**PATIENTS’ RIGHTS**

According to the Polish Constitution and other laws, patients have a number of rights; their observance is a responsibility of all the medical personnel - doctors, nurses, medical receptionists.

**In emergencies (in case of a threat to health or life), every patient has the right to receive emergency medical care without a referral**

In case of emergency, every patient has the right to seek medical care from a doctor specializing in the relevant therapy area. A woman in labor also has the right to receive emergency medical care without a referral.

The patient may ask their attending doctor to consult the case with another doctor or convene a joint consultation. The attending doctor may refuse to contact another doctor if he/she considers this measure to be unreasonable. Remember that in this situation, the patient's request and the doctor’s refusal must be recorded in the patient’s medical documentation, to which the patient is entitled to access.

The same applies to the medical care provided by a nurse or a midwife.

**Every patient has the right to privacy and respect for dignity**

Each patient can expect that all those involved in their healthcare will honor their right to privacy and respect their dignity.

Therefore only persons whose presence is professionally required may be present during treatment or an examination. Unauthorized persons may be present only with the consent of the patient and their attending doctor.

The right to respect for dignity also includes the right to die with dignity. In the terminal state the patient has the right to health care services providing relief in pain and other sufferings.

The patient is also entitled to request the presence of a confidant while receiving medical care. However the doctor may refuse the patient the confidant’s presence, if there is a risk to the patient’s health or a threat of infection. Such refusal must be recorded in the patient's medical documentation.

**Every patient has the right to receive full and clear information about their health condition**

Upon reaching the age of 16, every patient has the right to receive information about their health condition, diagnosis, the proposed and possible diagnostic and treatment methods, as well as the possible health and life consequences of performing or refusing medical intervention. If the patient is 16 to 18 years old, their legal representative (for example, a parent) also has the right to receive this information.

The doctor must explain the patient what diagnostic and treatment procedures will be performed, as well as for what purpose this or that medicine will be prescribed. Every patient has the right to receive information about the diagnostics results. If the patient is obliged to fully or partially cover costs of the provided healthcare service, the attending doctor must record this in the patient’s medical documentation.

Every patient also has the right to obtain full and clear information about the procedures performed by a nurse or a midwife.

Upon receiving information on their health condition, the patient has the right to express their opinion on this issue to the attending doctor. If the patient has reason to believe that the doctor has given incomplete information on their health condition and a possible unfavorable prognosis, the patient has the right to demand the full information to be provided.

Every patient can ask their doctor any questions concerning their health condition until the given answers are clear and understood by them. If the patient does not wish to receive information about their health condition, they have the right to refuse this information. In this case, the patient must indicate whether they refuse to receive information in part or in whole.

Remember that only can you decide to whom and which information on your health condition can be provided. You can authorize other persons (e.g. family, friends, the media) to receive this information, or you may not allow the information to be disclosed to anyone.

**The authorization for disclosure of patient health information must contain the following data:**

• place and date,

• patient data (first and last name, residence address),

• information about the person authorized (first and last name, residence address, ID number),

• patient’s legible signature.

**Every patient has the right to confidentiality of their medical information**

Every patient has the right to confidentiality and non-disclosure of their information obtained by the medical personnel (for example, doctors) due to provision of the healthcare services. The scope of medical confidentiality includes all information on the patient’s health status, diagnosis and progress of treatment, as well as the patient’s private, family and professional life.

This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed to unauthorized persons even after the patient's death. However, the medical personnel is obliged to disclose this information if its non-disclosure poses a risk to the patient’s and third persons’ health and lives.

**Every patient has the right to give or refuse consent for the provision of healthcare services**

After the doctor has provided complete and clear information about their state of health, a patient who is 16 years old has the right to give or refuse consent to perform diagnostics / treatment. Remember that you can always refuse any medical procedure or demand its termination. The patient’s consent may be oral, written or expressed through behavior that clearly indicates willingness (or lack thereof) to submit to the proposed services.

If the patient is 16 to 18 years old and does not agree to the medical intervention whereas their legal representative (for example, a parent) has a different opinion, the decision shall be made by the board of trustees.

**Every patient has the right to access records on their health condition and healthcare services provided**

Every healthcare facility (for example, hospital, polyclinic, private clinic etc.) is obliged to disclose the patient’s medical records when requested by the patient, their legal representative or an authorized person. After the patient's death, only the person authorized by the patient in their lifetime has the right to access their medical records.

**Such authorization must contain the following data:**

• place and date,

• patient data (first and last name, residence address),

• information about the person authorized (first and last name, residence address, ID number),

• patient’s legible signature.

The medical records must be made available to the patient for review (free of charge, on the premises of the healthcare facility where the patient is being or was treated), as well as for taking extracts or copies (on a paid basis). The doctor is obliged to explain the content of the medical documentation fully and in understandable terms.

The healthcare facility is obliged to keep patients’ medical records for 20 years, beginning from the end of the calendar year in which the last entry was made.

Exceptions to this rule are set out the Act on Patients’ Rights and Patients’ Rights Ombudsman.

**Every patient has the right to disagree with the doctor’s opinion or conclusion**

Every patient or their legal representative is entitled to express disagreement with the attending doctor’s opinion or conclusion on the patient's health condition, if such opinion or conclusion affects the patient’s legal rights or obligations. The statement of disagreement requires justification, incl. indication of the relevant provision of the law due to which such rights or obligations arise. The statement of disagreement must be submitted to the medical committee operating by the Patient Ombudsman, by proxy of the Patient Ombudsman within 30 days from the day when the attending doctor issued the above the opinion or conclusion.

The statement of disagreement cannot be filed if justification of the doctor’s opinion or conclusion must be reviewed according to the separate rules (for example, disagreement with the medical opinion drawn up by the evaluating doctor/medical board of the Social Insurance Fund).

**Patient’s rights at a polyclinic, a healthcare center, a hospital, a specialized early treatment center, a pharmacy**

Every patient has the right to be informed about their rights. Such information must be placed in a public access area of the facility.

Every patient has the right to receive information on the scope of medical services provided by the medical institution, incl. preventive healthcare programs financed from the public funds and implemented by this institution.

Every patient is entitled to make an appointment with the doctor in person, by third person or by phone.

If the patient’s attending doctor is absent, another doctor must consult them.

Every patient has the right to be informed of cheaper analogues of a prescription medicine, as well as of its use, storage and possible interactions with other medications.

**Every patient has the right to protect their rights**

In the event of violation of their medical rights, every patient has the right to complain to the appropriate authority:

• The Patients’ Rights Ombudsman,

• The owner of the nuclear medicine clinic NUKLEOMED,

• Self-governing organizations exercising powers in the field of health protection:

- Regional Chamber of Physicians and Dentists;

- Regional Chamber of Nurses and Midwives,

• general (administrative) court to recover compensation for the material and non-material damage suffered by the patient, as well as the insurance company with which the medical institution entered into Third Party Liability Insurance Contract;

• law enforcement authority - in case of an alleged crime;

• Human Rights Commissioner.

After the case has been investigated and closed by the Polish judicial authorities, the patient has the right to file a complaint with the UN Human Rights Committee or the European Court of Human Rights.

**Every patient has the right to report side effects of the medications taken**

The patient, their legal representative or the actual guardian has the right to report side effects of the taken medications to the medical personnel of the clinic, the head of the Office for Registration of Medicinal Products, Medical Devices and Biocidal Products, or the authority responsible for the introduction of this medication to the pharmaceutical market.

**TEXT OF THE ACT ON PATIENTS’ RIGHTS AND PATIENTS’ RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN IS AVAILABLE AT THE RECEPTION DESK**

Warsaw, 01.07.2017