

Rights and Responsibilities Patients, Patient Representatives, and Families



Boston Children's Hospital is committed to respecting and protecting the rights of our patients, their parents/guardians, families, and visitors. We will partner with you to provide high-quality, patient- and family-centered care. Boston Children's makes every effort to respect your culture, race, religion, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, age, disability, and military or veteran status.

This notice discusses your rights and responsibilities while receiving care. Please ask a member of your care team for a copy. If you feel your/your child's rights have not been respected, please talk to a member of your/your child's care team.

You Have the Right to:

Care and Treatment

- Receive safe and respectful care.
- Care that is free from discrimination, abuse, or neglect.
- Have your religious and spiritual needs supported.
- Be an active, informed member of the care team.
- Receive emergency treatment, whether or not you can pay.
- Obtain care that manages your/your child's pain.
- Make an informed and voluntary decision about the recommended procedure, intervention, or treatment — including anticipated benefits, potential risks, and available alternatives — except in an emergency.
- Choose an available health care provider for your care and treatment, in accordance with our Code of Conduct, except in an emergency.
- Consult another specialist (seek a second opinion) at your own expense.
- Care that supports special needs to the best of our ability; this may include a wheelchair-accessible environment and, as needed, an interpreter.
- Transfer safely to another facility that agrees to treat you.
- Be given or notified of resources that can help after discharge (when you go home). Be told what you need to know and do when you/your child goes home.
- Choose not to receive care unless the situation presents risk to your/your child's health or well-being, at which point the hospital may act and engage the Department of Children and Families according to hospital policies and laws.
- The least restrictive restraint, if needed, for the shortest length of time that will protect you, visitors, and staff from harm.

Communication

- Be fully informed about your/your child's diagnosis, treatment options, and risks in terms you can understand so you can be involved in all aspects of your care and make informed choices. In emergencies, this may occur after treatment.
- Receive a clear explanation of the results of any treatment or procedure.
- Receive timely, accurate, complete responses to your questions or concerns in a language and words you understand.
- Know the name and specialty of the members of your/your child's clinical team.
- Have us inform a family member or another provider of the care and treatment provided to you/your child by Boston Children's.
- Ask for information about the relationship of the hospital or health care providers to any other health care facility or educational institution and how it relates to your/your child's care.
- Choose someone to make medical decisions if you/your child cannot. The hospital will provide information on health care decision-making like a health care proxy, court-appointed guardian, designated caregiver, and other advocacy services and protective services.
- Get written information about emergency contraception, counseling, and other support, including be given emergency contraception if you/your child ask for it.
- Have your/your child's choices about your/your child's care (including organ donation and end-of-life decisions) honored as allowed by law and/or the hospital's ability.
- Get information on medically appropriate alternative treatments if you/your child have any form of breast cancer.
- Be informed of hospital rules that patients, families and visitors are expected to follow.
- Ask questions, raise concerns, or file a formal complaint or grievance related to care and services received as described below in the Feedback section.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Receive care with reasonable privacy to the best of our ability.
- Keep your/your child's medical information and communications confidential.
- Receive a copy of Boston Children's privacy practices on how we use or share health information.
- Choose not to be listed in our patient directory to keep your hospital stay private.
- Choose who may or may not visit. Boston Children's may apply visitor limitations for reasons such as infection risk, limited space, state of emergency, emergency situation, or the safety of our patients, families, visitors and/or staff.

- Decide not to take part in research studies, be a research subject, or obtain educational information that is not therapeutic.
- Refuse to be examined, observed, or treated by students, in accordance with our Code of Conduct, without jeopardizing access to care.
- Give Boston Children's permission before we take pictures or video of you/your family.
- Refuse requests for participation in fundraising or marketing activities.

Medical Records and Financial Assistance

- Access your/your child's medical records or request copy.
- Request a correction to your/your child's medical records if you believe the information is not right.
- Obtain a copy of your bill, discuss the charges, and explanation of costs for services provided.
- Contact Boston Children's Patient Finance Department at 617-355-3397 if you need help with paying your bill or have other billing questions.

Your/Your Family's Responsibilities:

Care and Treatment

- Share complete and current information about the patient's health including medical history, symptoms, treatments, medicines taken, and other information that could affect a treatment plan including any advance care planning.
- Understand that patient medical information will be shared with members of the clinical team, other providers for care coordination, insurance carriers, or people you allow to review your records.
- Tell us how you want to take part in your/your child's care and ask questions if you do not understand the care plan, instructions, or your/your child's responsibilities.
- Tell us right away if there are changes in your/your child's condition.
- Work together with the care team on the plan of care.
- Do not purposefully disrupt or obstruct any patient's care or experience.
- Go to scheduled appointments and let us know in advance if you cannot make it to an appointment.
- Follow Boston Children's rules for specific patient care areas.
- Be responsible for your/your child's belongings when at any Boston Children's locations. Please leave anything that you do not need at home.

Consideration of Others

- Do not talk about or repeat information about other patients or families.
- Speak in volumes and tones that support a restful and healing environment for all patients.
- Follow quiet hour rules and consider noise levels when you have visitors.
- Respect the property of Boston Children's and that of other patients, families, and visitors.
- Act appropriately and be respectful when trying to settle disagreements.

Code of Conduct

- Follow our **Patient, Family, and Visitor Code of Conduct** to keep yourself and others safe.
- Respect the rights of other patients, families, and hospital staff. For example: Be considerate with noise levels when talking or using music/video devices. Do not talk about or repeat information about other patients or families.
- Act and speak in a way that shows mutual consideration and respect for the care team, other patients and families, or visitors. Actions and language that are intimidating, abusive, or disrespectful will not be tolerated and may affect your access to the hospital.
- Support efforts to improve health equity, diversity, and inclusivity of our staff, patients, and families. Actions that are inappropriate, disrespectful, or discriminatory are not tolerated and may result in limiting access to services, transferring to another facility, or discharge.
- Understand that Boston Children's is a smoke-free campus. If you smoke or vape, you'll need to leave the hospital grounds.

If you violate our Code of Conduct or pose any other safety concerns, we may:

- Call security and/or law enforcement.
- Ask you to leave the appointment, unit, or facility or end a call.
- Establish a behavioral expectations agreement that may include limited visitation, restricted access to services, transfer to another facility, or medically appropriate discharge.

Formal Grievance (complaint or concern)

Boston Children's is committed to providing high-quality care for our patients. We want to hear from you if you are not satisfied with the care received.

You can share a complaint or file a formal grievance in the following manner:

- Talk to the department manager or a member of your/your child's clinical team.
- Contact the Boston Children's Patient Relations staff, either verbally or in writing.
- Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.: 617-355-7673
- After 4:30 p.m./weekends/holidays: Page the nursing administrator on call at 617-355-6369.
- Mailing address: Boston Children's Hospital Patient Relations, Mailstop 3238, 300 Longwood Ave., Boston, MA 02115
- Patient Relations staff will contact you upon receipt and will also provide a written response to your concern, which will include the name of the hospital contact person, internal process for reviewing the complaint, the results of our review, and date actions were completed.

Privacy and Confidentiality Concerns

For questions or concerns regarding privacy of patient information, contact the Boston Children's Privacy Officer:

- email: privacy@childrens.harvard.edu
- phone: 617-919-4309

Compliments or Feedback

Your feedback is very important to us. We hope you will tell us when we do a good job and when you have a concern or are not satisfied with your care.

These are the ways you can reach us:

- Talk to a department manager or a member of your/your child's clinical team.
- Provide feedback through a survey that you may receive in the mail or by text or email asking a few questions about your experience at Boston Children's.

Patient Safety Regulatory Agencies

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Patients, consumers, or their representatives may send a Patient Complaint Form plus any necessary HIPAA forms (available at: mass.gov/how-to/file-a-complaint-regarding-a-hospital) to:

- Division of Health Care Facility Licensure and Certification
Complaint Intake Unit
67 Forest St., Marlborough, MA 01752
- 24-hour consumer complaint line:
800-462-5540

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

Complete and mail Department of Mental Health (DMH) Complaint Form (available at: mass.gov/service-details/complaint-form) to:

- Department of Mental Health
Central Office of Investigations
25 Staniford St., Boston, MA 02114
- DMH Information and Resource line:
800-221-0053

The Joint Commission

Online:

- jointcommission.org, click "Contact Us" and then select "Patient Safety Complaint."

By mail:

- The Office of Quality and Patient Safety
The Joint Commission
One Renaissance Blvd.
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Visit the CMS website for contact information:

- cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/ContactCMS/index.html

Call:

- 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227)

The Office for Civil Rights

Complete an online form:

- ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf

Or mail a written complaint to:

- Centralized Case Management Operations
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Learn more on our Rights and Responsibilities webpage

childrenshospital.org/legal/patient-and-family-rights

