

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

Category:

Clinical rules and regulations

Purpose:

To outline the rights that all patients of BHC have to quality, fair services and to state the responsibilities that all patients must follow reasonable regulations set in place by the health center for maintaining operational excellence in the service of its patients.

Policy:

Patient Rights

Civil Rights

1. Patients have the right to considerate and respectful treatment in an environment free from harm.
2. Patients seeking services shall not be denied, suspended or terminated from services or have services reduced for exercising any of their rights.

Discrimination

1. Patients have the right to receive services regardless of age, sex, race, creed, color, religion, ethnic origin, ancestry, marital status, physical or mental disability, gender preference, veteran status or criminal record.
2. Patients may receive services without regard to one's ability to pay; if the patient is unable to pay the full fee for services, a sliding fee scale is available. The patient may examine and receive an explanation of their bill of services.
3. No recipient of services is presumed legally incompetent except as determined by a court.
4. Patients have the right to present any complaint or grievance on matters pertaining to services received, or any perceived or actual violation of rights.

Treatment

1. A recipient of services shall be provided with adequate and humane care and in the least restrictive environment, pursuant to an individualized service plan. When appropriate, a recipient's nearest kin or guardian shall be involved in the treatment/service plan.
2. Patients have the right to know of the variety of services that may be available and to participate in the planning of treatment.
3. Patients may refuse treatment at any time, and patients have the right to be informed of the consequences resulting from the refusal of treatment.
4. Seclusion will not be used as a means of intervention for any recipient services.

Communication with Persons of Limited English Proficiency

This policy serves to make certain that methods and procedures are in place to ensure effective communication with persons of limited English-proficiency so that they will be afforded equal access to the services provided by the clinic.

The clinic shall provide for communication with limited English-proficient persons, including current and prospective patients, family, interested persons, et al, to ensure them an equal opportunity to benefit from services. The procedures outlined below will ensure that information about services, benefits, consent forms, waivers of rights, financial obligations, etc., are communicated to limited English-proficient persons in a language which they understand. Also, they will provide for an effective exchange of information between staff/employees and patients and/or families during normal clinic hours of operation while services are being provided.

- If a patient requires the services of language interpretation, arrangements have been made with an outside interpretation service by the name of Certified Languages International (CLI). They will provide interpreting services by phone and can be used throughout the clinic and offices wherever there is a phone.

Note: Family members or friends of the limited English-proficient person may not be used as the translator unless specifically requested by that individual. Other patients may not be used to translate. These restrictions are to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication.

Communicating Information to Persons with Sensory Impairments:

- The clinic will take such steps as are necessary to ensure that qualified persons with disabilities, including those with impaired sensory or speaking skills, receive effective notice concerning benefits or services, and written material concerning waivers or rights or consent to treatment. All aids needed to provide this notice, for example, sign-language interpreters, readers, etc. are provided without cost to the person being served.

For Person with Hearing Impairments:

1. Qualified sign-language interpreter: To obtain a qualified sign-language interpreter to communicate, both verbal and written information, for persons who are hearing-impaired and who use sign-language as their primary means of communication contact the Vice President of BHC.
2. Written materials: All program information will be provided to hearing-impaired persons in writing. Printed materials and writing materials are available.

For Persons with Visual Impairments

1. Reader: Staff will communicate the content of written materials concerning benefits, services, waivers of rights, and consent-to-treatment forms by reading them out loud to visually impaired persons.

For Persons with Manual Impairments

1. Personal assistance: Staff will be available to assist individuals as may be required.
2. Special equipment: Special equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, walkers, canes, etc.) will be available to assist individuals as may be required.

The basic rights of human beings for independence of expression, decision, and action and concern for personal dignity and human relationships are always of great importance. During sickness, however, their presence or absence become vital, deciding factors in survival and recovery. Thus, it becomes a prime responsibility for the clinic to assure that these rights are preserved for its patients.

In providing care/services, the clinic has the right to expect behavior on the part of the patients, their relatives and friends, which, considering the nature of the illness, is reasonable and responsible.

This statement does not presume to be all-inclusive. It is intended to convey the clinic's concern about the relationship between the medical professionals and patients, or their parent or legally designated representatives; and to emphasize the need for the observance of the rights and responsibilities of patients.

Language Competency

- BHC will utilize an external language service line for additional translation as needed.

Patient and Family Education-

- All patients of Bridgeway Health Clinics have the right to receive accurate, comprehensible, and instructional information concerning their health conditions, treatment options for those conditions, and impacts of those conditions upon their lives and the lives of their family members. As such, BHC seeks to ensure that all patients/families are provided with quality health education materials and interactions that will contribute to the quality of their lives.
- The Health Care Team shall ensure that patients and families are instructed on diagnosis, services, treatment, follow-up care and information contributing to their well-being.
- The Health Care Team will document each step of the teaching/learning process in the patient's medical records.
- The Health Care Team will promptly inform and educate the patient of the plan for follow-up care, treatment or services, as well as how to obtain these services.
- For more information, please refer to the Patient and Family Education Policy.

Transportation of Patients for Hospital Admissions

- Bridgeway Health Clinics will have in place procedures for determining whether a patient is in need of hospitalization, and, for those in need, transporting patients to the hospital in a safe and efficient manner:
- Evaluation/assessment is done by a provider to determine if the patient's condition warrants hospitalization.
- The provider, clinic nurse or registration staff then calls the ambulance to transport the patient to the hospital unless the patient is stable enough to go by private auto.
- The hospital is then notified and a referral letter or copy of notes is given to the patient to give to the hospital to assist in treatment of the patient's condition.

Psychiatric Emergencies

- If a patient has psychiatric emergency warranting Baker Act assessment, Bridgeway Center, Inc. will be contacted to request a face-to-face evaluation by a licensed mental health practitioner or make contact with their Mobile Response Team.

Refusal of Treatment

- In addition to receiving educational information about treatment options, all patients of BHC have the right to refuse treatment administered at the clinic. If the medical provider has discussed the recommended treatment with the patient and the patient clearly expresses a refusal to receive the discussed treatment, the provider must document the refusal by obtaining appropriate signatures from the patient and witnesses and document the event in the patient's medical record.

For more information, please refer to the Consent for Treatment Policy.

Confidentiality

1. Patients will receive confidential treatment; all clinical records and client information are protected by law, regulations and center policies. For the purposes of funding, certification, licensure, audit, research or other legitimate purpose, patient clinical records may be used by the person conducting the review to the extent that is necessary to accomplish the purpose of the review.
2. Patient information released to or requested from other sources requires the patient's written consent. Patient records can be subpoenaed by court order and do not require the patient's signature for release of information.
3. Patients have the right to review and obtain a copy of their clinical record in accordance with BHC's policy.

Patient Responsibilities

Patients are required to:

1. Give full information, to the best of their knowledge, about their condition, including symptoms, medications, previous health, etc.
2. Ask questions if they do not clearly understand information or instructions about their care and treatment.
3. Follow the treatment plan coordinated by their provider.
4. Be responsible for their own actions if they refuse treatment or refuse to follow their treatment instructions and directions.
5. Ensure that payment for their care is made promptly and in full. This means understanding your insurance coverage and its limits and any added responsibilities they may have.
6. Follow BHC rules and regulations.
7. Be considerate of and respectful to their caregivers, other patients and visitors to the health center.
8. Not possess or use alcoholic beverages or "recreational" drugs in the health centers.
9. Not possess firearms or other weapons in or around the health centers' grounds.

BHC Responsibility

1. In the case of suspected child abuse or neglect, BHC is required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act to report any suspected incidents of neglect or abuse. BHC also has the ethical obligation to report suspected maltreatment of senior citizens or adults. (See Clinical Policy on Reporting for procedural details).
2. If at any time patients present a clear and present danger to themselves or to others, BHC's staff may release information that is required to protect them or others.
3. BHC may restrict or terminate delivery of services to patients who have been evaluated and determined as posing a serious physical threat to staff or others.

Comments and Concerns

Commitment to continuously improving care

BHC wishes to hear from its patients regarding satisfaction with care and services, as well as suggestions for improvement. BHC conducts random patient surveys on an ongoing basis. Patients that are asked to participate during a visit are also asked to consider how helpful the completion of the survey is to BHC. Patients' comments will help the health center improve the way it provides care. BHC also welcomes and encourages patients' comments at any time. All information is used to support efforts to continually improve the quality of patient care and safety.

Patient Comments and Complaints

BHC will actively solicit patient comments and complaints and will attempt to respond in the appropriate way so as to reduce risks and to improve quality of patient care.

- Patients will be asked to complete the Patient Grievance/ Complaint Form or call the BCI Solutions hotline. For more information, refer to the Compliant / Grievance Policy.
- The form should be submitted to the BCI SRQ department.
- All BHC employees should try to resolve the issue while the patient is present.
- If no solution is available during the patient's visit, the Vice President of BHC will coordinate complaint resolution.
- A report of customer comments and complaints should be forwarded to the Quality / Planning Committee of the Board of Directors.

Approved by Board of Directors:



Date: 3/20/2020

Arthur H. Lester, MD
Board of Directors Chair