

Patient & Family Advisor Handbook



Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll
Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital



Introduction

Welcome and thank you for joining the Rural Roads Health Services (RRHS) volunteer Patient and Family Advisor Program.



Your ideas and contributions help influence positive change. Your input is hugely valuable and important to us. Please don't hesitate to 'jump in' as you work with our team members on various initiatives in the hospitals. You are our trusted partners helping us to deliver excellent care – thank you (*in advance*) for bringing the patient/family voice to us!

Sincerely,
Nadia Facca, President & CEO

Our Patient Advisors:



Patient and Family Advisors have an interest in making a positive difference at RRHS.

This guide will help you develop a good understanding of what it means to be a patient and family advisor and how you will work together with RRHS employees.

Our goal is to work collaboratively to ensure all members are fully engaged in a meaningful way.

Our Mission, Values & Vision:

Our Mission

To be a key partner in supporting the health of our communities with excellent patient care and accessible specialized services

Our Values

- Quality
- Accessible Care
- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Community

Our Vision

Your regional health hub providing excellent patient care and access to integrated, specialized care through entry points close to home.

Patients' Rights and Responsibilities

Patients' Rights

Rural Roads Health Services believes that hospital personnel should be a community of caring persons and strive to provide the highest of quality care. We value the following fundamental rights of patients and are committed to maintain an environment that both fosters and protects these rights:

1. To receive considerate and respectful care and assistance, appropriate nursing, medical assessment and treatment that is free from mental and physical abuse regardless of colour, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, religious belief or financial status.
2. To have your condition, care and all treatment options explained in simplified terms to you or your authorized decision maker.
3. The right and responsibility to participate in development of your personal care plan.
4. To receive ongoing information concerning your diagnosis, treatment and any known prognosis.
5. To have your personal, financial, medical and other records entrusted to the hospital, kept in confidence, and available only to those for whom the information is essential.
6. To refuse and/or accept medical treatment and medication, if mentally competent, except for mandatory rules for safety and to be informed of the medical consequences of any refusal.
7. To be introduced to and informed of the professional status of individuals providing care and service.
8. To be accommodated in a safe and clean environment.
9. To receive a complete explanation of the need to transfer to another facility, and of the alternatives to such a transfer.
10. To receive information regarding healthcare requirements when planning for discharge from the hospital. To expect that we will do our utmost to provide reasonable continuity of care, including appointments, resources, and health care in the community following discharge.

11. To have a choice of participating in research, studies, surveys and teaching opportunities.
12. To provide feedback to the hospital on the care you are receiving or have received and to have concerns addressed in a timely manner.
13. To be informed of your responsibilities and role in your safety and the safety of other patients.
14. To have a parent, guardian or family member stay 24 hours per day in specific circumstances.
15. To have your privacy, confidentiality, safety and security protected.

Patients' Responsibilities

Rural Roads Health Services is committed to promoting health care, which addresses the needs of each person and to provide compassionate and quality care to those we serve. We believe that patients should participate in their treatment and be given the opportunity to make decisions regarding their health. We also believe that patients have the following responsibilities:

1. To be considerate and respectful of health care providers.
2. To provide accurate information to appropriate personnel, and to report any unexpected changes in your condition.
3. To observe health and safety regulations, including the hospital's infection control precautions, violence and harassment policy and smoking restrictions.
4. To follow the treatment plan as discussed and mutually agreed upon by you and your physician, including cooperating with other health care providers implementing physician orders.
5. To make appropriate and timely arrangements for leaving the hospital, upon discharge by your physician.
6. To consider participating in research, studies, surveys and teaching opportunities.
7. To ask questions when you do not understand or if you require additional information on the care you are receiving.
8. To provide feedback in a timely manner on the care that you receive.

RIGHTS
and
RESPONSIBILITIES

PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISOR

- Provides input about programs and services; delivers the patient/family perspective
- Participates in process improvement projects, program development, and quality improvement activities.
- Engages in learning opportunities

What is People and Family Centred Care (PFCC)?

People and family-centred care means safe and competent care that is culturally appropriate, compassionate, and respectful. Care is designed specifically to meet the needs, values, beliefs and preferences of patients and their families.

How do health care providers involve patients and families?

- Engage with patients and families to ensure their understanding and participation
- Monitor and evaluate services and quality with input from patients/families
- Co-design services
- Include patient and family representation on advisory and planning groups
- Partner with patients in planning, assessing, and delivering care



Roles and Responsibilities

Definition of a Patient and Family Advisor

A Patient and Family Advisor is someone who has received care at Rural Roads Health Services, or is a family member or caregiver of someone who has received care. They help to inform policies, programs, and practices that affect care and services. They advocate for the needs of the patient and family.

What does a Patient and Family Advisor do?

Patient and Family Advisors help inform the hospital about how to meet the needs and priorities of patients, families, and communities. They share opinions, ideas, and first-hand knowledge.

They work collaboratively with employees to ensure RRHS provides the best possible experience for patients, family members, and caregivers.

Who can be a Patient and Family Advisor?

Anyone who is a patient, family member, or caregiver of a patient who has had an experience at RRHS within the last three (3) years. Advisors must live in the local geographical area, be reliable, trustworthy, and committed. ***A medical background is not a requirement to be an advisor; however, a criminal background check is mandatory.***

What are the expectations of a Patient and Family Advisor?

- Provide input
- Give advice - This includes sharing personal stories, participating in meetings, focus groups, and reviewing patient/family materials
- Co-design improvements using experiences
- Participate in process improvement projects and quality improvement activities
- Consult and provide feedback
- Build partnerships with health care providers
- Attend monthly People and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) meetings
- Participate on corporate committees/working groups to provide the patient/family perspective.
- Adhere to RRHS's policies, procedures, and guidelines.



Roles and Responsibilities

What is the time commitment as a Patient and Family Advisor?

As a Patient and Family Advisor, you can participate in many ways – as much or as little as you feel comfortable. Opportunities to participate include sharing personal stories, serving on councils, working groups, committees, projects, interview panels and assisting during the Accreditation process.

The People and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) meets monthly, 9 months of the year for 90 minutes. You will be asked to attend meetings, review materials and provide input prior to the meetings. If you choose to join a committee, working group, project, etc., the time commitment will vary. Time commitments will be disclosed with the request, however expect a minimum of an additional 2 hours per month. Virtual meetings may be an option for those who cannot attend in person.

How can I be a successful Patient and Family Advisor?

- Collaborate with others.
- Share insight and information about personal experiences to help evolve programs, services, and hospital priorities.
- Be an active and empathetic listener.
- Have a positive and non-judgmental attitude.
- Be open to seeing beyond one's own personal experience.
- Utilize a positive approach to problem-solving and a desire to find solutions.
- Be eager to expand knowledge and skills.
- Understand that change doesn't happen quickly; it's a process.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Commit to RRHS's mission, vision and values.



Responsibilities and Accountabilities of a Patient and Family Advisor

- Uphold RRHS policies and procedures, including but not limited to: Code of Conduct, Privacy and Confidentiality, Scent Free Environment, Infection Control, etc.
- Review materials provided before each meeting.
- Attend scheduled meetings.
- Do not discuss confidential information outside council/committee meetings.

Orientation and Support.....

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the PFAC will provide orientation and support to Patient and Family Advisors.

New Patient and Family Advisors will be paired with a current Advisor who will offer mentorship and support.



Contact the Patient Experience Admin Support patient.feedback@rrhs.ca or by telephone 519-842-3611 x5302

What do I need to do to be prepared for each meeting?

Below are some common terms that will be used during the meetings you attend. You're encouraged to connect with the committee chair if you have questions.

- **Agenda:** a document that outlines the items that will be discussed at the meeting.
- **Meeting Minutes:** these are notes about the meeting discussion, action items, and next steps. As a member of a group, you are expected to review the minutes prior to attending the next meeting.
- **Chairperson:** the person who is in charge during the meeting. This may be the same individual for each meeting or the group may designate a different one for each meeting.

Why are Patient and Family Advisors important?

Patient and Family Advisors have first-hand knowledge and insight about how the local health care system can improve, and how to satisfy patient and family needs. Advisors look at things through a unique lens that can assist the hospital in adjusting or enhancing services. Patient and family participation has significant impact on **patient safety and harm reduction, reducing wait time and improving job satisfaction** for health care providers.

The Power of Storytelling

Patient and Family Advisors are often asked to share their personal and family stories about health care experiences. These stories provide context and help employees develop a better understanding of the patient/family perspective. Staff learn and appreciate how it feels to be a patient or family member receiving care at RRHS.

When asked to share your story, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- What am I willing to share/not share?
- Do I have my family's permission to speak about our experience?
- What is the main point of the story?
- What do I want people to take away from my story?
- Is my health care experience a negative one that is still bothering me? If so, am I able to share the experience in a constructive way?
- How can I use my experience to improve care for other patients and families at RRHS?



Think about the message you want to get across to your audience. Speak from your heart, be respectful and present negative experiences in a constructive way. Additional tips:

- Rehearse
- Keep it short and simple
- Balance positive experiences with opportunities for improvement
- Build in visual images
- Repeat or reinforce key phrases

Visit our website to learn more about our programs and services.

[Rural Roads Health Services](https://www.ruralroadshealthservices.ca/)

<https://www.ruralroadshealthservices.ca/>

People and Family Advisory Council Participation

Committees:

- Board Quality, Risk & Patient Safety
- Infection Prevention & Control
- Pharmacy & Therapeutics
- Ethics Advisory
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity (EDI)
- Enviro-Care Committee



CONTACT

April Mullen, VP Clinical Services & Patient Experience
519-842-3611 x5204 patient.feedback@rrhs.ca

Acknowledgements:

This document has been adapted with permission from St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) Patient Partner Orientation Handbook. Special thanks to our Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC) for their input and support.

Common Health Care Acronyms

AC Accreditation Canada
AE Adverse Event
ALC Alternate Level of Care
ALOS Average Length of Stay
CCAC Community Care Access Centre
CCC Complex Continuing Care
CCO Cancer Care Ontario

CHC Community Health Centre
CIHI Canadian Institute for Health Information
CMHA Canadian Mental Health Association
CPSI Canadian Patient Safety Institute
CPSO College of Family Physician and Surgeons of Ontario
CQI Continuous Quality Improvement
DEC Diabetes Education Centre
DI Diagnostic Imaging

ED Emergency Department
ER Emergency Room
EHR Electronic Health Record

FIPPA Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
GP General Practitioner
HIM Health Information Management
HR Human Resources
IPAC Infection Prevention and Control
ICU Intensive Care Unit

LTC Long-Term Care
MDRD Medical Device Reprocessing Department
MoHLTC Ministry of Health
MRP Most Responsible Physician
OHA Ontario Hospital Association
OHT Ontario Health Teams
ONA Ontario Nurses Association

OR Operating Room
OT Occupational Therapy
PACU Post-Anaesthetic Care Unit
PFA Patient Family Advisor
PFAC Patient Family Advisory Council
PRN ("As needed")
PSW Personal Support Worker
PT Physiotherapy

QI Quality Improvement
QIP Quality Improvement Plan
RL6 Safety Incident Reporting System
RN Registered Nurse

ROP Required Organizational Practice

RPN Registered Practical Nurse

SW Social Worker
TOA Transfer of Accountability
TOR Terms of Reference

