

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

Patient rights are promoted by Rodriguez Army Health Clinic (RAHC) personnel and are an integral part of the healing process. These patient rights are:

MEDICAL: Patients have the right to quality care and treatment consistent with available resources and generally accepted standards. Patients also have the right to participate in planning medical treatment, including the right to refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and government regulations and to be informed of the consequences of their refusal, even if the treatment is life-sustaining.

PAIN MANAGEMENT: Patients right to pain management is respected and supported by the staff when receiving medical care at RAHC. We are committed to educate patients on pain prevention and management. We will respond to the needs of those patients presenting with pain.

ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVES: Patients have the right, as permitted by law, to formulate advance medical directives, which may include living wills, durable powers of attorney or similar documents portraying their preference. Such documents enable staff and physicians at RAHC to carry out a patient's treatment preferences, should the patient become incapable of making such decisions. More information is available from the Center Judge Advocate (787) 707-5155.

RESPECTFUL TREATMENT: Patients have the right to considerate and respectful care, with recognition of their personal dignity and consideration of the psychological, spiritual and cultural variables that influence their perception of illness. A chaperone will be provided upon request.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY: Patients have the right, within the law and military regulations, to privacy and confidentiality concerning medical care. Patients, or their legally designated representatives, have access to the information contained in the medical record, within the limits of the law. For more information, please refer to the Military Health Systems Notice of Privacy Practices. This brochure can be obtained at the Patient Representative Office, Patient Administration and Patient Waiting Room.

IDENTITY: Patients have the right to know at all times the identity, professional status and professional credentials of healthcare personnel, as well as the names of the healthcare providers primarily responsible for their care.

EXPLANATION OF CARE: Patients have the right to an explanation concerning their diagnosis, treatment, procedures and prognosis of illness in terms that the patient can be expected to understand. When it is not medically advisable to give such information to patients, the information should be provided to appropriate family members or to another appropriate person in their absence.

CHARGES: Patients have the right to an explanation of charges related to their healthcare.

RESEARCH PROJECTS: Patients have the right to be advised if the facility proposes to engage in or perform research associated with their care or treatment. Patients have the right to refuse to participate in any research project.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT: Patients have the right to care and treatment in a safe environment. Providing quality healthcare is a complex task requiring close cooperation between patients and health facility personnel. Patients can take responsibility for their care by helping their medical team give the best possible care. (Please note that child and adolescent patients will be represented by their parents and/or guardians as required by Puerto Rico law. A joint effort between parents and/or guardians and the facility staff should enable these patients to comply with patient responsibilities.) Patient responsibilities are:

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PROVIDING INFORMATION: Patients have the responsibility to provide to the best of their knowledge, accurate and complete information about complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, advance medical directives and other matters relating to their health. Patients have the responsibility to let their healthcare providers know whether they understand the treatment and what is expected of them.

PAIN MANAGEMENT: Patients and/or their family members have the responsibility to ask the healthcare providers what to expect regarding their pain management and to participate in the discussions and decisions. Patients should ask for pain relief when the pain first begins and notify the healthcare provider if the pain is not relieved; share the concerns.

RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION: Patients have the responsibility to be considerate of the rights of other patients and of RAHC health facility personnel, and to assist in the control of noise, smoking and the number of visitors. Patients are expected to respect the property of other persons and of the facility.

COMPLIANCE WITH MEDICAL CARE: Patients have the responsibility to comply with the medical and nursing treatment plan, including follow-up care recommended by healthcare providers. This includes being on time for appointments and notifying RAHC when appointments cannot be kept.

MEDICAL RECORDS: Patients have the responsibility to ensure that medical records pertaining to them are retained in the medical facility for appropriate filing and maintenance. All medical records documenting care provided by RAHC are the property of the U.S. Government.

REPORTING OF PATIENT COMPLAINTS: Patients are encouraged to discuss their medical treatment concerns with the healthcare provider or the healthcare management team. If resolution does not occur, the patients or family members should discuss it with the Patient Advocate, RAHC Deputy Commander, NCOIC or RAHC Commander. These officers have access to all areas and will assist to resolve the situation. Patients should be assured that this action will in no way compromise nor diminish their medical care. Administrative concerns can be addressed with the area Head Nurse or the Noncommissioned Officer-in-Charge (NCOIC). Patients' recommendations, questions or suggestions should be directed to the Patient Advocacy Office, who will appropriately address those issues (787) 707-2043. After duty hours, the Administrative Officer of the Day, (787) 707-2792, will receive calls and refer them to appropriate channels.

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