

Patients' Bill of Rights

I. Information Disclosure

You have the right to receive accurate and easily understood information about your health plan, health care professionals, and health care facilities. If you speak another language, have a physical or mental disability, or just don't understand something, assistance will be provided so you can make informed health care decisions.

II. Choice of Providers and Plans

You have the right to a choice of health care providers that is sufficient to provide you with access to appropriate high-quality health care.

III. Access to Emergency Services

If you have severe pain, an injury, or sudden illness that convinces you that your health is in serious jeopardy, you have the right to receive screening and stabilization emergency services whenever & wherever needed, without prior authorization or financial penalty.

IV. Participation in Treatment Decisions

You have the right to know all your treatment options and to participate in decisions about your care. Parents, guardians, family members, or other individuals that you designate can represent you if you cannot make your own decisions.

V. Respect and Nondiscrimination

You have a right to considerate, respectful and nondiscriminatory care from your doctors, health plan representatives, and other health care providers.

VI. Confidentiality of Health Information

You have the right to talk in confidence with health care providers and to have your health care information protected. You also have the right to review and copy your own medical record and request that your physician amend your record if it is not accurate, relevant, or complete.

VII. Complaints and Appeals

You have the right to a fair, fast, and objective review of any complaint you have against your health plan, doctors, hospitals or other health care personnel. This includes complaints about waiting times, operating hours, the conduct of health care personnel, and the adequacy of health care facilities.

Patients have both rights and responsibilities when it comes to their health and the health care services they receive. On March 26, 1997, President Bill Clinton appointed an Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry. The Commission was co-chaired by Donna Shalala, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and Alexis Herman, Secretary of the Department of Labor. The Commission issued its final report, *Quality First: Better Health Care for All Americans*, in March 1998. The Patients' Bill of Rights is a component in this report.