

Patient-Centered Bill of Rights

By Beth L. Gainer, author of *Calling the Shots: Coaching Your Way Through the Medical System*; www.bethgainer.com

Too often, patients are confused by the language of various Patient's Bills of Rights because the language is often convoluted and confusing. It's hard enough to be a patient, so reading through muddling language only adds anxiety.

So here's what a Patient's Bill of Rights should look like. Feel free to keep this with you, especially at doctor appointments:

1. You have the right to be civilly disobedient with any medical personnel who you perceive does not have your best interest at heart.
2. You have the right to hire and fire doctors at will.
3. You have the right to question treatments without a doctor being condescending to you.
4. You have the right to understand you are on equal footing with a doctor because you are both human beings with comparable self-worth.
5. You have the right to collaborate with excellent doctors you trust and who truly have your best interest at heart.
6. You have the right to a voice in your own medical care.
7. You have a right to have doctors return your phone calls on a timely basis.
8. You have the right to follow your gut instinct and not allow medical people to manipulate you into ignoring it.
9. Whether you are incapacitated, in the hospital, or extremely sick, you have the right to speak up in any medical settings.
10. You have the right to choose your medical destiny to whatever extent possible.
11. You have the right not to be bullied or badgered by anyone -- from receptionist to doctor -- at any time.
12. You have the right to be treated with respect and to employ civil disobedience if you are being bullied, badgered, and disrespected in any way. In short, say "no" to thugs.