
Patients Should ‘Speak Up™ for Their Rights’



An educational campaign on patient rights by The Joint Commission: multimedia materials inform patients about taking an active role in their care.

An independent, nonprofit organisation, [The Joint Commission](#), has launched its *Speak Up™ For Your Rights* campaign. The aim of the campaign is for patients and their advocates to know their rights before, during and after receiving care. The materials (an infographic and an animated video), are provided in English and Spanish and can be downloaded and used for free.

According to Kathryn Petrovic, MSN, RN-BC, field director in surveyor management and development, Accreditation & Certification Operations, if healthcare organisations recognise and respect patients' rights and patients understand their own responsibilities, it helps to support “a positive provider-patient relationship necessary for the delivery of safe, quality care”.

To get the best possible care, understanding patient rights is essential. Those patients who are aware of their rights, are capable of asking the right questions and making informed decisions regarding the care and treatment they receive. In turn, providers can ensure higher level of satisfaction, if they inform patients of their rights.

For many people, navigating the healthcare is challenging. However, patients who are properly informed, know what they can and should ask from the providers. This approach is explored in the *Speak Up™ For Your Rights* video which is focused on a patient and her advocates in the settings of an emergency room. From the video, one can learn about the patient's rights, including the right to have an interpreter present and receive copies of a patient's medical records.

From the campaign's infographic the patients can learn what they should advocate for, including the rights to:

- Possess information and make decisions with regard to their care.
- Expect courteous and respectful treatment.
- Use the help of a patient advocate.
- Demand privacy of their health information.
- Discuss their rights with a patient representative.

Another message the campaign sends is that patients should take active position on their care. This means asking questions about diagnoses, prescriptions and treatments, or informing caregivers about any relevant details, such as allergies. *Speak Up™ For Your Rights* campaign also explains the role of advocates in obtaining the best care for patients and the procedure for filing a complaint if a violation of rights is suspected.

The general goal of *Speak Up™ For Your Rights* is to make healthcare less confusing for patients and to provide them with knowledge necessary for getting the best possible care.

About the Speak Up™

Since its launch in 2002, the Speak Up™ programme has been used in more than 70 countries. It encourages patients to be their own advocates and to:

- **S**peak up
- **P**ay attention
- **E**ducate yourself
- **A**dvocates (family members and friends) can help
- **K**now about your new medicine
- **U**se a quality health care organization
- **P**articipate in all decisions about your care

For more information visit [The Joint Commission website](#).

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