

**59-29b78. Rights of patients.** (a) Every patient being treated in any treatment facility, in addition to all other rights preserved by the provisions of this act, shall have the following rights:

- (1) To wear the patient's own clothes, keep and use the patient's own personal possessions including toilet articles and keep and be allowed to spend the patient's own money;
- (2) to communicate by all reasonable means with a reasonable number of persons at reasonable hours of the day and night, including both to make and receive confidential telephone calls, and by letter, both to mail and receive unopened correspondence, except that if the head of the treatment facility should deny a patient's right to mail or to receive unopened correspondence under the provisions of subsection (b), such correspondence shall be opened and examined in the presence of the patient;
- (3) to conjugal visits if facilities are available for such visits;
- (4) to receive visitors in reasonable numbers and at reasonable times each day;
- (5) to refuse involuntary labor other than the housekeeping of the patient's own bedroom and bathroom, provided that nothing herein shall be construed so as to prohibit a patient from performing labor as a part of a therapeutic program to which the patient has given their written consent and for which the patient receives reasonable compensation;
- (6) not to be subject to such procedures as psychosurgery, electroshock therapy, experimental medication, aversion therapy or hazardous treatment procedures without the written consent of the patient or the written consent of a parent or legal guardian, if such patient is a minor or has a legal guardian provided that the guardian has obtained authority to consent to such from the court which has venue over the guardianship following a hearing held for that purpose;
- (7) to have explained, the nature of all medications prescribed, the reason for the prescription and the most common side effects and, if requested, the nature of any other treatments ordered;
- (8) to communicate by letter with the secretary for aging and disability services, the head of the treatment facility and any court, attorney, physician, psychologist or minister of religion, including a Christian Science practitioner. All such communications shall be forwarded at once to the addressee without examination and communications from such persons shall be delivered to the patient without examination;
- (9) to contact or consult privately with the patient's physician or psychologist, minister of religion, including a Christian Science practitioner, legal guardian or attorney at any time and if the patient is a minor, their parent;
- (10) to be visited by the patient's physician, psychologist, minister of religion, including a Christian Science practitioner, legal guardian or attorney at any time and if the patient is a minor, their parent;
- (11) to be informed orally and in writing of their rights under this section upon admission to a treatment facility; and
- (12) to be treated humanely consistent with generally accepted ethics and practices.

(b) The head of the treatment facility may, for good cause only, restrict a patient's rights under this section, except that the rights enumerated in subsections (a)(5) through (a)(12), and the right to mail any correspondence which does not violate postal regulations, shall not be restricted by the head of the treatment facility under any circumstances. Each treatment facility shall adopt regulations governing the conduct of all patients being treated in such treatment facility, which regulations shall be consistent with the provisions of this section. A statement explaining the reasons for any restriction of a patient's rights shall be immediately entered on such patient's medical record and copies of such statement shall be made available to the patient or to the parent, or legal guardian if such patient is a minor or has a legal guardian, and to the patient's attorney. In addition, notice of any restriction of a patient's rights shall be communicated to the patient in a timely fashion.

(c) Any person willfully depriving any patient of the rights protected by this section, except for the restriction of such rights in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) or in accordance with a properly obtained court order, shall be guilty of a class C misdemeanor.

**History:** L. 1998, ch. 134, § 32; L. 2014, ch. 115, § 223; July 1.