

PATIENT AND STAFF CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

This present Code of Ethics is principally established for the promotion and protection of the patient's rights and responsibilities. Equally important, this Code of Ethics distinguishes the practices and conduct expected from all staff members towards patients and their families.

For definition purposes, the term "patient" refers to both inpatients and out-patients, long-term or short-term, while the term "staff" refers to all employees (permanent, temporary, or on contract-basis), physicians, students, and volunteers of the Hospital.

By no means should the readers of this Code of Ethics consider it the exhaustive and complete rules and regulations for patients and staff. This Code of Ethics should serve as an addition - as opposed to substitution - to the other codes of ethics that the Hospital's staff already pledge allegiance to.

Mount Sinai Hospital Center, in its continuing commitment to quality health care towards the patient's maximum well being, bases the intent of this Code of Ethics and of the efficient management of its health services on the following principles:

- 1) The patient requiring services is the reason for the very existence of those services;
- 2) Respect for the patient and recognition of his/her rights and freedoms must inspire every act performed in his/her regard;
- 3) The patient must be treated, in every intervention, with courtesy, fairness and understanding, and with respect for his/her dignity, autonomy and needs;
- 4) The patient must, as far as possible, play an active role in the care and services, which concern him/her;
- 5) The patient must be encouraged, through the provision of adequate information, to use services in a judicious manner.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PATIENT

I - RIGHTS

Every patient has the following rights:

- 1) opinion and expression of religion and its practices, and to freedom of any exploitation or abuse;

- 2) equal opportunity to receive health services without discrimination based upon age, language, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, color, civil status, social status, political convictions, religion, and mental or physical disability;

- 3) autonomy, self-respect, and safeguard of one's reputation, dignity, and intimate private life;

- 4) to be treated with understanding, respect, courtesy, and politeness;

- 5) to be properly informed of one's state of health and welfare and to be fully aware of the options available with regard to medical/non-medical treatments. The patient has the right to participate in all decisions affecting his/her health and welfare;

- 6) to be informed of the various health and social services and resources available in one's community, and how to benefit - if necessary - from and access such services and resources;

- 7) to receive health and social services in French and/or in English;

- 8) to be assisted and accompanied by any person when one wishes to get or understand information or obtain services from this Hospital;

- 9) to receive, with continuity and in a personalized manner, health and social services which are scientifically, humanely, socially and spiritually appropriate;

- 10) to accept or refuse health and social services (examinations, tests, treatments, surgery). In either case - acceptance or refusal - the repercussions and consequences shall thoroughly be explained to the patient;

11) to access one's dossier in consideration of the Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information and the Hospital policy. Such right of access may be waived, however, if communication of part or in entirety of the dossier is potentially and seriously prejudicial to the patient's health;

12) to confidentiality of one's dossier and to protection of access to it without proper authorization;

13) to issue complaints against the service provided by the Hospital or its staff;

14) to be aware of the Hospital procedure of complaints, of the code of ethics, and to partake in the affairs of the Hospital's Users' Committee;

15) to continued stay at the Hospital until the patient's state of health permits him/her to be discharged. The patient has a responsibility, however, to leave the Hospital once he/she is discharged.

II - RESPONSIBILITIES

Every patient has the following responsibilities:

1) to respect the privacy and property of other patients, their families, and of the staff. It is also the patient's responsibility to preserve hospital equipment and property at his/her disposition;

2) to treat all people (other patients, the staff) with courtesy, discretion, and politeness, and to foster harmonious relationships;

3) to take genuine interest in cooperating fully with the Hospital's professionals and in following the prescribed treatment plan.

FAMILIES/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES: It is also the role of families/legal representatives to ensure that the aforesaid rights and responsibilities of the patient are maintained and fully exercised. It is also their responsibility to cooperate with the staff in view of benefiting the patient's health.

PRACTICES AND CONDUCT OF THE STAFF

The staff's primary responsibility is to promote and protect the preceding "Rights and Responsibilities of the Patient". Such enforcement of the patient's rights and responsibilities should encourage the harmonization of the patient/staff relationship.

In addition, the staff must conform to the following practices and conduct:

- 1) treat all patients, their families, and other staff with understanding, respect, courtesy, politeness and dignity;
- 2) respect the religion, culture and moral beliefs of all patients, their families, and other staff;
- 3) respect the privacy and property of all patients, their families, and other staff, and to ensure that all patients are free from any abusive activity and are secure;
- 4) make sure, and assist in understanding if necessary, that the patients fully comprehend their state of health, their various medications and treatments, and their side-effects if any;
- 5) make sure that any research involving a patient, or his/her specimens, is authorized by the patient and the Hospital's ethics committee;
- 6) accommodate and not intimidate any patient, family member, or other concerned persons who may desire to issue a suggestion or complaint;
- 7) continuously maintain confidentiality of patient related information. Written, verbal or overheard information on a patient cannot be revealed or discussed with anyone other than the co-workers treating the case in question, and in the proper environment;
- 8) abide by the Hospital's regulations, mission statement, and employee dress code;
- 9) not accept, in any situation, tips or gifts of money.

FINAL DISPOSITIONS

Mount Sinai Hospital Center will enforce its zero tolerance policy at all times with regard to any breach of principles of the present Code of Ethics. Any infraction of the Mount Sinai Hospital Center Patient and Staff Code of Ethics may form the basis of a written or verbal official complaint lodged at the office of the Director of Hospital Services and Human Resources.

Sanctions and/or disciplinary measures may be taken against any person who has been found guilty of not following the Code of Ethics, thus supporting the zero tolerance policy.