

*Patient Rights & Autonomy*

By

September 9, 2004

## **Outline**

### A) Introduction

The American Hospital Association in 1973 was the pioneer in coming up with the Patient's Bill of Rights, which was subsequently revised in October 1992(Annas, 1989).

## **Thesis Statement**

The scope of this research paper is to explain Patient Rights & Autonomy.

## **An Overview on Patients Bill of Rights**

The Patients' Bill of Rights and Responsibilities has three primary objectives: to strengthen consumer confidence that the health care system is fair and responsive to consumer demands; to reaffirm the significance of a strong relationship between patients and their health care providers; and to reaffirm the critical role consumers play in safeguarding their own health (Annas, 1989).

### **Correlative obligations of Patients**

The collaborative nature of health care warrants that patient and/or their families and surrogates take part in their care. The effectiveness of care and patient satisfaction with the course of treatment depends, in part, on the patient's fulfilling certain obligations:

1. Patients are responsible for providing data about past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other health-related issues (Annas, 1989).
2. Patients must take responsibility for calling for supplemental details or clarification about their health status or treatment when they do not fully apprehend the current data or instructions (Annas, 1989).
3. The patient and/or parent/guardian are responsible for following their treatment plan and keeping appointments or apprising the responsible practitioner when unable to do so (Annas, 1989).
4. The patient and/or parent/guardian are responsible for their actions if they decline treatment or do not follow the practitioner's instructions (Annas, 1989).
5. The patient and/or parent/guardian are accountable for being kind and respectful to other patients, hospital personnel, hospital property and the property of other people (Annas, 1989).
6. The patient and/or parent/guardian is responsible for providing all needed information for insurance process and for assuring that the financial obligations of their care are fulfilled as promptly as possible (Annas, 1989).

7. The patient and/or parent/guardian is responsible for ensuring that the health care institution has a copy of their written advance directive if they have one (Annas, 1989).
8. The patient and/or parent/guardian is responsible for informing their physician and other caregivers if they anticipate problems in following prescribed treatment (Annas, 1989).
9. Patients should also be aware of the hospital's obligation to be reasonably efficient and equitable in providing care to other patients and the community. The hospital's rules and regulations are designed to help the hospital meet this obligation (Annas, 1989).
10. Patients and their families are responsible for making reasonable accommodations to the needs of the hospital, other patients, medical staff, and hospital employees (Annas, 1989).
11. A patient's health depends on many more than health care services. Patients are responsible for recognizing the impact of their lifestyles on their personal health (Annas, 1989).

### **Patients Bill of Rights from a Legal Perspective**

The Senate-passed Patients' Bill of Rights confers a broad array of rights on patients (Ciment, 1999). The bill would ensure that patients have the right to:

1. Have their medical decisions confirmed by a doctor
2. Consult a medical specialist
3. Visit to the closest emergency room
4. Designate a pediatrician as a primary care doctor for their children
5. Maintain the same doctor throughout their medical treatment
6. Obtain the prescription drugs their doctor prescribes
7. Access a fair and independent appeals process if care is traversed
8. Hold their health plan accountable for harm done.

**Conclusion**

Hospitals have different functions to perform which includes

1. The enhancement of health status
2. Health advancement
3. The prevention and treatment of injury and disease
4. The immediate and ongoing care and rehabilitation of patients
5. The education of health professionals, patients, and the community; and research.

All these activities must be carried on with an overriding concern for the values and dignity of patients. At the same time the Patients bills of right also stipulates certain responsibilities, which are to be adhered to by the persons undergoing treatment.

### **Bibliography**

Annas, George J. The rights of patients. Southern Illinois University Press,  
Carbondale, IL 1989.

Ciment, James. "US Senate passes patients' bill of rights." British Medical Journal,  
24, July .1999.