

MEDICARE PATIENT RIGHTS CHECKLIST

Your Guide to Advocating for Yourself or a Loved One in the Hospital

✓ YOUR RIGHTS AS A MEDICARE PATIENT ADMITTED AS INPATIENT

1. Right to Receive the “Important Message from Medicare” (IM)

What It Is: A notice explaining your hospital discharge rights.

When You Get It: Within 2 days of admission and again before discharge.

Regulation Hospitals Must Follow: 42 CFR § 489.27(b) & § 405.1205

Expert Tip: Ask for this form if you have not received it—it is your protection if you disagree with a discharge.

2. Right to Appeal a Hospital Discharge

You Can Say “I’m Not Ready to Leave”: File a fast appeal with the QIO (Quality Improvement Organization).

Call Within: Midnight the day of discharge.

Regulation Hospitals Must Follow: 42 CFR § 405.1206

Expert Tip: Keep the QIO number from your IM handy. It is often buried in fine print, but it’s your hotline to stop a premature discharge.

3. Right to Understand and Approve Your Care Plan

Includes: Medications, therapies, discharge goals, and follow-up.

Regulation Hospitals Must Follow: 42 CFR § 482.13(b)(2)

Expert Tip: Ask “What is today’s plan of care?” during morning rounds. Make sure your voice is part of the plan.

4. Right to Be Free from Discrimination or Abuse

Includes: Equal treatment regardless of age, gender, race, or disability.

Regulations Hospitals Must Follow: Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act

Expert Tip: If you feel mistreated, ask to speak with a hospital patient advocate, social worker, or case manager immediately.

5. Right to Ask Questions and Get Clear Answers

You Can Say: “I do not understand. Can you explain that another way?”

Regulation Hospitals Must Follow: 42 CFR § 482.13(b)(2)

Expert Tip: Use a notebook or app to track your questions—then bring it to rounds. You have the right to know everything about your care.

The American Senior Citizen

MEDICARE PATIENT RIGHTS CHECKLIST CONTINUED

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6. Right to Receive Medically Necessary Care

Includes: All services deemed “reasonable and necessary” under Medicare.

Regulation Hospitals Must Follow: 42 U.S.C. § 1395y(a)(1)(A)

Expert Tip: If told “Medicare won’t cover that,” ask: “Can you show me the written denial or provide the policy number used for that decision?”

TIPS FROM A NURSE CASE MANAGER TO YOU:

Don’t Go It Alone: Always ask to speak with a case manager, social worker, or patient advocate if you feel overwhelmed.

Be Present and Proactive: Families should attend rounds or call for updates daily.

Request a Care Conference: If care is complicated or the discharge plan doesn’t make sense, ask for a team meeting.

Document Everything: Write down names, dates, and what was said. This helps with appeals and future care.

Questions or Problems? Call 1-800-MEDICARE.

You Have the Right to Understand, Speak Up, and Be Heard.

Never Be Afraid to Ask for Help.