

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PATIENT



While You are a Patient in this Hospital, You Have the Right to:

- Be informed of your rights in advance before you receive care. Where appropriate, we will inform your support person or legal representative such as a parent of a minor child, legal guardian, or agent for health care decisions of your rights.
- Submit a complaint or grievance to the Hospital and/or to the governmental agencies listed below under Questions and Complaints.
- Participate in the development and implementation of your care, including a discharge plan.
- Make informed decisions regarding your care. This right includes being informed of your health status, being involved in care planning and treatment, and being able to request or refuse treatment. You also have the right to create an advance directive that hospital staff will follow.
- Designate and receive visitors of your choosing. We ensure that all Visitors enjoy full and equal visitation privileges. However, Springfield Hospital may impose reasonable restrictions on Visitors where it is clinically necessary for the individual patient or other patients.
- Have a family member, support person, representative, or physician of your choice notified promptly of your admission.
- Respect for your personal privacy, dignity and comfort.
- Receive care in a safe setting.
- We will use restraints or seclusion only if they are necessary to ensure physical safety and if no less restrictive intervention is possible.
- Refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the medical consequences of refusing treatment.
- Respect for your privacy. This right includes the right to have a person of your own sex present during an exam and the right not to remain disrobed any longer than is required. You have the right to wear your own clothes and religious or other symbolic items except when they interfere with your medical care.
- Expect that all communications and records pertaining to your care shall be treated as confidential unless you give us permission or is otherwise permitted by law.
- Expect that you will have access to our resources. Your rights include, if physically possible, a transfer to another room or place if another person in that room or place is disturbing you by unreasonable actions. When medically permissible you may be transferred to another facility only after receiving complete information and explanation concerning the needs for, and alternatives to, such a transfer.
- Treat your pain promptly and professionally.
- Know the names of the people that are providing your care and what they do. This includes your right to know of the existence of any professional relationship among individuals who are treating you, as well as the relationship to any other health care or educational institutions involved in your care.
- Know if any part of your care would involve research. You can always refuse to participate in research.
- Expect reasonable continuity of care, and the right to be informed by your attending physician of continuing health requirements following discharge.
- Receive an understandable and specific hospital bill.
- Know what hospital rules and regulations apply to your conduct as a patient.
- Whenever possible, guardians or parents have the right to stay with their children 24 hours per day. Whenever possible, visitors identified by patients may stay with terminally ill patients 24 hours a day.
- Have an interpreter if a language barrier or hearing impairment presents a continuing problem to your understanding of the care and treatment being provided.
- Receive professional assessment of pain and professional pain management.
- Be informed in writing of the availability of hospice services and the eligibility criteria for those services.
- Know the number of nursing staff working on your unit and the number of patients.

Vermont Bill of Rights for Hospital Inpatients

Vermont law includes specific rights for patients who are admitted as inpatients. Your rights as an inpatient include the right to:

- Receive considerate and respectful care at all times and under all circumstances with recognition of your personal dignity.
- Have an attending physician who is responsible for coordinating your care. Your right includes knowing your attending physician's name.
- Obtain, from the physician coordinating your care, complete and current information concerning diagnosis, treatment, and any known prognosis in terms you and/or your support person can reasonably understand.
- Receive information from your physician that is necessary to give informed consent prior to the start of any procedure or treatment, or both, unless it is an emergency. You also have a right to know if any medically significant alternatives for care or treatment exist.

Vermont Patient's Bill of Rights for Palliative Care & Pain Management

Vermont law includes specific rights for patients with terminal illness, pain and chronic conditions to make informed decisions.

Your rights include the right to:

- Be informed of all evidence-based options for care and treatment, including palliative care, in order to make a fully informed choice.
- Be informed of all available options related to terminal care if you have a terminal illness; and to be able to request any, all, or none of these options; and to expect and receive supportive care for the specific option or options available.
- Request or reject the use of any or all treatments in order to relieve your pain.
- Receive competent and compassionate medical assistance in managing your physical and emotional symptoms if you have a chronic condition.
- Pediatric patient suffering from a serious life-limiting illness or condition has the right to receive palliative care while seeking and undergoing potentially curative treatment.

As a Patient in this Hospital, You Have the Responsibility to:

- Give us the information we need to give you the care you need.
- Keep your appointments or phone us if you cannot.
- Be considerate of other patients by respecting their privacy and limiting your visitors.
- Observe safety regulations including tobacco-free environment and weapons policy.
- Supply accurate information to appropriate personnel and report unexpected changes in your condition to your doctor.
- Ask questions if instructions are unclear.
- Participate in your treatment plan as recommended by your health care team.
- Assure that the financial obligations of your health care are fulfilled as promptly as possible.

If you have any questions about your rights and responsibilities, ask your physicians, nurse, social worker, case manager, or other hospital representative.

Questions and Complaints

- All formal patient complaints must be submitted in writing to Customer Relations.
- Patient Complaint/Grievance forms are available at www.springfieldmed.org.
- Persons who express a desire to file a formal complaint verbally, either in person or via a telephone call (802-885-7299) will be instructed to complete and submit a written Patient Complaint/Grievance Form to Customer Relations.

- The Department Manager is responsible for resolving the formal written complaint or, if necessary, to refer it to the Quality Improvement Office within 30 days for investigation, review, and resolution.
- Department Managers are responsible for following-up on all patient complaints and for responses to patients, the Division Chief, or the Quality Improvement Office, as appropriate.
- If the patient is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, he/she may appeal this decision in writing directly to the Quality Improvement Office.
- Mail all submissions to Customer Relations #862, Springfield Medical Care Systems, 25 Ridgewood Rd., Springfield, VT 05156.

You may also make a complaint about SMCS to Vermont state agencies. You can contact them whether or not you have complained to SMCS first.

If you have a complaint about SMCS: The Division of Licensing and Protection of the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living investigates hospital complaints under federal law, and also works with the Vermont Department of Health to investigate hospital complaints for the state.

To file a complaint with the Division of Licensing and Protection, call 800-564-1612 (toll-free in Vermont) or 802-871-3313 or write to them at: 103 South Main Street, Ladd Hall, Waterbury, VT 05611-2306.

If you prefer to contact the Board of Health or Health Department directly: Board of Health and Vermont Department of Health, P.O. Box 70, Burlington, VT 05402-0070, Phone: 802-863-7200 Toll-free (in Vermont): 800-464-4343.

If you have a complaint about a Physician: The Vermont Board of Medical Practice investigates complaints against physicians (MD, DO), physicians assistants (PA), podiatrists and anesthesiologist assistants.

To file a complaint with the Board of Medical Practice: Phone: 800-745-7371 (toll-free in Vermont) or 802-657-4220 Download forms: http://healthvermont.gov/hc/med_board/complaint.aspx Mailing address: Vermont Board of Medical Practice, Vermont Department of Health, P.O. Box 70, Burlington, VT 05402-0070. Complaints About Licensed Health Care Professionals, Other Than Physicians: Secretary of State's Office, Office of Professional Regulation, National Life Building – North Floor 2, Montpelier, VT 05620 888.287.5006