

When you are a patient, you are an important member of your health care team with rights and responsibilities. Please read the information in this brochure carefully, so you can help your team provide you with the best care possible.

As a Patient You Have the Right:

- To receive the most appropriate medical treatment available, regardless of your sex, age, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or ability to pay.
- To get the information you need to understand your medical condition and prognosis.
- To be involved in plans and decisions about your medical treatment.
- To receive considerate, respectful care free of mistreatment or abuse.
- To expect reasonable personal privacy and safety.
- To know the identity and professional status of the people caring for you.
- To expect that information and records about you, and the care provided to you, will be treated confidentially. Only people who are directly providing or overseeing your care, and those monitoring or researching the quality or effectiveness of your care can see your records. Anyone else must have written permission.
- To decide whether anyone not directly involved with your care should be present when care is being provided to you.
- To have, at your request, a person of your own sex present during specific parts of a physical examination, treatment, or procedure performed by a health care professional of the opposite sex.
- To not be undressed longer than is necessary for a medical procedure.
- To wear appropriate personal clothing and religious or other symbolic items, provided they do not interfere with your care or treatments.
- To communicate with people outside of the hospital.
- To have an interpreter if a language barrier exists or if a hearing impairment makes it difficult for you to understand your care.
- To expect professional pain assessment and management.
- To be informed about the risks, benefits, alternatives to care and treatment and unintended outcomes of care, and to give informed consent prior to the start of any procedure or treatment.
- To prepare Advance Directives and to have your instructions followed.
- To consult with a specialist at your own request and expense.
- To refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law, including declining or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment or resuscitation measures, and to be informed of the medical consequences.
- To have a parent, guardian, reciprocal beneficiary, immediate family member or agent stay with you 24 hours a day if you are a child or are terminally ill.
- To be free from restraints and/or seclusion in any form used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience or retaliation by staff.

- To participate in, or refuse to participate in, research projects.
- To know the maximum patient census and the number of required nurses, licensed practical nurses and licensed nurses' aides who provide clinical care on each shift on the unit where you are receiving care.
- To receive a complete explanation of a need for transfer to another facility and of the alternatives to such a transfer.
- To receive information ahead of time about any continuing health care needs after your discharge.
- To be given information about the availability of hospice services and eligibility criteria for those services.
- To read your medical record and to request an addendum.
- To request an explanation of the charges for hospital services.
- To receive information about financial assistance.
- To have immediate family members, a reciprocal beneficiary, or guardian receive this information on your behalf if you consent, or if you are incompetent or unable to understand.

As a Patient You Have the Responsibility:

- To provide full information about your illness to the best of your ability, including past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and changes in your condition so that we can provide the right care for you.
- To provide us with complete personal information, including family contacts and current insurance coverage.
- To provide a copy of your Advance Directives document if available.
- To help your doctor and nurse assess your pain.
- To educate yourself about your diagnosis, your medical tests and medications.
- To prevent health care errors by paying attention to the care you receive, and reporting concerns.
- To follow the treatment plan recommended by your physician or to understand and accept the consequences of not doing so.
- To ask questions when you don't understand your care, treatment or what you are expected to do.
- To recognize the effect your lifestyle may have on your personal health.
- To be aware of what your health care insurance does and does not cover; services not covered may be provided at your expense.
- To keep scheduled outpatient appointments, or to call as soon as possible to cancel.
- To ensure that the financial obligations of your health care are fulfilled as promptly as possible.
- To be considerate of other patients by respecting their privacy and property, and by limiting visitors.
- To observe safety regulations – including compliance with the no-smoking policy.

Questions, Suggestions, or Concerns

If during your stay at Porter, you have a question, suggestion, or concern of any kind, please feel free to discuss it with your attending Physician, Nurse, or other hospital staff involved with your care. The hospital staff welcomes your thoughts, suggestions, or concerns regarding your care, the services, and accommodations.

Your care Providers will work diligently to resolve any concerns that may arise during the course of your care. In the event that you wish to speak with someone other than your care Providers, you may also contact Customer Service directly:

Customer Service

115 Porter Drive

Middlebury, Vermont 05753

802-388-5699

Email: patientadvocacy@portermedical.org

If you feel your concerns have not been adequately addressed, and believe it is necessary to discuss them with someone outside the hospital, you may contact:

Vermont Department of Health, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 657-4220 or toll free in Vermont (800) 745-7371

The Vermont Board of Medical Practice, Vermont Department of Health, P.O. Box 70,
Burlington, Vermont, 05402-0070
(802) 657-4220 or toll free in Vermont (800) 745-7371

Division of Licensing and Protection, Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent
Living, HC 2 South, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2306
(802) 871-3317 or toll free in Vermont (800) 564-1612

If you are unable to pay your hospital bill, you may be eligible for financial assistance. Information regarding eligibility can be obtained from the Patient Financial Services department at 802-388-5673 or 802-388-4745.