



Centre hospitalier affilié universitaire

A University-Affiliated Hospital Centre



Founded in 1924

Founded in 1924 by Montreal's Irish Catholic community, St. Mary's Hospital Center is situated in the heart of one of the most multicultural neighbourhoods in Canada. Today, St. Mary's is a community and teaching hospital affiliated with McGill University.

We are dedicated and committed to caring for our patients in an atmosphere of respect in addition to offering quality diagnostic services and general and specialized medical care.

We share in and are important witnesses to major events and significant experiences of life and death, happiness and sadness, hope and despair. It is our duty to create a humane environment and ensure that our patients' rights are respected at all times.

This Code of Ethics complies with the *Act respecting health services and social services* (the "AHSSS"), which places the patient at the heart of the healthcare system and whose primary goal is to reaffirm patient rights. It also reiterates the commitment of our employees, health professionals, residents, students and volunteers to act respectfully and humanely in carrying out their respective duties. Similarly, we expect our patients and their families to treat our employees and professionals with respect.

General guidelines for patient care

- All of our actions must be guided by respect for the individuality and specific needs of our patients. We must show respect, empathy and compassion for the persons in our care.
- We must recognize the human rights of patients and uphold the ethical principles of beneficence, autonomy and justice.
- We must always make sure that the services offered to patients are accessible, continuous, appropriate and safe. We provide help and assistance, and we must make every effort to ensure that our services take into account the habits and preferences of our patients as well as their conception of quality of life.
- In all circumstances, patients must be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. They must never be subjected to any form of discrimination or preconceived notions based on their ethnic origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background or religion.
- All of our actions must be guided primarily by respect for the patient's autonomy and his/her best interest while recognizing the importance of family, medicine and the pursuit of knowledge.
- The patient partners with the healthcare team in the care and services he/she receives

Our specific commitments for patients:

Communication and information:

- We are committed to communicating to patients clearly and unequivocally all relevant information concerning their state of health and the care and services they require.
- Patients have the right to know the reasons for the care they receive or refuse, as well as the benefits, risks and probable consequences.
- We must take the necessary time to explain, discuss, and answer questions as fully as possible, and also to listen to and understand the patient's concerns and worries.
- Communicating appropriately means identifying oneself and speaking politely to the patient.

Patient consent and participation in decisions:

- The inviolability of the person is a basic right. Patients must give their free and enlightened consent, without any form of pressure, for care of any kind, whether it be an examination, a test, a treatment, or any other intervention.
- Patients must be given information in a way that is easily understood so that they can exercise their autonomy and have their wishes respected.
- Not only do patients have the right to consent to care and treatment, they also have the right to refuse. Unless it is clear that a patient is not capable of consenting to the care required by his/her state of health, the patient's wishes must be respected.
- Taking into account patients' capacities, we are committed to listening to them and involving them in any decision which concerns them. We are also committed to respecting their wishes, within the constraints of our resources and the law. In the event of incapacity, we must ensure that the patient's legal representative participates in the decision-making process and acts solely in the patient's interest.

Privacy:

In the provision of care and services, communication often concerns issues related to the patient's privacy and intimacy.

- We are committed to keeping strictly confidential all patient information when communicating with other members of the healthcare team or anyone else.
- Before speaking with family members or relatives, the patient's consent must be obtained when possible.
- Members of the healthcare team who are privy to patient information must at all times exercise prudence and discretion and abstain from any comments except when they are required in the provision of care and services, and communication must be made in an appropriate, secure place.
- To protect our patients' right to privacy, we may allow access to their files only with their authorization or that of their legal representative, as the case may be, or on the order of a court or of a coroner in the performance of their duties, within the limits provided in the AHSSS.
- Unless the patient objects, the patient's family name, surname and address may be used to solicit a donation from the patient to St. Mary's Hospital Center or its Foundation, in accordance with the provisions of the AHSSS.

Care and services provided:

- We are committed to providing all persons with access to quality care and services that are appropriate, effective and continuous, within the limitations of available resources.
- This commitment requires that our professionals and our healthcare staff meet the highest standards of competence and professional integrity and perform their duties in accordance with their respective codes of ethics.
- Our professionals are fully accountable for the care and services they provide; these are planned according to information received from the patient. They may consult colleagues or refer the patient to more appropriate resources that are better able to respond to the patient's needs.
- We contribute to the development of teaching and research according to the highest standards. Students and researchers at our hospital must also abide by this Code of Ethics.
- Research at St. Mary's is governed by and conducted in compliance with legislative requirements and the strictest internal policies.

Patient safety and comfort:

- We try to foster a tranquil environment and strive to meet our patients' needs for silence, solitude and privacy.
- We work in a proactive manner to prevent physical and psychological abuse and the risk of incidents and accidents. All forms of violence, aggressive behaviour, threats and blackmail are strictly prohibited and vigilantly monitored.
- We make every effort to keep the hospital premises clean and orderly, while complying with the rules in force to minimize the risk of transmission of infectious diseases.
- We advocate an approach and culture of transparency. We are committed to informing patients as soon as possible of any situation that arises in the course of care or treatment that may have consequences to their health or well-being.
- St. Mary's Hospital Center works continuously to improve the quality of care and services. With this in mind, we facilitate access to the Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner for any questions, for assistance, or for the filing and handling of complaints.

If you wish to discuss in greater detail the principles set forth in this Code of Ethics, contact the hospital's Clinical Ethicist at 514-345-3511 ext. 5009.

If you have any questions, or would like to file a complaint, or obtain assistance, please contact the Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner at 514-345-3511 ext. 3301.