



# YOUR RIGHTS



*Client of Mental Health,  
Developmental Disability and  
Substance Abuse Services*

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**You can also get help from the following:**

Governor's Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities:

**1-800-821-6922**

The NC Careline:

**1-800-662-7030**

Office of Advocacy and Customer Services:

**(919)715-3197**

**What to do if services have been denied or reduced.**

If you feel that your services have been denied or reduced incorrectly, then you will need to contact the Southeastern Center, Appeals Coordinator, at 796-3104 for assistance.

**Are you having issues with housing?**

You can contact: Anita Oldham, Housing Specialist, at (910) 313-6043

**or**

go to: *wilmingtonhousing.com*.

**???QUESTIONS???**

If you have questions or need assistance with any of the information contained in this handbook, please call the Southeastern Center Consumer Affairs office at 910-796-3138, or any of the following Consumer Affairs Staff :

Carolyn Craddock	Dir. Consumer Affairs	313-6004
Lena Mair	Client Advocate	313-6013
Julie Quisenberry	Client Advocate	796-3138
Loleta Wilson	Client Advocate	313-6015
Anita Oldham	Housing Specialist	313-6043
Louise D'Alessandro	Admin Assist	313-3067

As a client of services, you have certain rights. This pamphlet will outline these rights and provide you with information about who to contact should you have questions or concerns. If you are a youth, please ask for the handbook designed for you.

- You have the right to dignity, privacy, and humane care.
- You have the right to be free of mental and physical abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- You have the right to treatment, including medical care and habilitation, regardless of your age or disability. The treatment you receive will be age appropriate.
- You have the right to be involved in the development of an individualized treatment plan, also known as your person centered plan. You have the right to invite family or friends to participate in the development of your person centered plan. The purpose of the person centered plan is to help you achieve your full potential. This plan must be developed within 30 days of entering services.
- You will be notified in advance of all potential risks and benefits of treatment.
- You have the right to develop an Advance Directive for mental health treatment. You may contact any Consumer Affairs staff person for assistance in developing an Advance Directive or for additional information.

- You have the right to be free from unnecessary or excessive medications. Medications will not be used as punishment or for the convenience of staff. You also have the right to refuse medications, but this should always be discussed with your doctor.
- You have the right to refuse treatment at anytime. However it is strongly encouraged that you discuss this with your treatment team prior to doing this.
- You CANNOT be treated with electroshock therapy, experimental drugs or procedures, or be given surgery (unless it is an emergency surgery) without your written permission.
- The use of physical restraint or seclusion cannot be used unless you and your team decide it is a needed intervention and it becomes part of your person centered plan, or you present a danger to yourself or others and there are no other means available to protect your safety and the safety of others.
- The use of physical restraint or seclusion cannot be used unless you and your team decide it is a needed intervention and it becomes part of your person centered plan, or you present a danger to yourself or others and there are no other means available to protect your safety and the safety of others.

### **When can your rights be restricted?**

Your rights can only be restricted for reasons related to your care or treatment. If it is determined by the treatment team, which you are a part of. You have the right to have an advocate or someone you trust be involved in the process. A restriction of your rights must go through a Client Rights committee for approval before they can be restricted. Any restriction will be documented and kept in your client record.

### **What to do if your rights have been violated or you have concerns regarding the quality of services or other issues.**

If at anytime you feel that your rights have been violated, you have concerns with service quality or you have any other issues, you may contact a Client Advocate at (910) 796-3138 to file a complaint. A complaint can be filed in person or over the phone. The client advocate will investigate the complaint, which can be done without using your name. This must be done within 5 days. You will be sent a written letter explaining the of the outcome of the investigation.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome ,you can file a complaint with the Southeastern Center Client Rights Committee if it relates to rights violations. All other complaint appeals will be heard by the Southeastern Center-Area/LME Director.

If you have questions or need assistance with filing a complaint, please call (910) 796-3138

- You have the right to keep personal possessions and clothing, except those items that are prohibited by law.
- You have the right to keep and spend a responsible sum of your own money.
- You have the right to participate in religious worship if you choose.
- You have the right to retain a driver's license, unless you are not of age or have been prohibited to do so by a court of law.

If you are under the age of 18, you have the right to proper adult supervision and guidance, the right to age appropriate activities, special education and vocational training if needed, appropriate structure, and treatment separate from adults.

*If your primary disability is a developmental disability, you have the right to continuity of care when being discharged from a residential facility, and are still needing residential care. If you are being discharged for any reason, the residential provider MUST provide you with a written 30-day notice, so that you have ample time to find a new residence. This right exists as long as you have not committed any illegal acts or are not a safety threat to others.*

- The fact that you are receiving services and any information about your care is confidential. Information about you can only be shared when:
  1. You have given written consent.
  2. It has been court ordered by a court of law. If you are under 18 years of age and it is determined to be in your best interest to notify your parent or legal guardian.
  3. When a client advocate is working to help resolve an issue for you.
  4. If you become a danger to yourself or others and it is necessary for the agency to take out involuntary commitment papers or find hospital placement for you.
  5. If the provider believe that you are likely to commit a crime, we will share the information with the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- Unless you have been declared incompetent by a court of law and have a legal guardian appointed to you, you have the same basic rights as everyone else. This Includes:
  1. You have the right to dispose of property
  2. You have the right to make purchases
  3. You have the right to enter into contractual relationships
  4. You have the right to vote
  5. You have the right to marry and divorce
- You have the right to a discharge plan prior to being discharged. You will receive a copy of the plan.

### **Rights in a 24 hour Facility**

If you receive care in a 24 hour facility, you have the rights listed above as well as the right to the following:

- You have the right to receive necessary medical care if you are sick. If your insurance does not cover the cost, then you will be responsible for payment.
- You have the right to send and receive unopened mail, and have access to writing material, postage, and staff assistance if requested.
- You have the right to contact and consult with a client advocate.

- You have the right to contact, consult and see a lawyer, your own doctor, or other private professional. This will be at your own expense, not the expense of the facility.
- If you are under 18 years of age, you may contact and consult with your parent or legal guardian at any time.
- You have the right to make and receive confidential telephone calls. All long distance calls will be at your expense, not the expense of the facility.
- You have the right to receive visitors between the hours of 8:00am and 9:00pm. Visiting hours must be for 6 hours each day, with 2 of those hours being after 6:00pm. If you are under the age of 18, visitors cannot interfere with school or treatment.
- You have the right to communicate and meet with individuals that want to communicate and meet with you. This may be under supervision if your treatment team feels this is necessary.
- You have the right to make visits outside the facility, unless it has been included in your person centered plan that this is not a good idea.
- You have the right to be outside daily, and access facilities and/or equipment for physical exercise several times per week.
- You have the right to individual storage space for your private belongings.