



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IN A CONNECTICUT PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT FACILITY



You are entitled to humane and dignified treatment at all times with full respect to your  
**CIVIL RIGHTS**      **PERSONAL DIGNITY**      **RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

You have the right to be treated with respect free from physical or mental abuse or harm  
Your rights are protected by federal law and Connecticut General Statutes

The **“CONNECTICUT PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS”** (CPBOR) are Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Sections 17a-540 through 17a-550 which protect your rights as a voluntary or involuntary patient of Connecticut inpatient and outpatient psychiatric treatment facilities including but not limited to facilities operated by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

The **CONNECTICUT PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS** protects your personal and Civil Rights including: your voting rights; property rights and right to enter into contracts unless in accordance with law you are declared incapable of exercising those rights.

The **CONNECTICUT PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS** also protects your right to:

- ◆ **Be treated in a humane and dignified manner at all times** with full respect to your personal dignity and privacy and to participate in developing your specialized treatment and discharge plan and be given reasonable notice of an impending discharge.
- ◆ **Give informed consent to treatment, medication and medical procedures** except when you are legally determined unable to do so and a conservator of person is appointed to act on your behalf or it is determined a delay in providing you treatment would be medically harmful or for electro-convulsive therapy when it is determined by Probate Court there is no other less intrusive beneficial treatment.
- ◆ **Authorize an advocate to be your representative.**
- ◆ **Request treatment by prayer alone according to principles and practices of your religious denomination or church.**
- ◆ **Be free from involuntary restraint or seclusion when inpatient** except when you present imminent physical danger to yourself or others or while being transported as a patient of Whiting Forensic Hospital. Restraints cannot substitute less restrictive alternatives and their use must be documented in your clinical records within twenty-four (24) hours. Medication cannot be used to manage behavior or movement when it is not standard treatment for your condition.
- ◆ **Receive physical and psychiatric examinations** when hospitalized with an initial psychiatric examination within forty-eight (48) hours and initial medical examination within five (5) days.
- ◆ **Send and receive mail without it being intercepted or censored; be provided writing material and postage and have access to public phones in appropriate locations** except when restricted by the head of a hospital or their designee due to clinical or safety concerns as documented in your clinical records.
- ◆ **Receive visitors during scheduled visiting hours** and meet privately with an attorney, paralegal and or clergy.
- ◆ **Personal Dignity** including: wearing your own clothes; keeping and using personal possessions; having personal storage based on facility or living arrangement's space limitations; having access to your own money for personal purchases; being present during searches of your personal property except when restricted by law.
- ◆ **Request access to your medical records in accordance with confidentiality laws.**
- ◆ **Be informed of your rights by the facility** including: the right to submit written notice to leave a psychiatric treatment facility\*; the right to hearings concerning proposed medication or involuntary hospitalization; the right to submit complaints and have them addressed.
- ◆ **Be free from discrimination in employment or housing due to a psychiatric disability or history of a psychiatric disability.**
- ◆ **Seek remedy for violations of your rights in court.**

## YOUR RIGHTS CANNOT BE RESTRICTED EXCEPT IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW AND AS DOCUMENTED IN YOUR CLINICAL RECORDS

\* If you are voluntarily inpatient at a psychiatric treatment facility and you submitted a written notice to leave, the facility has three (3) business days to file for a Probate Court commitment hearing. A hearing will be scheduled within seventy-two (72) hours excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays when you have the right to be present and represented by an attorney.

## YOU HAVE OTHER RIGHTS INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- The right to be free from abuse and neglect by healthcare providers and from abuse, neglect and exploitation by DMHAS staff and workforce.
- The right to freedom of movement while inpatient to the greatest degree possible as determined by your clinical and safety needs.
- The right to be free from discrimination and being deprived of your rights due to: age, alienage, blindness, color, disability, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, race, sex, sexual orientation and status as a veteran.
- The right as a person with disabilities to effective communication and equal access and to be provided upon written request reasonable modifications unless it can be demonstrated the modifications requested fundamentally alter programs, services and activities.
- The right as a person with Limited English Proficiency to meaningful language services from all federally funded healthcare providers.

**DMHAS and other federally funded healthcare providers complies with federal civil rights law and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (Affordable Care Act Section 1557).**

**YOUR RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED BY FEDERAL LAW, CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES AND COURT DECISIONS INCLUDING:** Americans with Disabilities Act; Civil Rights Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act; Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act; Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act; Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records (42 CFR part 2); Federal Patient Bill of Rights (42 CFR 482.13); Advance Directives (CGS 19a-570); Hospital Patient's Bill of Rights (CGS Section 19a-550); Mental Health Bill of Rights for Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing Persons (PA 21-72); Protection from Discrimination (CGS 46a-58); Advocacy Rights (Doe v. Hogan, Phoebe v Solnit); Whiting Forensic Hospital patient rights (Roe v. Hogan)

**Call an advocacy organization or seek legal advice if you have questions about your rights or if you need help  
STATE-WIDE ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS:**

**Advocacy Unlimited (AU):** **1-800-573-6929, 860-505-7581**

**Connecticut Legal Rights Project (CLRP):** **1-877-402-2299, 860-262-5030**

**Disability Rights Connecticut (DRCT):** **1-800-842-7303, 860-297-4300**

DMHAS operated and DMHAS contracted providers use the **DMHAS Client Grievance Procedure** to address denial of service, involuntary reduction, involuntary termination of service and other complaints from clients and patients at the lowest possible level.

DMHAS provides culturally affirmative mental health and substance use disorder treatment and recovery services in a person's primary language and manner of communication.

**ENGLISH AND SPANISH COPIES OF THIS NOTICE ARE POSTED BY DMHAS OPERATED AND DMHAS CONTRACTED PROVIDERS IN  
EVERY SERVICE LOCATION, CLIENT LOUNGE, WAITING AREA AND UNIT**

**This notice is available upon request in other formats and languages.**

**DMHAS Office of the Commissioner**

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([www.ct.gov/dmhas/crg](http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/crg))