

Your rights and responsibilities as a patient

We consider you a partner in your health care. When you're well informed, participate in treatment decisions, and communicate openly with your doctor and other healthcare professionals, you help make your care as effective as possible. We encourage respect for the personal preferences and values of each individual.

Patient rights

While you're a patient here, you have the right to...

- know what your rights and responsibilities are as a patient receiving health care.
- impartial access to medical treatment or accommodations regardless of age, race, color, ethnicity/national origin, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or source of payment. Additionally, you will not be denied necessary emergency medical care based upon your ability to pay for services.
- receive care in a safe setting that is free from all forms of abuse, neglect, or harassment.
- be treated with courtesy and respect of your dignity, personal values, beliefs, spiritual, psycho-social and cultural needs at all times and upon all occasions.
- know what patient support services are available including: 1) accessibility of religious and other spiritual services; 2) an Ethics Committee and/or Patient Relations department for resolving disputes and conflicts or for expressing grievances; and 3) necessary counseling on availability of financial resources for health care.
- information regarding your diagnosis, treatment options, alternatives, risks, and likely outcome, as well as prompt and reasonable response to any questions or requests.
- access to complementary or alternative health care that is determined to be in your best interest, if available.
- make informed decisions about the plan of care prior to and during the course of treatment, and to refuse a recommended treatment or plan of care to the extent permitted by law and Health First policy, and to be informed of the medical consequences of this action.
- disclosure of unanticipated outcomes of care, treatment, and services that relate to sentinel events.
- know the name, function and qualification of each of your caregivers, as well as others who may be involved such as students, residents or other trainees. You may request such information from your caregiver.
- expect that Health First caregivers will provide necessary health care services to the best of their ability and capability. If Health First is unable or incapable of providing necessary health care services to you, a treatment referral or transfer may be recommended, and the risks, benefits, and alternatives will be explained to you. Please know that you will not be transferred unless you give permission to be transferred and another health care facility agrees to accept you as a patient.
- expect that any pain you experience will be acted upon when you report it, that every reasonable attempt will be made to manage your pain no matter the cause or severity, and you'll receive respectful care regardless of the intervention necessary to control your pain.
- be informed of Health First policies and practices that relate to your care, treatment and responsibilities, including patient conduct.
- consent to or decline to participate in proposed research studies or human experimentation affecting care and treatment or requiring direct patient involvement, and to have those studies fully explained prior to consent. If you choose to decline to participate, you're entitled to the most effective care that Health First can otherwise provide.
- expect that the sanctity of the human body will be respected after death.
- have an Advance Directive concerning treatment, designating a surrogate medical decision maker and/or a support person to exercise your visitation rights with the expectation that Health First will honor the intent of that directive to the extent permitted by law and Health First policy.
- be free from unnecessary restraint or seclusion of any form and know that your caregivers are trained on the appropriate use of restraint and seclusion.
- full participation in designating your visitors (including but not limited to a spouse; domestic partner, including a same-sex domestic partner; another family member; or a friend) and withdrawing or denying consent to receive such visitors at any time. Please know that clinically necessary restrictions or limitations on patient visitation may be necessary to provide safe care to you or other patients, and may be imposed when: 1) there is a court or police order restraining or limiting contact with you; 2) you are undergoing care interventions; 3) infection control issues exist; and 4) visitors may interfere with your care or the care of other patients.

- have information provided in a manner tailored to meet your needs with respect to age, language, ability to understand, vision impairment, speech impairment, hearing impairment, or other cognitive impairments, or if English is not your primary language.
- every consideration of privacy and expect that all communications and records pertaining to your care are treated as confidential, including case discussion, consultation, examination, and treatment. You may request to receive a copy of Health First's Notice of Privacy Practices, which outlines your rights to request: 1) restrictions to disclosure of your medical record; 2) an accounting of disclosures; and 3) an amendment to, inspection and/or copy of your medical record.
- ask about the existence of business relationships among Health First, educational institutions, other health care providers, and payers that may influence your treatment and care. If you're eligible for Medicare, you have the right to know, upon request and prior to treatment, whether the caregiver or facility accepts the Medicare assignment rate.
- receive, upon request and prior to treatment, a reasonable estimate of charges for medical care.
- receive, upon request, a copy of an itemized bill and be given an explanation of charges.
- retain and use personal clothing or possessions unless deemed to be contraindicated.
- have a family member or representative of your choice and your own physician notified promptly of your admission.

Patient responsibilities

While you're a patient here, it's your responsibility to:

- provide accurate and complete information regarding your health to the best of your knowledge, including past illnesses, hospitalizations, prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbal medications, allergies or negative reactions experienced with medication in the past, and any other matters related to your health care status.
- participate effectively in the decision-making process and accept responsibility for requesting additional information or clarification about your health status, treatment, medications, or plan of care when you don't fully understand.
- effectively communicate to your treatment team any pain management concerns or unexpected changes in your condition, so they can be addressed in a timely manner.
- inform your caregiver(s) if you anticipate any problems in following the prescribed treatment or keeping your appointments.
- understand that you're responsible for your outcome if you choose not to follow your physician's recommendations and that there may be health-related consequences for your personal decisions and lifestyle.
- identify someone who can take charge of your care if at any time you become unable to speak for yourself. This can be a family member or friend who, in such a case, will become your health care surrogate.
- provide a copy of your Advance Directive, if you have one, to your caregiver upon every admission.
- follow instructions, policies, rules and regulations in place to support quality care for patients and a safe environment for all individuals in Health First facilities.
- support mutual consideration and respect by maintaining civil language and conduct in interactions with caregivers and other staff.
- meet your financial commitment by providing the necessary information for insurance claims, and work with Health First to make arrangements for payment when necessary.