerate of the rights of other patients and hospital personnel and for assisting in the control of noise and the number of visitors. The patient is responsible for being respectful of the property of other persons and of the Hospital.