

You Have the Right to be Free from Restraint and Seclusion

Restraint is when staff stop you from moving by

- putting you in a chair or bed and using straps to hold your body,
- using their hands or body, or
- by giving you an injection of medication against your will.

Seclusion is when staff put you in a room by yourself and say that you are not allowed to leave.

Restraint and seclusion can only be used in an emergency situation when someone's behavior is putting you or another person at serious risk of violence or injury.

Before using restraint or seclusion, staff must try other less restrictive strategies first.

You **may not** be restrained or secluded for being disruptive, as a punishment, or for staff convenience. You must be released from restraints or seclusion at the earliest possible time when the emergency is over. Adults may not be restrained for more than 4 hours, unless ordered by a doctor.



Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is a private non-profit law firm that provides free legal and advocacy services for people with disabilities.

As Maryland's Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency, DRM monitors and investigates facilities to prevent abuse, neglect, and rights violations.



If you have questions or concerns, please contact us.

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Know Your Rights in Maryland Psychiatric Hospitals



You Have the Right to be Free from Abuse & Neglect

Protection from discrimination, physical assault, sexual assault, and sexual harassment is your right.

Your personal liberty can only be restricted if necessary and consistent with your treatment needs.

You cannot be denied the right to vote or to hold property.

You have the right to refuse medication, except if you are dangerous to yourself or others, or if approved by a Clinical Review Panel.

You Have the Right to File a Complaint

You have the right to file a complaint about health or safety concerns with the Maryland Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), which is responsible for monitoring health care facilities.

If you are in a state-operated hospital, you also have the right to file a complaint with the Resident Grievance System (1-800-RGS-7454) and to receive help from a Legal Assistance Provider (LAP).

You Have the Right to Individualized Treatment

Your written treatment plan must have goals, objectives, and an estimate of how long you may be in the hospital.

Your treatment plan must be updated at least every 15 days. If you are hospitalized for more than 2 months, the plan must be updated at least every 60 days.

You have the right to be involved in decisions about your treatment, to attend your treatment team meetings, and to attend your discharge planning meetings. You have the right to ask questions and get answers about your treatment.

You have the right to have a friend, family member, or other advocate of your choice participate in your treatment and discharge planning. Staff must provide a schedule of treatment team meetings so that your advocate can attend.

You have the right to share your thoughts about what helps you and what doesn't help you. If your treatment plan isn't meeting your needs, you have the right to request changes in your plan.

You Have the Right to Communicate with Others

You have the right to reasonable access to a telephone.

You have the right to reasonable access to mailing materials (paper, pen, and postage). Your letters must be sent without delay and without being opened. However, if a person does not want you to contact them, you will not be allowed to contact that person.

Your treatment team may also restrict your access to mail and/or phone use if there is a medical reason. The restriction must be documented in your medical record and reviewed every 30 days.

You Have the Right to Visitors

You have the right to receive visitors and to speak privately with them.

Your treatment team may restrict your right to visitors for a medical reason. However, you **always** have the right to receive visits from an attorney or clergy person.