



Policy

University of North Carolina Hospitals recognizes that care should be focused upon the patient's individual needs and provided in a manner that is considerate and respectful of each patient's personal dignity. In recognition of these factors, UNC Hospitals affirms the following rights and responsibilities for patients. If a patient cannot adequately assert these rights, because the patient is a minor or is not competent, the patient's guardian, next of kin, or other authorized representative may do so on the patient's behalf. Patients and their representatives may also request a copy of the UNCH policy on Patient Rights and Responsibilities, Admin 0131.

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

1. A patient or his/her representative has the right to be informed of patient rights in advance of receiving or discontinuing patient care, whenever possible.
2. A patient has the right to medical and nursing services without discrimination based upon age, race, ethnicity, color, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin or source of payment.
3. A patient has the right to have his/her family member or representative and his/her physician promptly notified of his/her admission to UNC Hospitals, unless the patient requests this not be done.
4. A patient has the right to receive visitors whom she or he designates, including but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner, another family member, or a friend. Patient visitation is only restricted when the visitor's presence infringes on others' rights, safety, or is medically or therapeutically contraindicated for the patient.
5. UNC Hospitals respects a patient's right to receive information in a manner he or she understands. An interpreter will be provided when necessary.
6. A patient has the responsibility to provide accurate and complete information about present complaints, pain, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, demographics, and matters relating to his/her health. A patient is expected to ask questions and tell caregivers if he/she does not understand his/her care or treatment.
7. A patient has the right to good quality care and high professional standards that are continually maintained and reviewed.
8. A patient has the right to respectful care given by competent personnel.
9. A patient has the right to receive medical and nursing care in a safe setting and to be free from all forms of abuse and harassment.
10. A patient has the right to be free from seclusion and restraints that are not medically necessary.
11. A patient has the right to information about pain and pain relief measures and health care providers committed to pain prevention and control.
12. A patient has the right to know what UNC Hospitals rules and regulations apply to his/her conduct as a patient.
13. A patient who presents to the Emergency Department has the right to receive at least a medical screening exam, regardless of the patient's ability to pay, and the right to have any emergency medical condition stabilized or to be transferred appropriately.
14. A patient has the right, upon request, to be given the names of all health care providers directly participating in his/her care.
15. A patient has the right to assistance in obtaining consultation with another physician at the patient's request and expense.
16. A patient has the right to expect emergency procedures to be implemented without unnecessary delay.
17. A patient who is mentally capable (and if not, the patient's guardian, next of kin, or other authorized representative) has the right to participate in development, implementation, and revision of his/her plan of care.
18. A patient, or his/her authorized representative, has the right to full information in understandable terms, concerning his/her diagnosis, treatment and prognosis, including information about alternative treatments and possible complications.
19. A patient has the right to make informed decisions concerning his/her care. A patient does not have the right to demand medically unnecessary treatment or services.
20. A patient has the right to be informed by his/her physician of his/her right to refuse any drugs, treatment or procedures, and of the medical consequences of such refusal.
21. A patient has the right to make advance directives and to have health care personnel comply with these directives, within the limits of the law.
22. A patient has the right to have UNC Hospitals document his/her wishes concerning organ donation when he or she makes such wishes known, in accordance with law and regulation.
23. A patient has the right to decide whether or not to participate in research, investigation, or clinical trials. A patient's refusal to participate in research or discontinuing participation at any time will not jeopardize his/her access to care, treatment and services unrelated to the research.
24. When medically permissible, a patient may be transferred to another facility only after he/she or his/her next of kin or other authorized representative has received complete information and an explanation concerning the needs for and alternatives to such a transfer.
25. A patient has the right to participate in the development and implementation of his/her discharge plan, which includes being informed of his/her continuing health care requirements following discharge and the means for meeting them.
26. A patient has the right to access protective and advocacy services. UNC Hospitals will provide the contact information for patient advocacy groups when requested.
27. A patient has the right to have all records pertaining to his/her medical care treated as confidential, except as otherwise provided by law or third party contractual arrangements.
28. A patient has the right to access his/her own medical information within a reasonable time. A patient's access to medical records may be restricted by the patient's attending physician for sound medical reasons, consistent with applicable law. A patient's authorized representative may have access to the information in the patient's medical records, even if the attending physician restricts the patient's access to those records.
29. A patient or his/her authorized representative has the right to be informed about unanticipated outcomes of care, treatment and services that relate to sentinel events.
30. A patient has the right to every consideration of privacy concerning his/her own medical care program.
31. A patient has the right to an environment that preserves dignity and contributes to a positive self-image, such as the provision of privacy during personal hygiene activities. A patient has a right to withhold consent for electronic monitoring or recording during an examination, except when there is a medical need for continuous observation.
32. A patient has the right to give or withhold informed consent to produce or use recordings, films, or other images of the patient for purposes other than provision of care.
33. A patient has the right to examine and receive a detailed explanation of his/her bill.
34. A patient has a right to information and counseling on the availability of known financial resources for his/her health care.
35. A patient has the responsibility to assure that the financial obligations for his/her health care are fulfilled in a reasonable period of time.
36. A patient who is a Medicare beneficiary has a right to receive a notice of non-coverage and the patient's discharge rights.
37. A patient cannot be denied the right of access to an individual or agency that is authorized to act on his/her behalf to assert or protect the rights set out in this document.
38. A patient has the right to file a grievance through UNC Hospitals' Patient Relations Department when that patient believes any of the above rights have been violated. See UNC HCS Policy ADMIN 0127, "Patient Complaints/Grievances".
39. A patient has the right to notify the North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation (NC DHSR) of a complaint by telephone at (800) 624-3004 (within N.C.) or (919) 855-4500, fax (919) 715-7724, or mail to 2711 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-2711. A patient has the right to notify the Joint Commission, a hospital accrediting organization, about complaints regarding patient safety or quality of care by telephone at (800) 944-6610, fax-Office of Quality Monitoring (630) 792-5636, mail-Office of Quality Monitoring, The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181, or email complaint@jointcommission.org.

Grievance Procedure for Violation of Patient Rights

1. The Board of Directors of the UNC Health Care System has delegated the management of the grievance process for Patient Rights and Responsibilities to the Patient Relations Department. The Patient Relations Department will report on its activity at least annually to the Board of Directors.
2. When an issue cannot be resolved promptly by staff, a patient or his/her representative may file a grievance (oral or written) with the Patient Relations Department. Grievances may be filed in person, by phone at (919) 966-5006, by mail to the **Patient Relations Department, UNC Hospitals, 101 Manning Drive, Chapel Hill NC 27514** or email at patrel@unch.unc.edu. All UNC Hospitals' physicians and staff should report a patient grievance about a violation of any patient rights to Patient Relations.
3. The Patient Relations Department will attempt to resolve a grievance within 7 business days of filing. Patient Relations will communicate a written resolution of the grievance in a language and manner the patient understands. The written response will include the decision, the name of the grievance investigator, the steps taken to investigate the grievance, and the date of completion.
4. Other matters not covered by this procedure may be referred to the Patient Relations Department, and will be handled by the Department's routine procedure, rather than pursuant to the policy.