

Patient Guide



WELCOME TO South Texas Health System®



Thank you for choosing South Texas Health System for your healthcare services. This patient guidebook has been created to help you become familiar with the services of our facilities and to provide you with helpful information during your stay.

South Texas Health System is an integrated system of care comprised of six facilities, six freestanding emergency rooms, multiple physician practices and a broad variety of outpatient services. We are dedicated to achieving the highest quality of compassionate care for you and your family.

We look forward to serving your healthcare needs and if we can do anything to make your stay more pleasant, please do not hesitate to ask any of our staff for assistance. It is my pleasure to welcome you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Stark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Charles Stark
Regional Vice President

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MISSION AND VALUES

Our Vision

South Texas Health System is dedicated to achieving the highest quality of compassionate care for you and your family through innovation and advanced technology. We recognize that a philosophy of Service Excellence combined with visionary leadership is our future if we are to maintain the position as the region’s healthcare leader.

Mission Statement

To provide superior quality healthcare services that:

- Patients recommend to family and friends
- Physicians prefer for their patients
- Purchasers select for their clients
- Employees are proud of
- Investors seek for long-term returns



OUR COMMITMENT TO CARE

How is your stay? Are you getting the care you need? Are your doctors and nurses listening and responding to your questions or requests? Our goal is to provide the best quality care. To do so, we ask for feedback from patients like you.

During Your Stay

Please speak with your nurse or nursing supervisor if you have any questions or concerns about your care. If your issue is still not resolved, then contact the department director, risk manager, or administrator. You also have the right to file your complaint with:

Texas Department of State Health Services

Customer Service Representative

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714
888-963-7111
TDD: 1-800-735-2989
Email: customer.service@dshs.state.tx.us

Office of Quality and Patient Safety

The Joint Commission

One Renaissance Blvd.
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
630-792-5000
Email: patientsafetyreport@jointcommission.org
jointcommission.org

After Your Stay

Once you leave our care, we may ask you to take the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey. This survey is a tool to measure and report patient satisfaction. *It's made up of simple questions on key topics, such as:*

- Doctor and nurse communication
- Medicine and discharge information
- Pain management and staff responsiveness
- Overall quality of the hospital

If you're selected to receive this survey, please take the time to complete it. The results will help us know what we're doing right and where we can improve.

Want to Know How We Score?

You can review and compare the quality, care and safety ratings for different hospitals at:

Medicare Hospital Compare, which uses HCAHPS results and other data: medicare.gov/hospitalcompare

You also can find information on hospitals at:

Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP)
hfap.org

DNV Healthcare
dnvglhealthcare.com

The Joint Commission
qualitycheck.org

Nondiscrimination Policy

South Texas Health System complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate or exclude anyone, or treat them differently on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. South Texas Health System understands the diverse needs of our community and offers complimentary interpretation and language assistance services to patients and family members to provide effective communication throughout your visit or stay with us. If you require an interpreter or language assistance, please ask a hospital employee/house supervisor and one will be provided at no cost to you.

South Texas Health System utilizes the company GLOBO to handle most of our language and communication services, which include video remote interpretation, written translation and on-site interpreting.

If you believe that South Texas Health System has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with:

Pamela Gordon, MBA, CPHQ, CPPS, FACHE

System Director of Quality and Infection Prevention and Risk
Office: 956-632-4695
Fax: 956-971-5276
Email: pam.gordon@uhsrgv.com

You also can file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail, phone or email at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Ave. SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201
1-800-368-1019
1-800-537-7697 (TDD)
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

Family-Initiated Rapid Response Team

During your stay, you have access to a special service called the Rapid Response Team. You can call this service and a critical-care team will check on you or your loved one and provide help.

When to Call Rapid Response

Call for help if you notice:

- Chest pain
- Inability to wake up
- Changes in breathing or difficulty breathing
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Severe shakiness or seizure
- Sudden changes in vision
- Sudden confusion or drastic changes in behavior
- The patient feels he or she is experiencing a condition that is worsening or a serious new health concern is developing

How to Call Rapid Response

Step 1: Dial the appropriate number on the bedside phone:

South Texas Health System Edinburg/South Texas Health System Children's: 62222

South Texas Health System Heart: 455

South Texas Health System McAllen: 54800

Step 2: Tell the operator your name, room number, patient's name and your concern.

The Rapid Response Team may be called when a staff member, patient or family member is concerned and/or assesses an acute change in the patient's condition.

VISITORS

Guidelines for Visitors

Visitors can be "good medicine" for patients. Family members and friends are welcome to visit; however, patient care is our primary concern.

- People with colds, sore throats or any contagious diseases should not visit patients.
- To maintain a quiet environment, visitors should avoid creating unnecessary noise.
- Visitors may be asked to leave the room when the doctor or nurse needs to see the patient. Liberal visiting arrangements may be made for families or friends of surgical patients on the day of surgery.
- Visitors should ask before giving gifts of food or beverages since many patients have special or restricted diets.
- Cut flowers are not permitted in the critical care units.

Please contact the nursing unit if you have questions.

Visiting Hours

Visits from family and friends are an important part of the healing process. In order to meet the individual needs of our patients, visiting hours may vary from unit to unit.

Please check with your nurse regarding specific hours and age restrictions.



Smoke-Free Environment

South Texas Health System facilities are smoke-free and tobacco-free. As a healthcare provider, STHS recognizes the hazards of tobacco use and enforces a no-tobacco/no-smoking policy. No one, including employees, patients and visitors, is allowed to use any form of tobacco in any STHS facility or on any property owned by STHS, including parking lots and private offices.

ATM Machines

ATM machines are located throughout our main facilities.

Dining Services

Cafeterias are located on the main floor of each hospital. *Meal times are as follows:*

South Texas Health System Edinburg

Open Monday - Friday

- Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- Lunch: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Dining services for South Texas Health System Children's and Edinburg Regional Rehab Center are available at South Texas Health System Edinburg.

South Texas Health System Heart

Open Monday - Friday

- Breakfast: 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- Lunch: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

South Texas Health System McAllen

Open every day

- Breakfast: 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- Lunch: 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Dinner: 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Coffee Corner (Edinburg Only)

Located in the main lobby and open Monday through Friday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Vending Machines

Vending machines are available in the cafeteria at the main campus, in the ER lobby at South Texas Health System McAllen, in the ER lobby at South Texas Health System Children's, and in the front lobby at South Texas Health System Heart.

INPATIENT ACCOMMODATIONS

Your Hospital Bed

Hospital beds can be adjusted by using the controls on the beds. The beds are equipped with three side rails that must be raised while you are asleep or sedated. Should you need assistance, please call your nurse.

Room Temperature

All rooms in the hospital are centrally heated and air conditioned. If the temperature in your room is not comfortable, please notify your nurse.

Calling Your Nurse

All rooms are equipped with a nurse call system. Patient bathrooms also are equipped with an emergency call system. You will receive instructions for their use.

Patient Meal Services

We recognize that food and nutrition play a very important role in your well-being. To serve you better, we have a meal preparation and delivery system for room service dining. The special diet that your physician has prescribed for you gives you greater control over what and when you eat to help in your recovery.

Please request a visit from our registered dietitian if you have questions about your diet or any nutritional concerns. If you have any requests regarding your meals, please ask your nurse to contact the Dietary Department.

Telephones

Please give your telephone number to friends and family so they can dial you directly.

To make a local call: Dial 9 and then the number.

Please Do Not Leave the Unit

In the interest of patient safety and security, patients are encouraged to remain on their assigned floors. Patients should not leave the floor without discussing it with their nurse.

Cell Phones

Cell phones may be used in public areas of the hospital, except at the South Texas Behavioral Health Center campus. If you have a cell phone with you, please use it with discretion and keep it at a low volume or in vibrate mode while a physician is visiting with a patient or family. The camera option on a cell phone may not be used at any time.

STHS is not responsible for the loss of cell phones.

Gift Shop

There are gift shops in the front lobby of South Texas Health System Edinburg and South Texas Health System McAllen. There is also a kiosk in the South Texas Health System Heart lobby. The Gift Shop has greeting cards, snacks, toiletries, flowers and other gift items.

Hearing-Impaired Services

A telecommunications device is available to help hearing-impaired patients or patients who want to communicate with a hearing-impaired relative or friend. Ask your nurse for details.

Guest Internet Service

We offer wireless internet access as a free service for patients, families and visitors at South Texas Health System Edinburg, South Texas Health System Children's, South Texas Health System Heart and South Texas Health System McAllen. Wireless service is available in the following locations:

- Lobbies and dining areas
- Patient and family waiting areas
- Inpatient rooms

If you need technical support, please call 956-388-2233.

Drills

For your protection, the hospital conducts fire and disaster drills regularly. If a drill occurs while you are here, please remain in your room and do not become alarmed.

Valuables or Lost Items

The hospital permits patients to bring and use personal clothing and possessions; however, patients are encouraged to leave their valuables, such as jewelry and large amounts of cash, at home for safekeeping. If you lose something, immediately notify your nurse, who will report the loss to Security. All found items should be brought to Lost and Found located in Security. The hospital will not be responsible for the loss, damage or theft of personal items brought to the hospital.

Home medicines should be sent home for safekeeping. If not, they will be taken to the pharmacy. You can pick up your medicines from the pharmacy when you're discharged.

Perishable items such as flowers, fruit and food typically will be disposed of immediately. All other items will be kept for 30 days before disposal. STHS will make an effort to contact the owners of any item found on campus.

Do not leave important items like eyeglasses, dentures or hearing aids on meal trays or your bed as they may get lost. STHS is not responsible for the loss or damage of these items.

PATIENT EDUCATION

Patient education is an integral part of quality healthcare at South Texas Health System. Education about your health status will assist you and your family or friends to make well-informed healthcare decisions and will increase your ability to participate in your own care.

Members of your healthcare team will provide you with information and education regarding your illness, recovery and health maintenance. Also, they can help explain other topics related to your care, such as advanced directives, medications, medical equipment, nutrition and follow-up care. If you have questions, speak to any of your healthcare team members.

BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CARE

You can make your hospital stay safer by being an active, involved and informed member of your healthcare team. The suggestions below can help you become more informed and involved in your healthcare.

Become More Informed and Involved

- Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask caregivers questions. It's OK to ask! If you don't understand the explanation, ask again.
- Speak up if you have questions about your care or treatments, or if something doesn't seem right to you.
- Learn all that you can about your health problem and share your information with your caregivers.
- Ask caregivers about your medications, their purposes and their effects. Ask why you are taking them.
- Ask caregivers to check your hospital armband every time you receive a medication or treatment.

Preventing Infections

Hand washing is the best way to stop the spread of germs.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. Rub your palms and fingernails between your fingers and the backs of your hands for at least 15-20 seconds.
2. You may use alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands. Rub it all over your hands until they are dry.
3. Clean your hands before eating or touching food, after you use the restroom, after you cough or sneeze, and after touching someone else.
4. Everyone caring for you should clean their hands. If you do not see your doctor, nurse or other healthcare provider clean their hands when entering your room to provide care, remember – it's OK to ask!
5. Healthcare workers should wear clean gloves when they provide care to you. It's OK to ask!

Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.

1. Use tissues.
2. Throw away used tissues after coughing or sneezing, and clean your hands.

Sometimes preventing infection requires the use of isolation precautions. Ask caregivers to explain what these are and how they work.

Wash your hands carefully after handling any type of soiled material.



Manage Your Meds

Whether you take one medicine or five, it is important to know what you are taking and why. *Ask your doctor these questions about any new (and current) medicines you take:*

- What is the name of my medicine? Generic name?
- Why am I taking it? How will it help?
When will it start working?
- What dose? How often? How long?
- What is the best time (morning, night, etc.) or way (with food, with water) to take it?
- What are possible side effects? What do I do if they happen?
- Are there any foods, drinks or activities to avoid?
- What do I do if I miss a dose?

Remember, take charge of your medicines. Think you are due for your next dose? Wondering if this new medicine can replace one you already take? Want to make sure all your medicines and supplements are safe to take together? Do not be afraid to ask.

Prevent Medicine Errors

Be sure your doctors and nurses know:

- That your name matches the name on the medicine (use your ID bracelet to double-check).
- All the prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, and herbal or vitamin supplements you take.
- Any allergies you have to medicines, anesthesia, foods, latex, etc.

PREVENTING FALLS IN THE HOSPITAL

Who is at risk for falls?

Anyone can fall. Falls occur in any age group, at any time and in any place. If a fall occurs while you are in the hospital, associated complications can prolong your hospital stay and your recovery. There are many factors that increase the possibility of falling.

They include:

- Illness, surgery, tests or treatments can make you weak or unsteady.
- Medicines can make you dizzy or confused.

- Medical equipment—such as IV pumps, oxygen or tubes—can make it difficult to move without help.
- Lack of sleep and unfamiliar surroundings can affect your judgment.

Staff members will:

- Ask about your history of falls before coming to the hospital to assess your risk of falling.
- Orient you to your new surroundings.
- Place the call bell and needed objects within your reach.
- Answer your call bell as soon as possible.
- Help you get in and out of bed and with toileting, as needed.
- Provide non-skid footwear.
- Keep the environment free of unneeded equipment, furniture and clutter.
- Place special armbands on your wrist if you are at increased risk of falling.

You can decrease your risk of falling by:

- Telling your nurse if you have a history of falling.
- Using the call bell to ask for help before trying to get out of bed or go to the bathroom.
- Making sure the call bell and other needed items are within your reach before family or staff member leave your room.
- After calling for help, stay where you are and wait for the staff to come and help you.
- When getting out of bed, sit on the side of the bed before standing. Stand slowly since some medications or conditions can make you dizzy when you change positions.
- When finished in the bathroom, use the call bell and wait for staff to assist you back to your bed.
- Wearing non-skid footwear and using equipment provided for your safety.
- Not using IV poles or furniture with wheels for support while walking.

Family and loved ones can help prevent falls by:

- Telling the nurse if the patient has a history of falls.
- Checking with the nurse before getting you in or out of bed.
- Reminding you to call for help before getting out of bed.

- Placing the call bell and other needed items within your reach.
- Reminding you of your surroundings if you are forgetful or confused and alert the staff when they leave your bedside.
- Refraining from tampering with any alarms or equipment in use to alert the nurse if you attempt to get up without asking for help.
- Informing the nurse if there are any routines that can help to prevent falls and keep you safe.

KEEPING YOU SAFE IF YOU NEED SURGERY

Caregivers will ask for your name and date of birth several times and they will ask the kind of surgery you are having and the part of your body that will be operated on. If you have questions, do not understand something, or something does not seem right to you, speak up! Remember, it's OK to ask!

Before some surgeries, the doctor may write his or her initials on your skin to confirm the correct location for your procedure. We will perform a "timeout" right before your surgery to make sure everyone on your team agrees on what surgery is to be done.

After Your Surgery

Tell us if you are having pain. We want to make you comfortable. Ask questions about new medications and treatments. Ask when you can resume activities, like getting out of bed and walking independently.

Use assistive devices such as canes, walkers and wheelchairs as needed.



RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

The Rapid Response Team is a group of medical and nursing professionals trained to help when signs suggest that a patient is getting much sicker. The Rapid Response Team takes action very quickly and will go anywhere in the hospital to see a patient.

The Rapid Response Team may suggest things like lab tests, medications or moving the patient to an intensive care unit.

Medications

Every medication that you receive in the hospital is reviewed first and then prepared. The pharmacist screens your medications to make sure there is no potential for drug interactions and to see that you are not given any drug that may cause an allergic reaction.



ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

One of the most important decisions you can make about your care is to fill out advance directives in case you can no longer speak for yourself. Advance directives are documents that let others know your wishes about the type of care you want. And they will only be used if you become unconscious or too ill to communicate yourself.

Different states have different laws about advance directives. Check with your nurse if you have any questions. *Directives can include:*

Living Will

This set of instructions explains the type of life-prolonging medical care you wish to accept or refuse. It can include your wishes about the use of resuscitation (CPR) if your heart stops, a ventilator if you stop breathing, or feeding tubes or IVs if you cannot eat or drink.

Durable Power of Attorney

For healthcare: This is a legal document that names your healthcare proxy—someone who can make medical decisions for you if you are unable to do so. An official healthcare proxy can represent your wishes on emergency care, but also on other medical issues like potential treatment options, blood transfusions, kidney dialysis, etc. Choose someone you trust, discuss your medical wishes and make sure the person agrees to represent you in this role.

For finances: You also have the right to appoint someone or the same person to help manage your finances if you cannot.

Fill Out Your Forms

Make sure you submit advance directives each time you go to the hospital, so your most current information and wishes are on file. You do not need a lawyer to fill these out. For more information and to obtain the forms you need, contact the Case Management Department.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

South Texas Health System is committed to promoting your comfort and well-being. There are many diseases and surgical procedures that can cause pain. *If you are experiencing pain:*

- Ask your doctor or nurse what to expect regarding pain and pain management.
 - Discuss pain relief options with your doctor or nurse.
 - Work with your doctor and nurse to develop a plan for managing your pain.
 - Don't wait – ask for pain relief when the pain begins! Most medications take a while to work.
 - Tell your doctor* or nurse if your pain is not relieved.
 - Don't be afraid to ask for medication to relieve your pain – taking medication will not make you an “addict.”
- Effective pain management is essential to the healing process.

Wong-Baker FACES® Pain Rating Scale

You're the Expert on Your Pain



0
No Hurt



2
Hurts
Little Bit



4
Hurts
Little More



6
Hurts
Even More



8
Hurts
Whole Lot



10
Hurts
Worst

* Physicians are not employees or agents of South Texas Health System.

SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

How to Play a Role in Your Loved One's Recovery

We encourage patients to pick a key person to support them during their hospital stay. Whether you are that primary support person, or just one of many people caring and supporting your loved one, you can play an important role in making sure your loved one gets the safest and best care both here and beyond the hospital.

What to Know Before You Leave

Caregivers can help ensure the best outcome for their loved one after a hospital stay by getting the answers to these three questions:

- What is the next step for medical care (home or facility, follow-up with primary care physician, or physical therapy, etc.)? Help your loved one arrange the details to make this happen—financial plan, transportation, scheduling, etc.
- What new and former medicines does my loved one need to take? Help your loved one understand the details—timing, dosing instructions, side effects, prescription refills, etc.
- What health warning signs do I need to watch for and what do I do if they happen? Help your loved one by writing these symptoms down as well as the name and contact number to call.

Caregivers Need Care Too

If you feel like you need a break or help, reach out to friends and family. And consult the resources listed here:

National Alliance for Caregiving

caregiving.org

Caregiver Action Network

caregiveraction.org

Family Caregiver Alliance

caregiver.org

HOSPITAL BILLS AND INSURANCE

The hospital billing process may seem complicated, but you can feel more in control by knowing exactly what your bill covers. For example, if you stay overnight, you can expect to see charges for your room, meals, 24-hour nursing care and medicines. The bill also will show charges for any special services, such as X-rays and lab tests. You will receive bills for doctors, surgeons and specialists separately from the hospital.

Medicare

If you have Medicare, you will have to fill out an MSP (Medicare Secondary Payer) form. This ensures that Medicare only pays for services not covered by other insurance you may have. If you have secondary insurance, this usually covers Medicare deductibles. If you do not have secondary insurance, you need to pay these amounts yourself.

Also be sure to read your quarterly MSNs (Medicare Summary Notices) to review:

- The amount your doctor(s) charged
- The amount Medicare approved and paid
- The amount you owe
- Your current deductible status

If you have questions, call the customer service number listed on your statement.

Commercial Insurance Providers

If you use a commercial insurance provider, then the hospital forwards your claim based on the information you provide at registration. About a month after you leave the hospital, you will get an explanation of benefits (EOB) statement from your insurance provider. This is not a bill. *EOBs show:*

- The amount billed by your doctor or hospital
- How much of that cost is covered by your insurance
- How much you owe

Review this and all other bill-related documents carefully. If you have questions, contact the customer service number listed on the statement.

Self-Pay Patients and Payment Arrangements

If you are planning to pay your bills without help from Medicare or a commercial insurance provider, then you'll get bills directly from the hospital. When the first bill arrives, call the hospital's financial services department to set up a payment plan.

Communicate with the financial services department as soon as possible. If you don't set up a payment plan, or if you stop making payments, then your account may be placed with a collection agency. The hospital wants to work with you, so reach out with any questions or concerns you have.

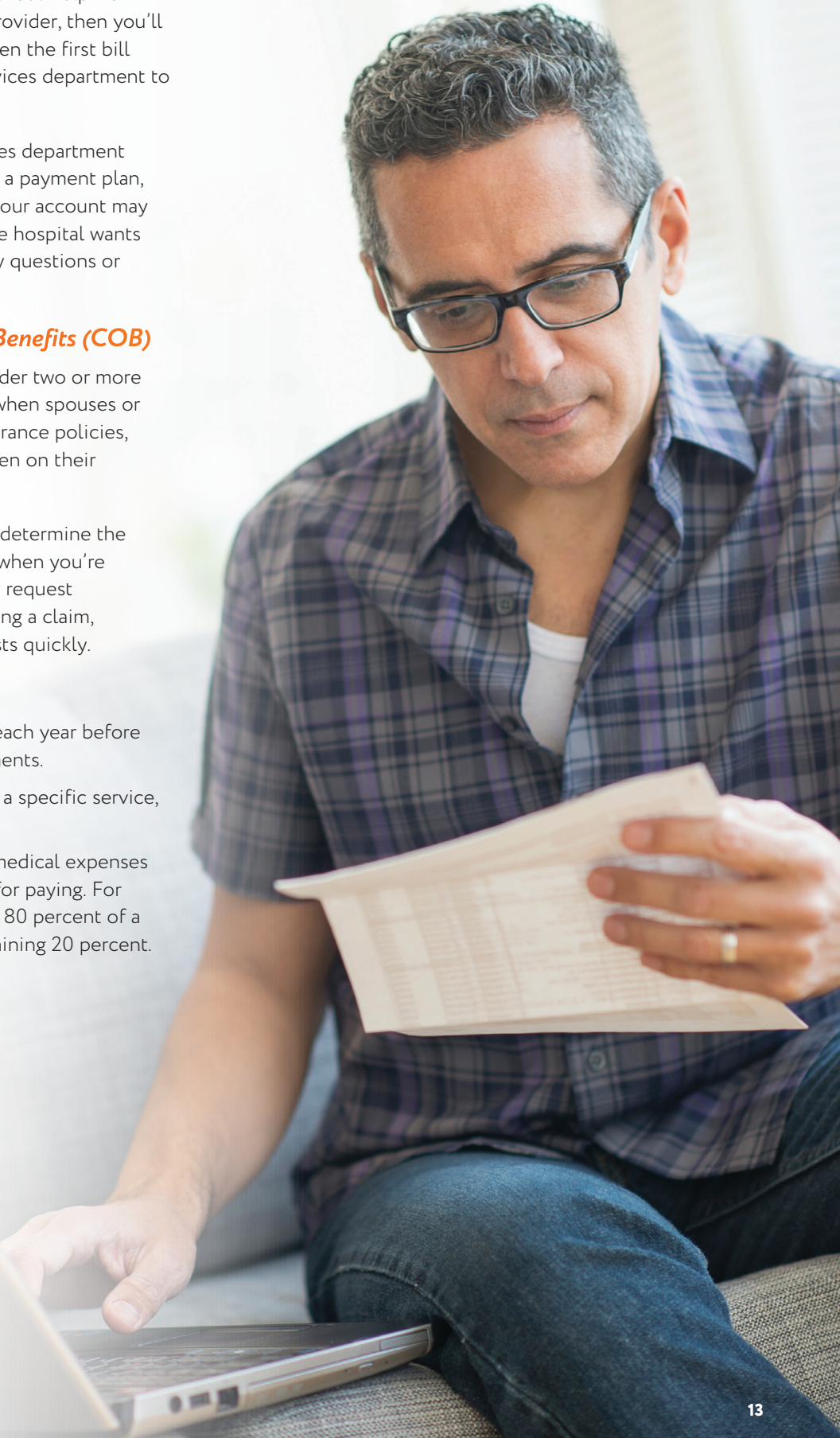
Understanding Coordination of Benefits (COB)

COBs happen when you're covered under two or more insurance companies. This may occur when spouses or partners are listed on each other's insurance policies, or when both parents carry their children on their individual policies.

To prevent duplicate payments, COBs determine the primary payer. You choose who this is when you're admitted. Insurance companies usually request completed COBs from you before paying a claim, so make sure you address these requests quickly.

Commonly Confused Terms

- **Deductible:** The amount you owe each year before your insurance begins making payments.
- **Co-payment:** A flat fee you pay for a specific service, usually due at the time of service.
- **Coinsurance:** The portion of your medical expenses that you're personally responsible for paying. For example, your insurance may cover 80 percent of a bill, while you have to pay the remaining 20 percent.



PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. It is the law in the state of Texas that the healthcare provider or facility recognize the rights of the patient and that the patient respects the healthcare provider's or health-care facility's right to expect certain behavior on the part of the patients.

Patient's rights are the following:

1. To be treated with courtesy and respect, with appreciation for individual dignity, and with protection of privacy.
2. To a prompt and reasonable response to questions and requests.
3. To know who is providing medical services and who is responsible for care.
4. To know what support services are available, and the patient who does not speak English or is communicational handicapped has the right to be provided an interpreter when receiving medical services.
5. To know what rules and regulations apply to conduct.
6. To be given, by the physician, information concerning diagnosis, planned course of treatment, alternatives, risks and prognosis; to participate in the development of the treatment plan; and to formulate Advance Directives.
7. To refuse any treatment, except as otherwise provided by law.
8. To be given, upon request, full information and necessary counseling on the availability of known financial resources for care.
9. The patient eligible for Medicare has the right to know, upon request, if the healthcare provider or facility accepts the Medicare assignment rate, before treatment.
10. To receive, upon request, a reasonable estimate of charges for medical care before treatment.
11. To receive a copy of a reasonably clear and understandable, itemized bill and, upon request, to have the charges explained.
12. To impartial access to medical treatment or accommodations, regardless of race, national origin, religion, physical or mental handicap, or source of payment.
13. To treatment for any emergency medical condition that will deteriorate from failure to provide treatment.
14. To know if medical treatment is for purposes of experimental research and to give consent or refusal to participate.
15. To express grievances regarding any violation of rights, as stated in Texas law, through the grievance procedure of the healthcare provider or facility to the appropriate state-licensing agency.
16. To pain relief including:
 - a. Information about pain and pain relief measures.
 - b. A concerned staff committed to pain prevention and management.
 - c. Health professionals who respond quickly to reports of pain.
 - d. Your reports of pain will be believed.
17. All patients (or their support person, where appropriate) shall have the right, subject to his or her consent, to receive the visitors whom he or she designates, including, but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), another family member, or a friend, and the patient (or support person, where appropriate) shall have the right to withdraw or deny such consent at any time.

18. All patients shall be given an opportunity to identify a support person who may be a family member, friend or other individual who supports the patient during his or her hospital stay and may exercise the patient's visitation rights in the event the patient is incapacitated or otherwise unable to do so. A support person may or may not be the same person who would make decisions regarding medical treatment in the event of the patient's incapacity. A support person may be identified by the patient verbally or in writing. The identity of a support person selected by a patient shall be recorded in the patient's medical record.
19. All patients shall be informed, before care is furnished to the patient whenever possible, of their visitation rights, and any clinically necessary or reasonable restriction or limitation the hospital may place on such rights, and the reason for such restriction or limitation.

B. Patient is responsible for the following:

1. For providing, to the best of his/her knowledge, accurate and complete information about present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalization, medications and other matters relating to his/her health.
2. For reporting unexpected changes in condition to healthcare providers.
3. For reporting to healthcare providers whether he/she understands the planned course of action and what is expected of him/her.
4. For following the treatment plan recommended by healthcare providers.
5. For keeping appointments and, when unable to do so for any reason, for notifying the healthcare provider.
6. For his/her actions if he/she refuses treatment or does not follow the healthcare provider's instructions.
7. For assuring that their financial obligations for healthcare are fulfilled as promptly as possible.
8. For following the rules and regulations affecting patient care and conduct.
9. The patient has the responsibilities pertaining to pain management to the following:
 - a. Ask your doctor or nurse what to expect regarding pain and pain management.
 - b. Discuss pain relief with your doctors and nurses.
 - c. Work with your doctor and nurses to develop a pain management plan.
 - d. Ask for pain relief when pain first begins.
 - e. Help your doctor and nurse assess your pain.
 - f. Tell your doctor or nurse if pain is not relieved.
 - g. Tell your doctor or nurse any worries you may have about taking pain medication.

Procedures:

Patients may file complaints. The contact information for regulatory agencies is listed below. The information on how to file a complaint to the state agency or The Joint Commission is made available to the patient during the course of admission. This information is available in the Patient Guide brochure.

**South Texas Health System
Quality Management Department**
956-632-4695 or 956-632-4484

**Office of Quality and Patient Safety,
The Joint Commission**
One Renaissance Blvd. | Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
630-792-5000

**Texas Department of State Health Services
Customer Service**
P.O. Box 149347 | Austin, TX 78714-9347
512-776-2150 or 512-458-7111 or 888-963-7111
TDD Relay Texas: 1-800-735-2989
customer.service@dshs.texas.gov

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Blvd. | Baltimore, MD 21244
Medicare Service Center: 1-800-MEDICARE
(1-800-633-4227)
Report Medicare Fraud and Abuse: 1-800-HSS-TIPS
(1-800-447-8477)
<https://www.cms.gov/>

You have the right to have complaints and/or grievances reviewed by the hospital. You are encouraged to contact the Charge Nurse, Nursing Director of the unit you are on for resolution of complaints and to report grievances. South Texas Health System reviews and, when possible, resolves complaints and grievances with you or your family. You have the right to voice complaints and recommend changes without being subject to coercion, discrimination, reprisal or unreasonable interruption of care. You have the right to file a complaint with the state authority or The Joint Commission.

You have the right to access protective services. The safety of healthcare delivery is enhanced when patients, as appropriate to their condition, are partners in the healthcare process. Hospitals are entitled to reasonable and responsible behavior on the part of the patients, within their capabilities, and their families.

Patients and families, as appropriate, are responsible to provide accurate and complete information about present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications and other matters relating to their health.

Patients and their families must report perceived risks in their care and unexpected changes in their condition. They can help the hospital understand their environment by providing feedback about services, needs and expectations.

Patients and families, as appropriate, are responsible for participating in their healthcare plan and communicating questions about their care to their healthcare providers if they do not understand their care, treatment and service, or what they are expected to do.

Patients and their families are responsible for following hospital instructions, policies, rules and regulations that are in place to support quality care and a safe environment.

Patients and families, as appropriate, are responsible for following the treatment plan recommended by the healthcare team. They should express any concerns about their ability to follow the proposed care plan. The hospital makes every effort to adapt the plan to the specific needs and limitations of the patients. When such adaptations to the care plan are not recommended, patients and their families are informed of the consequences of the alternatives and not following the proposed plan.

Patients and their families are responsible for the outcomes if they do not follow the care, treatment and service plan.

Patients are responsible for assuring that the financial obligations of their healthcare are promptly met as agreed to with the hospital. In the case of minors or incompetent adult patients, the parents or legal guardians shall be accountable for adhering to the responsibilities listed.

Patients and their families should show mutual consideration and respect of hospital staff, independent practitioners and other patients by maintaining civil language and conduct and must be considerate of the hospital's and other patients' property.

Patients and their families must inform their patient care provider of any special communication needs.



RESPECTING YOUR PRIVACY

This section describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Protected Health Information

Information about your health is private, and it should remain private. That is why this healthcare institution is required by federal and state law to protect the privacy of your health information. We call it Protected Health Information (PHI).

Who Will Follow This Notice

This notice describes the information privacy practices followed by our hospital employees, volunteers and related personnel.

The practices described in this Notice may also be followed by healthcare providers, who are members of our Medical Staff, if they have opted to abide by its contents. Many of the doctors follow the practices contained within this Notice. Other physicians have created their own Notice. Those members of the Medical Staff who opt not to abide by this Notice are required to give you a separate Notice that will explain their privacy practices.

Each participant who joins in this joint Notice of Privacy Practices serves as their own agent for all aspects of HIPAA Compliance, other than the delivery of this Joint Notice.

For physician-specific issues or questions, please feel free to contact your physician directly.

Hospital employees, volunteers and related personnel, including those members of the Medical Staff must follow this Notice with respect to:

- How we use your PHI
- Disclosing your PHI to others
- Your privacy rights
- Our privacy duties
- Hospital contacts for more information or, if necessary, a complaint

Your personal doctor may have different policies regarding the use and disclosure of PHI created in their offices.

Using or Disclosing Your PHI:

For Treatment

During the course of your treatment, we use and disclose your PHI. For example, if we test your blood in our laboratory, a technician will share the report with your doctor. Or, we will use your PHI to follow the doctor's orders for an X-ray, surgical procedure or other types of treatment-related procedures.

For Payment

After providing treatment, we will ask your insurer to pay us. Some of your PHI may be entered into our computers in order to send a claim to your insurer. This may include a description of your health problem, the treatment we provided and your membership number in your employer's health plan. Or, your insurer may want to review your medical record to determine whether your care was necessary. Also, we may disclose to a collection agency some of your PHI for collecting a bill that you have not paid.

For Healthcare Operations

Your medical record and PHI could be used in periodic assessments by physicians about the hospital's quality of care. Or we might use the PHI from real patients in education sessions with medical students training in our hospital. Other uses of PHI may include business planning for our hospital or the resolution of a complaint.

Special Uses

Your relationship to us as a patient might require using or disclosing your PHI in order to:

- Remind you of an appointment for treatment
- Tell you about treatment alternatives and options
- Tell you about our other health benefits and services
- Ask you to contribute to our charitable activities unless you tell us not to ask you

Your Authorization May Be Required

In many cases, we may use or disclose your PHI, as summarized above, for treatment, payment or healthcare operations or as required or permitted by law. In other cases, we must ask for your written authorization with specific instructions and limits on our use or disclosure of your PHI. You may revoke your authorization if you change your mind later.

Certain Uses and Disclosures of Your PHI Required or Permitted by Law

As a hospital or healthcare facility, we must abide by many laws and regulations that either require us or permit us to use or disclose your PHI.

Required or Permitted Uses and Disclosures

- If you do not verbally object, we may include information identifying you in a visitor's directory of patients while you are an inpatient in our hospital. This information may include your name, general condition and religious affiliation, if any.
- If you do not verbally object, we may share some of your PHI with a family member or friend involved in your care.
- We may use your PHI in an emergency when you are not able to express yourself.
- We may use or disclose your PHI for research if we receive certain assurances which protect your privacy.

We May Also Use or Disclose Your PHI

- When required by law, for example when ordered by a court
- For public health activities including reporting a communicable disease or adverse drug reaction to the Food and Drug Administration
- To report neglect, abuse or domestic violence
- To government regulators or agents to determine compliance with applicable rules and regulations
- In judicial or administrative proceedings as in a response to valid subpoena
- To a coroner for purposes of identifying a deceased person or determining a cause of death, or to a funeral director for making funeral arrangements
- For purposes of research when a research oversight committee, called an Institutional Review Board, has determined that there is a minimal risk to the privacy of your PHI
- For creating special types of health information that eliminate all legally required identifying information or information that would directly identify the subject of the information
- In accordance with the legal requirements of workers' compensation program

- When properly requested by law enforcement officials, for instance in reporting gunshot wounds, reporting a suspicious death or for other legal requirements
- If we reasonably believe that use or disclosure will avert a health hazard or to respond to a threat to public safety including an imminent crime against another person
- For national security purposes including to the Secret Service or if you are Armed Forces personnel and it is deemed necessary by appropriate military command authorities
- In connection with certain types of organ donation programs

YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS AND HOW TO EXERCISE THEM

Under the federally required privacy program, patients have specific rights.

Your Right to Request Limited Use or Disclosure

You have the right to request that we do not use or disclose your PHI in a particular way. However, we are not required to abide by your request. If we do not agree to your request, we must abide by the agreement.

Your Right to Confidential Communication

You have the right to receive confidential communication from the hospital at a location that you provide. Your request must be in writing, provide us with the other address and explain if the request will interfere with your method of payment.

Your Right to Revoke Your Authorization

You may revoke, in writing, the authorization you granted us for use or disclosure of your PHI. However, if we have relied on your consent or authorization, we may use or disclose your PHI up to the time you revoke your consent.

Your Right to Inspect and Copy

You have the right to inspect and copy your PHI. We may refuse to give you access to your PHI if we think it may cause you harm, but we must explain why and provide you with someone to contact for a review of our refusal.

Your Right to Amend Your PHI

If you disagree with your PHI within our records, you have the right to request, in writing, that we amend your PHI when it is a record that we created or have maintained for us. We may refuse to make the amendment and you have a right to disagree in writing. If we still disagree, we may prepare a counter-statement. Your statement and our counter-statement must be made part of our record about you.

Your Right to Know Who Else Sees Your PHI

You have the right to request an accounting of certain disclosures that we have made of your PHI over the past six years, but not before April 14, 2003. We are not required to account for all disclosures, including those made to you, authorized by you or those involving treatment, payment and healthcare operations as described above. There is no charge for an annual accounting, but there may be charges for additional accountings. We will inform you if there is a charge and you have the right to withdraw your request, or pay to proceed.

What if I Have a Complaint?

If you believe that your privacy has been violated, you may file a complaint with us or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C. We will not retaliate or penalize you for filing a complaint with the Office of the Secretary.

- To file a complaint with us, please contact the hospital's Risk Management Department or call the UHS Compliance Hotline at 800-852-3449. Your complaint should provide specific details to help us in investigating a potential problem.
- To file a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, write to: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 150 S. Independence Mall West, Suite 372, Public Ledger Building, Philadelphia, PA 19106-1019, or visit hhs.gov/ocv. This document is our notice. We will abide by the privacy practices set forth in this notice. However, we reserve the right to change this notice and our privacy practices when permitted or as required by law. If we change our notice of privacy practices, we will provide our revised notice to you when you next seek treatment from us.

Compliance with Certain State Laws

When we use or disclose your PHI as described in this notice, or when you exercise certain aspects of your rights set forth in this notice, we may apply state laws about the confidentiality of health information in place of federal privacy regulations. We do this when these state laws provide you with greater rights or protection for your PHI. For example, some state laws dealing with mental health records may require your expressed consent before your PHI could be disclosed in response to a subpoena. Another state law prohibits us from disclosing a copy of your record to you until you have been discharged from our hospital. When state laws are not in conflict or if these laws do not offer you better rights or more protection, we will continue to protect your privacy by applying the federal regulations.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

A successful recovery after your stay starts with a solid plan before you go.

Checklist for Discharge

Make sure you have the following information before you leave the hospital.

- **Discharge summary.** This includes why you were in the hospital, who cared for you, your procedures and medicines.
- **Medicine list.** This includes all your new and former prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements. Ask if there are any medicines you can stop taking or that are not good to take together. Also make sure you know why, how and when to take each one.
- **Prescriptions.** Check that your pharmacy has your new prescriptions and that you have a plan to get them filled.
- **Local resources.** Ask your discharge planner for help finding local after-care services or other support groups.

- **After-hospital services.** *Know how much support you'll need in these areas:*

- **Personal care:** bathing, eating, dressing, toileting
- **Home care:** cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping
- **Healthcare:** taking your medicines, doctor's appointments, physical therapy, wound care, injections, medical equipment

- **Follow-up care instructions.** *Beyond medicine, this can include:*

- Foods or activities to avoid
- Tests or appointments
- How to care for incisions or use equipment
- Warning signs to watch for
- Daily living adjustments (like how to get into bed)
- Who to call with questions

Try the teach-back method. Repeat back what you hear the discharge planner say to make sure you understand the details correctly.

Plan Early

Reduce your chances of being readmitted and increase your chances for a healthy recovery by planning early. Take steps as soon as possible during your stay to plan for a successful transition from the hospital.

To begin, ask to speak with your discharge planner, and review the following:

- Your discharge summary and discharge plan
- Your complete medicine list and instructions
- Your upcoming appointments
- What to do if you don't feel well

A Reason to Plan Early

If you need a rehabilitation facility, nursing home, skilled care or other service after your stay, you'll need time to find and weigh your options. *For help comparing services in your local area, go to:*

- [medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare](https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare)
- [medicare.gov/homehealthcompare](https://www.medicare.gov/homehealthcompare)
- [qualitycheck.org](https://www.qualitycheck.org)

Not Ready to Leave?

You have the right to appeal your discharge if you don't agree with the decision that you are ready to leave the hospital. Speak with your discharge planner or physician and share your concerns. You also may need to reach out to Medicare, Medicaid or your insurance company.

Questions to Ask Before Discharge

1. Has my follow-up appointment been scheduled? With whom? Do I have a ride there?
2. What are key warning signs I need to watch out for? Whom do I call if they happen?
3. What special equipment do I need? What special instructions do I need (wound care, injections, etc.)?
4. What kinds of activities and foods are limited? For how long?
5. Do the doctors caring for me after my stay have access to my test results and medicines? Do I need follow-up tests?
6. Are my new medicines safe to take with my other medicines, vitamins or supplements?
7. Do I know how and when to take my medicines and how I will get prescriptions filled?

8. Who will provide the extra personal, home or healthcare services I may need?
9. Who can help me if I have concerns about medical costs?

Need Medical Equipment or Supplies?

If you need durable medical equipment (walker, wheelchair, hospital bed, oxygen, etc.), Medicare will only cover the cost if you use an approved supplier. To find one in your area, visit medicare.gov and select “Find suppliers of medical equipment and supplies” or call 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227).

HEALTH RECORDS ONLINE

Access select medical records online ... 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Health Records Online is a secure, online service from South Texas Health System that lets you view select medical records online, from the comfort and convenience of your home or office. *All you need is an Internet connection and a computer or smartphone to see your healthcare records including:*

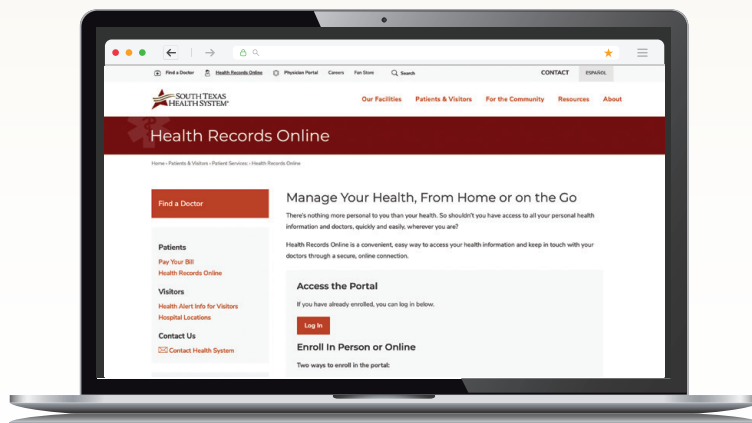
- Lab results
- Radiology reports
- Medications
- Health issues
- Allergies
- Immunizations
- Procedures
- Summaries of care you’ve received
- Discharge instructions

It’s Easy to Enroll

Signing up for Health Records Online is easy.

- Provide your email address at registration and we will email you an invitation to join.
- Enroll in the portal at any time after registration by navigating to southtexashealthsystem.com/hro. When enrolling, enter your Medical Record Number (MRN) found on your hospital wristband or on documentation provided at discharge. Follow the simple steps and you’ll have access to your health records in minutes.

**For more information go to southtexashealthsystem.com/hro.
For technical support, please call 1-888-252-8146.**





WHERE TO FIND US

FACILITIES AND FREESTANDING EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS:

- 1 South Texas Health System McAllen**
301 W. Expressway 83 • McAllen, TX 78503
956-632-4000
southtexashealthsystemmcallen.com
- 2 South Texas Health System Heart**
1900 South D St. • McAllen, TX 78503
956-994-2000
southtexashealthsystemheart.com
- 3 South Texas Health System Edinburg**
1102 W. Trenton Road • Edinburg, TX 78539
956-388-6000
southtexashealthsystemedinburg.com
- 4 South Texas Health System Children's**
1102 W. Trenton Road • Edinburg, TX 78539
956-388-6800
southtexashealthsystemchildrens.com
- 5 South Texas Health System Behavioral**
2101 W. Trenton Road • Edinburg, TX 78539
956-388-1300
southtexashealthsystembehavioral.com
- 6 Cornerstone Regional Hospital***
2302 Cornerstone Blvd. • Edinburg, TX 78539
956-618-4444
cornerstoneregional.com
- 7 South Texas Health System ER Alamo**
140 E. Frontage Road • Alamo, TX 78516
956-403-5100
sthseralamo.com
- 8 South Texas Health System ER McColl**
4702 S. McColl Road • Edinburg, TX 78539
956-213-2600
sthsermccoll.com
- 9 South Texas Health System ER Mission**
900 E. Expressway 83 • Mission, TX 78572
956-271-1200
sthsermission.com
- 10 South Texas Health System ER Monte Cristo**
3615 N. Interstate 69C • Edinburg, TX 78541
956-259-2100
sthsermontecristo.com
- 11 South Texas Health System ER Ware Rd.**
3700 Nolana Ave. • McAllen, TX 78504
956-213-2700
sthserwareroad.com
- 12 South Texas Health System ER Weslaco**
330 W. Expressway 83 • Weslaco, TX 78599
956-975-2300
sthserweslaco.com

* This hospital is co-owned with physician investors.



INPATIENT REHABILITATION:

Inpatient Rehabilitation Center (Edinburg)
1102 W. Trenton Rd.
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-207-7036

Inpatient Rehabilitation Center (McAllen)
301 W. Expressway 83
McAllen, TX 78503
956-632-4677

OUTPATIENT CLINICS:

McAllen Family Medicine Residency Center
205 E. Toronto Ave.
McAllen, TX 78503
956-687-6155

Bariatric Weight Loss Surgery Center (Heart)
416 Lindberg Ave. | Suite B
McAllen, TX 78501
956-664-1616

Pediatric Comprehensive Care Clinic (Children's)
4302 S. Sugar Rd. | Suite 205
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-381-0932

South Texas Health System Sleep Center
5416 S. Jackson Rd. | Suite A
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-630-2844

Intensive Cardiac Rehabilitation Program (McAllen)
1900 South D St.
McAllen, TX 78503
956-994-2770

Outpatient Rehabilitation Center (Edinburg)
1200 S. 10th Ave. #5516
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-420-3800

Outpatient Rehabilitation Center (McAllen)
1800 S. 5th St.
McAllen, TX 78503
956-971-5640

South Texas Health System Wound Healing Center
4302 S. Sugar Rd. | Suite 101
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-388-2700



southtexashealthsystem.com

Physicians are independent practitioners who, with limited exceptions, are not employees or agents of South Texas Health System. The System shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice, visit our website. 21471550-481460 2/22