



# SOUTH BRUCE GREY HEALTH CENTRE

CHESLEY | DURHAM | KINCARDINE | WALKERTON

## PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISOR HANDBOOK

Thank you for your interest in partnering with South Bruce Grey Health Centre (SBGHC) as a Patient and Family Advisor. Our patients and their family members can contribute a great deal to how care is delivered at SBGHC. This guide will give you some background information to help you decide if being a Patient and Family Advisor is right for you.

### **Patient and Family Centered Care**

SBGHC's Patient and Family Advisory Council is a way of engaging patients and families that is based on the principles of Patient and Family Centered Care:

- **Dignity and Respect**  
Health care practitioners listen to and honour patient and family perspectives and choices. Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into the planning and delivery of care.
- **Information Sharing**  
Health care practitioners communicate and share complete and unbiased information with patients and families in ways that are affirming and useful. Patients and families receive timely, complete, and accurate information in order to effectively participate in care and decision-making.
- **Participation**  
Patients and families are encouraged and supported in participating in care and decision-making at the level they choose.
- **Collaboration**  
Patients, families, health care practitioners, and leaders collaborate in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation; in health care facility design; and in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care.

*- Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care*

### **What is a Patient and Family Advisor?**

A Patient and Family Advisor is a person who has had a recent experience (generally within 3 years) of being a patient or the family member of a patient and is partnering with staff and physicians to provide direct input into policies, programs and practices which affect patient care and services.

### **Is there a difference between Advisor and Advocate?**

Yes. An advocate is a person who pleads the cause of another. An advisor is a person who partners with staff by bringing their experience of what it is like to be a patient to a decision making table. An advisor looks at the big picture through the lens of their experience.

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### **Role of the Patient and Family Advisor**

- To partner with staff to ensure patient and family centered care is provided in a fully accessible environment that promotes healing, ensures dignity and instills trust.
- To keep the patient and family as the focal point of our health system.
- To be viewed as a positive reinforcement of the patient family centered care concept.
- To build partnerships with health care professionals based on mutual respect and open communication.
- To participate in facility design, quality improvement and program development.
- To support the hospital and clinics in their process improvement projects.

### **Characteristics of a Successful Advisor**

- Respectful of others and their perspectives
- Comfortable speaking in a group and interacting with others
- Good listener
- Able to use their personal experience constructively
- Able to see beyond their own experience
- Able to see the big picture
- Non-judgmental
- Positive attitude
- Ability to work collaboratively with other families and healthcare providers
- Desire to expand their knowledge and skills
- Desire to participate in bringing about meaningful change
- Able to maintain confidentiality of patient and organizational information

### **Responsibilities of a Patient and Family Advisor**

- Advisors are accountable to the Manager, Communications, Engagement and Patient Experience
- Advisors must adhere to SBGHC Policies including, but not limited to: Code of Conduct, Scent Free Environment and Infection Control (SBGHC is a scents and smoke free environment)
- Advisors are responsible to prepare for meetings by familiarizing themselves with materials sent out prior to each meeting
- Advisors are responsible for attending meetings which are held monthly. There may be additional work between meetings.
- Advisors must not discuss confidential information outside Council/committee meetings

### **What you can expect as a Patient and Family Advisor**

- Advisors will have the opportunity to assist with hospital events and participate on hospital committees
- Advisors will receive orientation to their committee

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- Accessible meeting rooms are available
- Advisors will be full members of the committees on which they sit
- A rewarding experience and the knowledge you are making a positive difference in how healthcare is delivered at SBGHC
- Over the years healthcare has developed its own language. You can expect to have abbreviations, acronyms and terms clearly defined/explained.

### **Patient Experience Advisor Application and Recruitment Process**

- The Application form and copies of this handbook can either be accessed online at [www.sbghc.on.ca](http://www.sbghc.on.ca) or contact the Communications and Patient Relations Office at the number below and information will be mailed to the applicant
- An interview is held
- The applicant will then receive a decision via regular mail or email
- Orientation to a committee, council or working group is given
- A SBGHC Confidentiality Agreement is signed and an ID badge is created

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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South Bruce Grey Health Centre

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*Developed based on the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital Patient Experience Advisor Handbook*