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*Southern Maryland*  
**HOSPITAL CENTER**

**Patient Information Guide**

**SOUTHERN MARYLAND HOSPITAL  
PATIENT INFORMATION GUIDE**

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## **WELCOME**

Southern Maryland Hospital Center wishes to extend a warm welcome to you as our patient and guest. We will make your stay as comfortable as possible by dedicating our professional skills, medical resources, and hospitality to your care.

Your physician has selected the finest hospital in Southern Maryland for your care and treatment. Our 358-bed hospital is staffed by highly trained professionals and maintains the latest in state-of-the-art equipment. SMHC has received numerous professional awards and recognitions for the quality care we consistently deliver.

A number of people, some of whom you may never meet, will have their attention focused upon you. Your recovery and well being are their first priority. Every member of our staff is here to make your stay as pleasant as possible. Please discuss your questions and needs openly with them. At times, normal hospital procedure may seem confusing to you. Should you need further assistance, call Administration at extension 4530 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. During other hours, the Administrator of Nursing is available to address your concerns and can be reached through the hospital operator by pressing "0."

We hope this patient information guide will give you a better understanding of what to expect during your stay. As we will be proud to say that you were our patient, we hope you will be proud to say "Southern Maryland Hospital Center is my hospital."

Francis P. Chiamonte, MD. M.P.H., F.A.C.S.  
President and Chairman of the Board

## **HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY**

In the early 1970's, Dr. Francis P. Chiamonte recognized the need for a full-service hospital in Southern Maryland. The population was growing rapidly and, for some specialty care, area residents were traveling many miles to the medical centers of downtown Washington. Finally, after countless hours of planning and development, ground was broken for Southern Maryland Hospital Center in June of 1976. In November of 1977, the hospital opened its doors and began serving the 400,000 residents of Southern Maryland with a complete range of multi-specialty health care.

In the years since our founding, SMHC has grown into today's 358-bed, full-service, acute care facility. The equipment and technology are the latest, but our care remains rooted in the tradition of old-fashioned hospitality. Our logo incorporates the traditional caduceus, representing a compassionate touch. Each employee, upon beginning work at SMHC, makes a commitment to bringing the highest medical expertise, with tender loving care, "Back to the Bedside."

## **MISSION, VISION and VALUES**

*Southern Maryland Hospital Center is a full-service, regional health care facility founded in 1977 to provide a complete range of inpatient, outpatient, and community services for the residents of Southern Maryland. At SMHC, highly skilled health professionals efficiently deliver respectful and compassionate care using the most advanced medical technology.*

*Southern Maryland Hospital Center is a resource center seeking to prevent illnesses and promote health through education and screening. Our goal is to assist the residents of Southern Maryland in achieving the highest possible level of physical and mental health, thereby improving the quality of life in our community.*

*Southern Maryland Hospital Center continuously evaluates all services and seeks to improve the delivery of care. Each SMHC employee, medical staff member, and volunteer is motivated by an uncompromising commitment to quality as measured by the satisfaction of our patients and their families.*

### **Vision**

The vision of Southern Maryland Hospital Center is to improve community health care services through a commitment to quality and safety which meets the changing needs of our customers.

***The employees, medical staff, and volunteers of Southern Maryland Hospital Center hold in common these values with respect to our patients and our professional relationships.***

<b>Quality</b>	We perform each task to the best of our abilities and never cease to try to do better.
<b>Respect</b>	We acknowledge the dignity of every individual and appreciate the differences and uniqueness of each.
<b>Integrity</b>	We are forthright with our patients and each other and fulfill our tasks promptly, accurately, and completely.
<b>Safety</b>	We are committed to improving patient safety and reducing risks in the care environment for patients and others, including health care providers.
<b>Flexibility</b>	We continually adjust our methods to better serve our patients and we readily embrace change and new technology.
<b>Efficiency</b>	We manage our work so as to conserve resources and hold down the costs of health care without compromising patient care.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	We protect the rights of our patients and their families and safeguard their privacy.
<b>Accountability</b>	We accept responsibility for the results of our work and set aside personal interests for the good of our patients.

**AS A SOUTHERN MARYLAND HOSPITAL PATIENT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

- Considerate and respectful care, provided in a safe environment, free from all forms of abuse, neglect, harassment and/or exploitation.
- Have your cultural, psychosocial, spiritual and personal values, beliefs and preferences respected.
- Access protective services and advocacy services or have these services accessed on your behalf.
- Appropriate assessment and management of pain.
- Remain free from seclusion or restraints of any form that are not medically necessary or are used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience or retaliation.
- Know the name of the physician who has primary responsibility for coordinating your care and the names and professional relationships of other physicians and providers.
- Receive information, in a language you can understand, about your illness, course of treatment, outcomes of care (including unanticipated outcomes) and your prospects for recovery.
- Participate fully in the development and implementation of your plan of care and to actively participate in decisions before giving or withholding consent. This includes the right to refuse treatment and care.
- Formulate advance directives and have the hospital staff and practitioners comply with these directives.
- Have a family member or representative, and your personal physician notified of your hospital admission.
- Be informed of any proposed research or experimental treatment that may be considered in your care and to consent or refuse to participate. Such refusal will not compromise your access to service.
- Full consideration for privacy during case discussions, examinations, consultations and treatments.
- Confidential treatment of all communications and records pertaining to your care and your hospital stay.
- Reasonable continuity of care.
- Be informed of the continuing healthcare requirements following your discharge from the hospital.
- Request and receive an explanation of your bill regardless of source of payment.
- Receive a prompt and courteous response to your complaints concerning the quality of care and service. If you feel the hospital has not addressed your concerns satisfactorily then you have the right to file a complaint with the State of Maryland, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene at 55 Wade Avenue, Catonsville, Maryland 21228 (1-877-402-8218) or the Joint Commission at 1 Renaissance Blvd., Oakbrook, IL 60181 (630-792-5000).

**AS A SOUTHERN MARYLAND HOSPITAL CENTER PATIENT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- Providing accurate and complete information concerning your present complaint, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications and other matters relating to your health
- Reporting perceived risks in your care and unexpected changes in your condition to the responsible practitioner.
- Participating to the best of your ability in making decisions about your medical treatment and complying with the agreed upon plan of care.
- Keeping your care provider informed of your pain and the effect of treatment in managing your pain.
- Following your treatment plan, including instructions of nurses and other health professionals acting on the physician's orders.
- Your actions, should you refuse treatment or fail to follow your physician's orders.
- Asking questions of your physician or other care providers about your condition, treatment or procedures
- Asking questions when you do not understand information or instructions.
- Providing the hospital with a copy of any advance directives or health care decisions in effect, at the time of admission.
- Immediately reporting any concerns or errors you may observe.
- Informing your physician or other care provider of your desire to transfer your care to another doctor, caregiver, or facility.
- Being considerate of others receiving and providing care.
- Observing hospital policies and procedures, including those regarding smoking, noise, and permitted number of visitors.
- Assuring that the financial obligations of your hospital care are fulfilled as promptly as possible.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Smoking**

Maryland State law prohibits smoking within a healthcare facility. To comply with this law and in the interest of the health and safety of all our patients, visitors, and staff, smoking is not permitted in any part of the hospital or on the hospital grounds.

### **For your Privacy**

*Privacy laws prohibit hospital staff, students, volunteers and physicians from discussing your personal medical information with anyone unless you communicate that this person has a right to know. Since staff is unable to identify family members when they call on the phone, you may be provided with a password for your designated family member to use when inquiring about your medical care. It is also a good idea to designate just one person to be the spokesperson for your family.*

### **Organ and Tissue Donation**

Organ and tissue donation provide new hope to those who are seriously ill or injured. Southern Maryland Hospital participates with the Washington Regional Transplant Consortium to manage organ and tissue donations. If you already have an organ donor card it is important that your family is fully informed of your wishes. For more information on donation call 703-641-0100.

### **Visitors**

Your visitors are welcome, but remember that rest is an important part of your treatment. Much of your time in the hospital is spent receiving care and treatment, particularly in the morning. Please help us to assure that these visiting hours are carefully followed, so that we may provide treatment in a timely fashion:

Hospital: 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Special/Critical Care Unit: 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m.

Check with Maternal Child Health and Psychiatric Care units for their specific visiting hours.

Visitors must sign in at the information desk and obtain a “Visitor Pass.”

Children under 12 years are not permitted in nursing units

Visitors are limited to two people at a time

Visitors are not permitted to lean or sit on a patient’s bed

### **Dining facilities**

The hospital cafeteria is located on the ground floor. Hours of services are (may be subject to change):

Breakfast: 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (Monday through Friday only)

Lunch: 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dinner: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Vending machines are accessible in the cafeteria 24 hours a day

### **Gift Shop**

The Gift Shop is located on the first floor near the lobby. Gifts, cards, fresh flowers, toiletries newspapers, etc., are available for purchase. Gift shop hours are 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily.

## IN YOUR ROOM

### When you reach your room

Your nurse will help you settle in, explain where everything is located, and show you how to use the nurse call system. When you need assistance or wish to talk to a nurse, you may contact the nurses' station through this system.

### Personal Belongings and Valuables

Only bring to the hospital what you will need during your stay. Southern Maryland Hospital cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage to valuables or personal property. Please send valuables home with family members or friends. If that is not possible, ask the admitting staff or nurse to put them in the hospital safe. Items needed during your stay, such as walkers and canes, should be labeled. Eyeglasses, contact lenses, dentures and hearing aides should be kept in protective containers in your bedside tabletop drawer when not in use. A denture cup is available for dentures. Avoid placing dentures or other personal items on your meal tray or they may become lost.

### Telephones

For your convenience, telephones are provided in your room at a daily charge. If you do not want phone service please tell your nurse; otherwise your hospital bill will reflect the phone charge.

To make a local call, press "9" and wait for the dial tone. Incoming calls are accepted between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The telephone service is not equipped to accept collect calls or to accommodate telephone calling cards. Please ask your nurse if you require a TTY phone.

### Television

Television service is provided for a nominal fee. To request this service, please ask your nurse or call the TV hostess on extension 4459. Personal TV sets are not permitted.

### Electric Appliances

Electric appliances may interfere with medical monitoring equipment and therefore are discouraged. Any electrical appliance brought into the hospital, such as, radios or electric razors, must be inspected and approved by SMHC. Please let your nurse know if you have any electric appliances with you or brought to you during your stay.

### Mail

Our volunteers will deliver mail that arrives for you at the hospital to your room at least once daily. If you have already been discharged, mail will be forwarded to your home address.

### Patient Nutrition

*Your diet is an important part of your treatment and is prescribed by your physician. Each morning (unless you are on a special diet) you will receive a menu from which to select meals for the following day. A registered dietician performs nutrition consultations and is available to assist you with your dietary needs.*

*Meals are served according to the following schedule:*

***Breakfast:*** 7:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

***Lunch:*** 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

***Dinner:*** 4:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### Gratuity

The SMHC staff and volunteers are here for your service. The important little extras are also part of our job. Tips are neither expected nor permitted. We earnestly request adherence to this policy.

## **PATIENT SERVICES**

### **Patient Education**

While you are here in the hospital or after you are discharged, you may want to consider attending one of Southern Maryland Hospital Center's many ongoing educational and wellness programs. Course topics include diabetes management, maternal-child education, smoking cessation, weight management, CPR certification, and much more. Also, topics of interest to the general public are covered in one-time free seminars. Continuous complimentary health screenings and numerous support groups are offered through the hospital as well. For more information call the Community Health Education line at 301-877-5700.

During your stay you may want to check out the Patient Education Channel on channel 29. Maternal Child Health's patient education can be found on channel 31. These television programs augment education provided to you by the many members of your healthcare team.

### **Institutional Ethics Committee**

New and difficult questions face health professionals, patients and families today largely because of our ability to sustain life. Sometimes the value of preserving life conflicts with respecting patients' wishes, relieving the suffering of a loved one or making life and death decisions for a family member who is unable to make his/her wishes known. The Southern Maryland Hospital Ethics Committee is an important resource available to assist in communication and decision making. The Ethics Committee can help families, patients and hospital staff to clarify issues in order to make appropriate decisions. To initiate the process, contact the patient's physician, nurse or case manager, or the Case Management Department at 301-877-4519.

### **Case Management Services (Social Services)**

Nurse Case Managers are available to help you with your discharge planning, to give information and counseling to help patients and their families cope with emotional, social and financial difficulties. They can help you with insurance benefits, delivery of medical equipment to your home, home health care, placement for short term rehabilitation or long term care. The Nurse Case Manager can assist you with obtaining Medical Assistance or provide information on other community or government financial programs. If you need assistance contact the Nurse Case Manager assigned to your nursing unit or contact the Case Management Department at 301-877-4519.

### **Interpreters**

The hospital has a foreign language interpreter phone line with trained qualified interpreters. We also provide access to sign language interpreters. Please notify your nurse should you need either of these services.

### **Pastoral Care Services**

Many patients find comfort and meaning in religion during their hospitalization. Pastoral services are available on site or the hospital can assist you in arranging a visit from clergy of your denomination. Please notify your nurse should you need these services. A prayer and meditation chapel, located on the first floor, is available for use by patients, families, and staff.

## **Day of Discharge**

You will be discharged from the hospital when your physician determines you are ready to return home and writes your discharge order. Before you are discharged, the staff will work with you and your family to prepare you for going home. Be sure you are clear about discharge instructions including medications you need and information about follow-up visits and continued care. Make sure you are given a phone number to call if you have questions.

Discharge time is usually 11:00 a.m. We ask that you be prepared to leave your room and arrange to be picked up from the hospital as soon as the discharge process is completed. Be sure to check your closet, drawers and bathing area for any personal items.

When it is time for you to leave, you will be escorted to the Cashier's Office on the first floor to complete the discharge process. You will be asked to pay for insurance copayments, deductibles, and telephone at this time. If you have any questions regarding your hospital bill, contact the Business Office at 301-877-4262.

The Cashier's Office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Discharges at other times are processed through the Emergency Department.

## **Billing Statement**

Southern Maryland Hospital Center provides emergency or urgent care to all patients regardless of ability to pay.

For maximum benefit coverage for you, it is necessary to comply with criteria established by your insurance carrier. Be aware that many insurance companies require preauthorization, second opinions, deductibles, and co-pays as a part of their contract with you. Charges not covered by insurance become your responsibility.

Deductibles and/or co-pays are expected prior to testing, treatment, and discharge. Financial counselors are available to assist you if you need to make arrangements for payment.

If you are currently enrolled with Medicare, please note that Medicare may not always be the primary carrier responsible for payment of your bill. If you have other insurance coverage (HMO, group, Hospice, etc.), they may need to be billed before Medicare. Please notify the Admitting Department at 301-877-4290 should you need to change or correct any billing information during your hospital stay or the Business Office at 301-877-4262 after you are discharged. This will help to expedite billing and alleviate delays in payment of your bill.

## **Financial Assistance Policy**

You may be entitled to receive financial assistance with the cost of medically necessary hospital services if you have a low-income, do not have insurance, or your insurance does not cover your medically-necessary hospital care and you meet the income criteria.

Southern Maryland Hospital Center meets or exceeds the legal requirements by providing financial assistance based on income level, source of income, and medical expenses. It is important that the information provided on the application for financial assistance be correct.

## **Billing Rights and Obligations**

### **Patients' Rights:**

Those patients that meet the financial assistance policy criteria may receive assistance from the hospital in paying their bill.

If you believe you have wrongly been referred to a collection agency, you have the right to contact the hospital to request assistance (see contact information below).

You may be eligible for Maryland Medical Assistance. Medical Assistance is a program funded jointly by the state and federal government that pays the full cost of health coverage for low-income individuals who meet certain criteria (see contact information below).

### **Patients' Obligations:**

For those patients with the ability to pay their bill, it is the obligation of the patient to pay the hospital in a timely manner.

Southern Maryland Hospital makes every effort to see that patient accounts are properly billed. Patients may expect to receive a summary billing statement within 30 days of discharge. It is your responsibility to provide correct insurance information.

If you do not have health coverage, you are expected to pay the bill in a timely manner. If you believe you may be eligible for financial assistance, or if you cannot afford to pay your bill in full, please contact the business office promptly, at 301-877-4262.

If you fail to meet the financial obligations of this bill, you may be referred to a collection agency. In determining whether a patient is eligible for free, reduced cost care, or a payment plan, it is the obligation of the patient to provide accurate and complete financial information. If your financial position changes, you have an obligation to promptly contact the business office to provide updated/corrected information.

### **Contacts**

- Questions about your bill: contact the hospital's business office at 301-877-4262. A hospital representative will be glad to assist you with any questions you may have.
- Financial Assistance Program: For information or to apply for the hospital's financial assistance plan, call 301-877-5593 or download the uniform financial assistance application from the following link: [ERLINK "Http://www.hsrc.state.md.us/consumers\\_uniform.cfm"](http://www.hsrc.state.md.us/consumers_uniform.cfm)
- Maryland Medical Assistance: For information or to apply contact your local Department of Social Services by phone at 1-800-332-6347; TTY: 1-800-925-4434; or via the internet [www.dhr.state.md.us](http://www.dhr.state.md.us).

### **Physician Services**

Physician services provided during your stay will be billed separately and are not included on your hospital billing statement. These physician services may include emergency department, radiology, pathology, attending and consulting physicians.

## **PATIENT SAFETY**

Your health and safety are important to us. Southern Maryland Hospital actively participates in the National Patient Safety Initiatives to promote safe medical care. Here is how you can help make your stay a safe and positive experience:

### **Identification**

Wear your hospital ID bracelet. Check to make sure the information on the ID bracelet is correct. Make sure staff check your ID bracelet before any procedure or test, before a blood transfusion, before giving medicine or taking a blood specimen. If you are on a special diet the dietary staff will also verify your identification.

### **Medications**

Provide the hospital with a complete list of medications you are taking at home. The staff will compare these medications to those you will take in the hospital and any new medication you may take after discharge. In addition to your prescribed medications, be sure to tell your doctor or nurse if you are also taking over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or herbal remedies. These non-prescription medications may interfere with your prescribed medications.

### **Allergies**

It is important to let the staff know if you have any allergies to medications, foods, or have had any previous reactions to latex products.

### **Preventing the spread of germs**

Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds. Feel free to remind staff to use the alcohol-based foam or to wash their hands before examining you, giving you medicine and taking your blood. Get vaccinated, if your physician recommends it. Flu and pneumonia vaccines can help prevent illnesses in children, the elderly and high-risk patients.

### **Preventing falls**

Always ask for help getting out of bed, especially at night. Keep your call button within reach. Steps taken to prevent falls may include keeping the bed in the lowest position, using non-slip socks, and keeping side rails up.

## **SHARE IN YOUR CARE**

Southern Maryland Hospital Center takes pride in our efforts to prevent negative outcomes and to promote safe patient care. The members of the health care team- doctors, nurses, therapists, technologists, aids, case managers and many more- share in your care. You, as the patient, also have a vital role in making your care safe by being actively involved and taking steps to SHARE IN YOUR CARE.

**Speak up if you have a question.** You are urged to ask any questions you may have about your plan for treatment, medical tests, diagnosis, medications, and discharge planning. You are provided with education to help you make an informed decision about your care, but if something is not explained to your satisfaction, ask for

more information until you are satisfied. When in doubt, seek a second opinion. The more information you have about the options available to you, the more confident you will be in the decisions made.

***Have a trusted family member or friend be your advocate.*** Your advocate can ask questions you may not have thought to ask. Make sure your advocate knows how you would like your care handled so they can act on your behalf. (See Making Decisions About Your Healthcare).

***Always make sure you are getting the right medications and treatment.*** Expect the hospital staff to confirm your identification armband before a procedure, and when giving you medication. Ask about the medication if the pills look different than what you have been given before.

***Review consents for treatment before you sign them.*** Consents may be signed in your doctor's office before you come to the hospital or when you are in the hospital. Take the opportunity to have all your concerns addressed. Do not sign the consent until you are satisfied that all your questions have been answered. Consents should address any risks to the procedure or operation, alternatives to treatment, and the benefits expected from the procedure or operation.

***Educate yourself about your diagnosis, treatment options, medications, and care at home.*** Good sources of information include your doctor, library, respected internet websites, and support groups. Ask for any written information you can keep for reference. Discharge instructions are also a good source of information. Make a note of who/where to call for help or more information after you are discharged.

## *IN YOUR*

***Communicate concerns to your health care team.*** Do not be afraid to speak up if something does not seem quite right. Encourage family and friends to tell the doctor or nurses if you are not behaving like you normally do. This may signal the need for immediate assistance. Do not assume anything.

***Ask your doctor about the specialized training*** and experience he/she has in treating your particular illness. Ask how many procedures he/she has done. Ask about the training and experience of the staff who will be caring for you after surgery.

***Remember to be an active participant in your care.*** Keep copies of your medical records from previous hospitalizations and share them with your health care team. This will give them a more complete picture of your health history.

***Expect health care workers to educate you about your care.*** Expect to be educated on your medications, pain management, medical tests, diagnosis, diet, after discharge needs, etc. Hold health care workers to your expectations. Use the information you receive to help you make informed decisions about your health care.

***Patients who take part in their health care decisions are more likely to have better outcomes. By increasing your awareness and involvement you can have a positive health care experience.***

## Patient/Family Education for Pain Management

### Our Philosophy:

At Southern Maryland Hospital Center, we strive to keep you free from pain. We recognize that preventing and managing your pain is important to your overall well being. Controlling your pain will help you to eat and sleep better, and will make it easier for you to participate in your treatments, move around and visit with your family and friends.

To help us we ask you to let us know when you are in pain. We can help you better if you pay attention to the level of your pain and use this scale to report your pain.

### FACES Pain Rating Scale



### Please Remember...

1. It is important to keep your pain out of the moderate to severe range, 4 and above, so do not wait until the pain is severe before you request relief.
2. Our staff will be asking you frequently about your pain.
3. If your doctor has ordered medications for pain, the nurses will give you pain medication as soon as possible after your request.
4. If your pain is not better after the medication, or if you are having side effects, please tell your doctor or nurse so that something can be done to help you.
5. Pain medications when given with supervision, are safe and effective. There are alternatives to medication available. Your nurse will help you decide which is right for you.
6. Medications may be prescribed by your doctor that can help relieve any side effects.
7. It is understood that pain levels may be higher after surgery, certain activities and during your recovery.
8. Taking pain medications before walking or physical/occupational therapy can make those activities more tolerable and help you to get better faster.

## **HOSPITAL INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES**

Southern Maryland Hospital Center complies with all hospital infection prevention and control guidelines as required by the Center for Disease Control, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Good infection control practices promote the health and safety of all patients, visitors and staff and help to prevent hospital associated infections.

Examples of some basic infection control practices used by hospital staff include:

1. Washing hands or using antiseptic hand foam before and after each patient contact and after glove removal.
2. Adhering to Standard Precautions, which means treating the blood and body fluids of all persons as if they may be infectious.
3. Wearing gloves, gown, mask, goggles and other personal protective equipment when contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, non-intact skin and mucous membranes is anticipated.
4. Eliminating recapping of needles and disposing of all sharp objects in needle boxes/designated containers.
5. Transporting all blood, body fluid and tissue specimens to the Lab in sealed plastic bags.
6. Treating all used linen as potentially infectious.
7. Disposing of trash in two ways: clear bag - non-contaminated items; red bags - item contaminated with blood or body fluids.
8. Using disposable patient care supplies and equipment when available and cleaning/disinfecting/sterilizing all reusable patient care supplies, equipment and instruments as appropriate.
9. Placing patients with specific infections and diseases on "Precautionary Measures" Isolation which includes Contact, Droplet, Enteric and Airborne Precautions.
10. Reporting communicable diseases to the local and/or state health department as required by Maryland state law.

The hospital employs a full-time, certified RN Infection Preventionist who oversees all aspects of the infection control program.

For questions regarding infection prevention and control and/or infectious diseases, please contact your physician or the Infection Preventionist at 301-877-4739.

## **MAKING HEALTH CARE DECISIONS and ADVANCE DIRECTIVES**

*Under the Patient Self Determination Act and the Maryland law you have the right to make decisions about your own medical care, including the right to accept or refuse treatment. You should be involved in any decisions about your care because your medical care affects you most of all. Care will be provided in this hospital regardless of whether you have an advance directive.*

### **What is an Advance Directive?**

*An Advance Directive is a document in which you state what you want done if, in the future, you cannot make your own medical decisions. You can protect your rights by writing down your wishes and having two witnesses sign the document.*

There are two kinds of Advance Directives that can be combined into one document:

1. In a **living will**, you say what kind of medical care you do or do not want if you ever become unable to make your own treatment decisions. You can also choose to be an organ, tissue or eye donor. Usually, a living will applies when you are in a terminal condition.
2. In appointing a **health care agent** (or durable power of attorney for health care), you choose a person to make decisions about your medical care if you cannot do so yourself. Talk to your healthcare agent about what you want now, and what you would want in the future if you ever become unable to make your own decisions. If you do not appoint someone or leave specific instructions, Maryland law will allow your relatives to make decisions for you.

### **How do I write an Advance Directive?**

Writing an Advance Directive takes serious thought. There is no particular form to use. You can create one of your own or ask for the form used by the hospital. If you wish, a social worker or case manager will discuss it with you.

### **What should I say in my Advance Directive?**

*You can communicate anything you want, but it is best to appoint someone to make your health care decisions and to discuss the following questions with that person.*

Do you want treatment that tries to restart your heartbeat or breathing (resuscitation)?

Do you want to be put on a breathing machine (ventilator or respirator) if you cannot breathe on your own?

Do you want to be fed by tubes (receive artificial nutrition and hydration) if you cannot eat or drink on your own?

Do you want to be kept as comfortable and free of pain as possible, even if such care prolongs your dying or shortens your life?

Do you wish to be an organ, tissue or eye donor?

### **What should I do with my Advance Directive?**

Give a copy to your healthcare agent, your doctor, the hospital, your family, and anyone else who might be involved in making decisions about your treatment. **IF YOU HAVE AN EXISTING ADVANCE DIRECTIVE, PLEASE BRING IT WITH YOU TO THE HOSPITAL.**

**What if I want to change my Advance Directive?**

You can change or cancel your Advance Directive at any time. You can write a new Advance Directive, destroy the old one, or tell those involved in your care that you have changed your mind. It is very important to let your doctor know that your wishes have changed.

**Does my Advance Directive change if I am having surgery?**

If you are having an operative or invasive procedure during your hospitalization your Advance Directive (such as "Do Not Resuscitate") may need to be modified in preparation for your procedure and immediate postoperative period. If you currently have such an Advance Directive, it should be discussed with your physician, surgeon and an anesthesiologist prior to the procedure.