

SELF ADVOCACY IN HEALTHCARE

NAVIGATING HOSPITAL AND DOCTOR'S OFFICE SETTINGS

You may access healthcare settings for a number of reasons, whether this is for a routine check-up or care during an emergency. Though all settings should be supportive of Two-Spirit, transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse people you may find that you need to advocate for yourself.

Check-in and admissions

When you first arrive at a healthcare setting the first thing you will need to do is check-in. When you check-in you will usually be asked for:

- ▼ Your Care Card (or another healthcare card applicable to you)
- ▼ The reason for your visit

If your Care Card does not display the name that you go by and/or the gender with which you identify you can:

- ▼ Tell the person checking you in that the name you use is different than what is on your Care Card
- ▼ Ask the person checking you in to record the name you use so that:
 - ▽ Hospital staff will use only that name for you and;
 - ▽ That name will be used to call you in from the waiting room
- ▼ Tell the person checking you in the pronouns you use, if you wish, and ask that hospital staff be made aware when providing care for you

Information about the purpose of your visit or the name/pronouns you use may not be things you want to discuss out loud in a busy waiting room. To protect your confidentiality you can:

- ▼ Ask for a private space in which to discuss your needs
- ▼ Ask for a piece of paper so that you can write down personal information instead of speaking out loud

If the hospital you are seeking care from uses electronic charting, you can ask that your file is kept confidential. This will add a safety barrier and may hide some information (such as your name on certain screens) or control who may gain access to your chart. Every system is a bit different so settings or appearance will vary.

- ▼ An example of how to request this from admitting personnel or your nurse is "I would like my chart to be confidential, please" or "can you change the settings to make my chart confidential?". It may also be called a "VIP" setting.

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Meeting with healthcare providers

Throughout your time in a healthcare setting you may only meet with one provider or several providers. Each new provider you meet will check-in to confirm your identity and your reason(s) for seeking care.

Providers need to use 2 unique and acceptable patient identifiers according to their organizational policies to confirm your identity. There are many identifiers that can be used that do not include the name on your medical chart/hospital wristband. You can request that the provider use your date of birth, Personal Health Number (PHN), Medical Record Number (MRN), Encounter or Account Number.

- ▼ You can find the numbers mentioned above on your hospital wristband and can read them back to your provider who will confirm with your chart.
- ▼ If you do not have a PHN, or if you have other numbers in addition to your PHN, you may see them on your wristband, such as a Certificate of Indian Status number or Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) Unique Client ID (UCI) number.
- ▼ Reminder: Hospital staff should not ask you about your immigration status, you do not have to answer this question.

When asked your name, the provider needs to know the name you go by and may also request the name that is on your medical chart/hospital wristband to avoid confusion. An example of how to respond to this question is:

The name I go by is _____. I have a different name that I do not go by on my medical chart. We can confirm using another identifier on my wristband.

It may also be helpful to state your surname if that is the same on your ID.

Discussing your care

Depending on the healthcare you are seeking, your healthcare provider may or may not need to ask questions about:

- ▼ Hormone therapy
- ▼ Your surgical history
- ▼ Your body parts

Healthcare providers should only ask questions that are important to your care. If you are unsure of why you are being asked a question or why a certain exam is being recommended you can ask your healthcare provider to tell you the rationale for their investigation.

If you are not satisfied with their explanation you can:

- ▼ Ask for further clarification or;
- ▼ Decline to answer with question or proceed with the exam