



BETTERSAFE

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

Patient Safety Awareness Week (March 7-13, 2021)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Patient Safety Awareness Week was launched in 2002 by the National Patient Safety Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) to encourage everyone to learn more about healthcare safety.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), some studies suggest that as many as 400,000 deaths occur in the US each year as a result of errors or preventable harm. Not all cases result in death yet there are noted long-term impacts on the patient's physical and emotional health, financial wellbeing and/or family relationships.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever you start medical care or switch medical care providers, you have certain rights guaranteed under federal law. Many states have additional protection laws in place, so check your state's healthcare laws to get specific details on their patient bill of rights.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FEDERAL PATIENT RIGHT YOU HAVE IS INFORMED CONSENT

Your healthcare provider must give you all of the information you need to make an informed decision on your care. If you need additional assistance, many hospitals can provide you with a patient advocate. Patient advocates are often associated with long term



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

care. If the hospital does not have a patient advocate on staff, your state's department of health may also be able to help.

HIPAA IS MORE THAN JUST A FORM THEY HAVE YOU FILL OUT AT ANY DOCTOR, DENTIST OR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OFFICE. IT IS THERE FOR YOUR PROTECTION

Per the Center of Disease Control (CDC), the "Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that required the creation of national standards to protect sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge."

Rights you have under HIPAA include, but are not limited to:

- » Receive a notice of the healthcare providers privacy practices and to ask questions or file a complaint about those practices.
- » To access and request a copy of your medical records.
- » To request an amendment to your medical records.
- » To request a disclosure account: Who if anyone your healthcare provider has shared your information with.
- » These rights apply to electronic and paper records. You can ask for a specific format you want to receive them in.
- » You can still access your records even if your physician or healthcare provider is no longer practicing. You can get this information from the physician's partners, health information manager or privacy officer, a local medical society, your state's medical association or department of health.

YOU CAN ASK FOR A SECOND OPINION

Depending on the diagnosis, it can seem overwhelming. It is well within your patient rights to ask for a second opinion either at the healthcare provider location or outside of it. The original healthcare provider should facilitate supplying any information or records to the secondary provider or to you directly.

IF YOU, A FRIEND, OR A LOVED ONE HAS A MENTAL ILLNESS, YOU HAVE RIGHTS AND CANNOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

Did you know that half of all Americans will experience a diagnosable mental health condition in their lifetime? Being diagnosed with a mental illness does not revoke your patient rights. You have the right to ask your healthcare provider about any treatment that is being prescribed and seek a second opinion.

