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<b>CATEGORY:</b> Administrative	<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>
<b>Approval Signature:</b>  _____	<b>Title of Signer:</b>  _____
	Approval Date:  Review Date:

**POLICY**

All Community Health Centers of America staff members and contractors should serve patients in accordance with the following outline of basic patient rights.

All patients should comply with their responsibilities to assure their continued care.

**PURPOSE**

To outline patient rights and responsibilities.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Community Health Centers of America strives to protect the rights of patients as set forth below.

In the case of patients with a legally authorized representative, the patient rights and responsibilities outlined below can be exercised on the patient’s behalf by the legally authorized representative.

**A. PATIENT RIGHTS**

1. Access to Care

- a. To access medical care regardless of race, creed, sex, gender identity, disability, marital status, national origin, or source of payment.
- b. To receive a medical screening examination and stabilizing care, regardless of ability to pay.

2. Respect and Dignity

- a. The patient can expect to receive considerate care that safeguards his/her personal dignity and respects his/her cultural, psychosocial, and spiritual values.
- b. The patient has the right to have access to pastoral care upon request.

3. Privacy and Confidentiality

The patient can expect, within the law, personal and informational privacy, including the right to:

- a. Refuse to talk with or visit with anyone not officially connected Community Health Centers of America, including visitors, or persons officially connected with the health center but not directly involved in his/her care or related procedures.
- b. Wear appropriate personal clothing and religious or other symbolic items, as long as such items do not interfere with diagnostic procedures or treatment.
- c. Be interviewed and examined in appropriate surroundings and to have a person of

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- one's own sex present during certain parts of a physical examination, treatment, or procedure performed by a health professional of the opposite sex.
- d. Not remain disrobed any longer than is required for accomplishing the medical purpose for which the patient was asked to disrobe.
  - e. Expect that any discussion or consultation involving his/her case will be conducted discreetly and that individuals not directly involved in his/her care or who do not have a "need to know" will not be present without his/her permission.
  - f. Have his/her medical record read only by individuals directly involved in his/her treatment or who have a "need to know" and by other individuals only on his/her authorization or that of his/her authorized representative.
  - g. Expect all communications and other records pertaining to his/her care, including the source of payment for treatment, to be treated as confidential.
  - h. Have care providers announce themselves prior to entering the exam room.
  - i. Be placed in protective privacy when considered necessary for personal health or safety.
4. Personal Safety  
The patient should expect reasonable safety with Community Health Centers of America's practices and environment.
5. Identity of Care Providers  
The patient should expect to know the identity and professional status of individuals providing service to him/her and to know which physician (or other practitioner) is primarily responsible for his/her care. This includes the patient's right to know of the existence of any professional relationship among individuals who are treating him/her, as well as the relationship to any other health care or educational institutions involved in his care.
6. Information  
The patient should be able to obtain from the practitioner responsible for coordinating his/her care, complete, to the degree known, and current information concerning his/her diagnosis, treatment, and any known prognosis. This information should be communicated in terms the patient can understand. When staff are concerned that disclosing treatment information will cause the patient or someone else harm, staff should seek assistance of a supervisor. When possible, the patient and/or his/her family should be provided with appropriate education and training to expand their knowledge of the patient's illness and treatment needs and to attempt to learn skills and behaviors that promote recovery and improve function.
7. Communication  
a. The patient has the right to expect that Community Health Centers of America will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and that reasonable accommodations are made. A disabled individual has the right to reasonable access

to the facility and the ability to maneuver in public and patient care areas of the office.

- b. The patient has the right to communicate either verbally or in writing with staff. When the patient does not speak or understand the community's predominant language, he/she has the right to reasonable access to an interpreter.
- c. The visually or hearing-impaired patient has the right to access auxiliary aids and services.

8. Involvement in Care/Informed Consent/Research

- a. The patient and his/her family, as appropriate, can expect to participate in decisions involving his/her health care, including the resolution of dilemmas about care decisions. Such decisions should be based on clear, concise explanations of his/her physical condition and all proposed technical procedures, including any risks such as death, disability or side effects, problems related to recuperation, and the probability of success and benefits. The patient should not be subjected to any procedure without his/her voluntary, competent, and informed consent, or that of his/her legally authorized representative. Where medically significant alternatives for care or treatment exist, the physician should so inform the patient.
- b. Any patient asked to participate in a research project or receive an experimental procedure can expect to receive a full explanation of the procedures to be followed, and a description of the expected benefits, potential discomforts and risks, and alternative services that might also prove advantageous to them. The patient shall be informed of his/her right to refuse to participate in such activities without compromising his/her access to services.
- c. The patient has the right to appropriate assessment and management of pain.
- d. The patient has the right to be protected from all forms of abuse or harassment. The patient has the right to access protective services, including counseling or guardianship, and to reach the maximum level of independence.

9. Reporting Complaints or Grievances

- a. See Patient Grievance Policy

10. Consultation

The patient, at his/her own request and expense, has the right to consult with a specialist.

11. Refusal of Treatment

- a. The patient may refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law. When refusal of treatment by the patient or his/her legally authorized representative prevents providing care in accordance with professional standards, the Community Health Centers of America relationship with the patient may be terminated upon reasonable notice.
- b. Regardless of any decision made by the patient regarding extent of treatment, the patient can expect to receive all appropriate care necessary to prevent suffering.

12. Charges

The patient may request and receive a reasonable explanation of the total bill for services rendered by the Community Health Centers of America regardless of the source of payment for care. The patient should expect timely notice prior to termination of his/her eligibility for reimbursement by any third-party payor for the cost of his/her care.

13. Third Party Involvement/Medicare/Insurance/UR

Third party entities, usually the payor of the patient's bill, may request access to patient medical record information and billing information. Community Health Centers of America will only release such information after it has reasonably assured itself that the patient has consented to the release of such information through either a signed release or the agreement the patient has with such third party.

**B. PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Provision of Information

A patient should provide, to the best of his/her knowledge, accurate and complete information about present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other matters relating to his/her health. He/she should report unexpected changes in his/her condition to the responsible practitioner. A patient should make it known whether he/she clearly comprehends the recommended course of care and treatment and what is expected of him/her. The patient should provide any advance directive and contribute to his/her treatment plan.

2. Compliance with Instructions

A patient should be responsible for following his/her treatment plan. Compliance includes following the instructions of nurses and other health personnel as they carry out the plan of care and implement the responsible practitioner's orders and as they enforce the applicable rules and regulations. The patient should keep appointments and notify the responsible practitioner when he/she is unable to do so for any reason.

3. Refusal of Treatment

The patient is responsible for his/her actions if he/she refuses treatment or does not follow his/her practitioner's instructions.

4. Charges

The patient is responsible for assuring that the financial obligations of his/her health care be fulfilled as promptly as possible.

5. Rules and Regulations and Patient Responsibilities

The patient should follow rules and regulations affecting patient care, conduct and safety and comply with patient responsibilities.

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6. Respect and Consideration

The patient should be considerate of the rights of other patients and Community Health Centers of America personnel. The patient should respect the property of others that of Community Health Centers of America.