

UW Medicine

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ACCESS TO CARE

Policy

UW Medicine is an integrated health system that includes three hospitals: Harborview Medical Center, University of Washington Medical Center and Valley Medical Center. Through various delivery methods, each hospital provides guidance to our healthcare professionals concerning admissions, non-discrimination, end-of-life care and reproductive healthcare. The purpose of this policy is to provide our patients with a clear summary of the commitments and expectations in these subject areas.

Admissions: Each hospital admits patients to the hospital as in-patients when the patient's diagnosis warrants admission, based on medical necessity and upon the orders of a physician.

- When one of our hospitals does not have an appropriate in-patient bed available, we will work within our system, and with area hospitals as needed, to transfer the patient to an in-patient facility with capacity.
- When one of our hospitals lacks the expertise required to treat the medical condition, we will work within our system, and with area hospitals as needed, to transfer the patient to an appropriate facility.

Non-Discrimination: Each hospital is committed to ensuring that patients are treated with equality, in a welcoming, nondiscriminatory manner, consistent with state and federal law.

- Each hospital provides an environment for patients that is free from discrimination based on age, race, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran or military status or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.
- Patients have a right to choose the family members and/or other individuals close to them who may participate in their healthcare decisions and have access to protected health information about them. We will respect patient choice.
- UW Medicine will not condition a patient's access to emergency treatment, and labor and delivery care on an ability to pay for such treatment.
- UW Medicine will not discriminate in the provision of charity care to patients with financial need. Please refer to the [UW Medicine Financial Assistance policy](#).
- If you believe there has been behavior inconsistent with these standards, you may file a complaint.
- For more information on filing a complaint, please click on the link below for the appropriate hospital:
 - [Harborview Medical Center](#)
 - [UW Medical Center](#)
 - [Valley Medical Center](#)

End of Life Care: Each hospital will honor patient choice in end-of-life decisions.

- UW Medicine will talk with patients and their family or surrogate about advance directives that guide the healthcare team on the patient's wishes for medical care. If a patient does not have an advance directive, we will provide them with information on how to do so.
- UW Medicine will provide patients with information on their rights to accept or refuse medical care, and any limitation in our ability to implement their wishes.
- Each of the hospitals provides the full range of comfort and palliative care for end-of-life.
- Each of the hospitals complies with the state law known as the Death with Dignity Act.

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Reproductive Healthcare Services: As an integrated health system, the hospitals work together to provide access to a full range of reproductive healthcare services to meet a patient's clinical needs and a patient's choice, although not every procedure is available in all three hospitals. This policy focuses on services provided in hospital facilities only.

- Through the primary care settings in hospital facilities, patients have access to a full array of preventative healthcare services including all forms of contraception prevention, and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Through two of the three hospitals, patients have access to dedicated birth services. Harborview Medical Center provides pre-natal care services with planned deliveries at UW Medical Center.
- Our hospitals which routinely deliver babies offer a full scope of services related to prenatal care, birth, maternal fetal medicine consultations and referrals, and genetic counseling.
- Within the UW Medicine integrated health system, we offer both elective and medically indicated terminations of pregnancy in addition to actively referring patients to community providers.
- Patients who wish to explore services related to fertility can find a full array of such services at UW Medical Center.

Note: The above hospitals permit their healthcare professionals to opt-out of participating in services that violate their conscience or values. In such circumstances, the hospitals arrange for other healthcare professionals to deliver the care for the patient.

REVIEW / REVISION DATES:

03/2014, 5/2017, 10/2019, 01/2020 (revised), 02/2021 (revised), 10/2024 (revised)

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