



## Athens-Limestone Hospital Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) Guidelines

### **Overview, Vision & Mission Statements**

The ALH Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) will provide a formal communication vehicle for patients and families to take an active role in improving the patient experience at ALH. The council will focus on programs and practices that will represent the most successful patient and family experience within ALH and will help to replicate and share those best practices across the organization.

**The PFAC Vision and Mission are guided by the ALH Mission, Vision and Values.**

**Vision:** To create a more positive and responsive health care experience at Athens-Limestone Hospital by partnering with patients, families, staff and community members.

**Mission:** The mission of the Patient and Family Advisory Council is to enhance the overall health care experience at Athens-Limestone Hospital by involving patients, families, staff and community members in the consideration and development of patient and family centered policies and services. The Council's ongoing advisory role will provide user feedback on efforts to improve quality, safety and service at the hospital.

### **Council Responsibilities**

The overall goal is to create a patient and family centered environment which promotes the best possible outcomes for ALH patients and families.

**Identify:** Identify existing best practices in patient and family centered care including those within ALH and those from other sources. Explore ways to share and replicate these best practices across the organization.

**Advise:** Work in an advisory role to enhance patient and family centered care initiatives at ALH by collaborating with existing patient, family and employee focus groups.

**Support:** Support staff and ALH leadership in patient and family centered activities and initiatives. Act as a sounding board for implementation of new and existing programs.

**Participate:** Provide patient/family member feedback and recommendations to the following committees and work groups including, but not limited to patient safety, quality improvement, service excellence, facility appearance, ethics, and patient education.

**Represent:** Represent the patient and family perspectives about the healthcare experience at ALH and make recommendations for improvement.

**Educate:** Empower patients, family members and staff through continuous education. Collaborate with ALH staff to facilitate patient and family access to information regarding patient & family centered care. Influence and participate in ALH staff orientation, patient/family education, discharge/transition planning.



**Communicate:** Enhance communication between patient, family members and ALH.

**Evaluate:** Evaluate the role of PFAC in improving outcomes of the patient and their families' healthcare experience while at ALH.

## **Structure, Membership Criteria & Selection and Terms of Appointment**

### **Structure**

The PFAC will consist of up to sixteen (16) members of the communities served by Athens-Limestone Hospital. The membership will reflect the diversity of the community and the patients served by the hospital. One or more hospital liaisons will be assigned the responsibility of providing the link in communication between the hospital and the PFAC and offer support as needed.

### **Membership Criteria**

Members are selected based on the following criteria:

- Current or past experiences as a patient or family member at ALH
- Ability to represent patient care experience
- Willingness to work in an advisory role
- Good listening skills
- Ability to interact well with differing groups of people
- Respect of others' perspectives
- Ability to participate in a consistent and agreed-upon schedule of meetings and potential subcommittee efforts
- Commitment to serve for an eighteen (18) month to twenty-four (24) month term with potential to renew or step down at the end of the term. Initial council members will rotate off at 18 and 24 months with subsequent council members serving the full one (1) year term.
- Cannot be a current Athens-Limestone Hospital employee

### **Terms of Appointment:**

The PFAC membership will consist of the following:

- Council members may request to be reappointed
- Resignation will be submitted in writing or via e-mail to the ALH PFAC Liaison (Please provide a 30-day notice)
- Vacancies may be filled during the year as needed

## **Roles and Responsibilities**



**The role of the Patient and Family Advisory Council is solely consultative. Members will be expected to:**

- Attend each PFAC meeting to serve as **“the voice of the customer – our patients and families”**. Please notify a staff member in advance if unable to attend.
- Draw on the member’s own experience as a patient and/or family member and provide feedback to the hospital about ways it could be improved.
- Collaborate with the hospital to participate in a variety of information-gathering activities in an effort to understand others’ experiences, such as discussions with patients and family members, open forums, focus groups, and surveys.
- As requested by the hospital and based on the member’s availability and interest, members may also serve on other committees as appropriate across the hospital system with Senior Leadership Team guidance.
- Engage thoughtfully and constructively around the issues and ideas discussed during each meeting.
- Be respectful of the unique background and perspective of each PFAC member.
- Be realistic and mindful of good health care practice and the hospital’s budgetary, regulatory, and legal constraints.

### **Planning, Reporting and Evaluation**

- PFAC reports will be submitted to ALH Leadership Team on a semi- annual basis and as needed to give updates and receive feedback and guidance.
- An annual PFAC progress report will be provided to the ALH Board.
- The PFAC may engage in educational forums.

### **Orientation and Training**

All selected patient and family applicants will receive orientation and training as to the mission and goals of the institution and the advisory council, as well as hospital regulatory and privacy issues.

### **PFAC Meetings: Agenda, Minutes, Attendance, and Inclement Weather Plan**

Meetings will be held every other month on a designated day and time.

**Agenda:** Meeting agendas will be set by the designated staff/employee member and distributed to the membership prior to each session.



**Meeting Minutes:** The designated staff/employee will distribute the minutes in a timely manner to all active members for review. All PFAC correspondence and documents can be reviewed by members upon request. All PFAC minutes will be retained for a minimum of three (3) years.

**Attendance:** It is expected that the members of the council will make every attempt to attend every session during their term. Participation by every member will provide the most effective meeting and make the most impact on the patient experience at ALH. However, if a member is not able to make one or more sessions, notification to a staff member as soon as possible is expected in order to make any needed adjustments prior to the group meeting.

**Attire:** PFAC members may wear business, business casual or casual attire.

**Inclement Weather:** In the event of inclement weather council members will be notified of a cancelled meeting in a timely manner.

### **Confidentiality**

PFAC members must not discuss any personal or confidential information about patients, staff, or hospital business with anyone other than PFAC members and hospital personnel working with PFAC. Council members must adhere to all applicable HIPAA standards and guidelines. If an advisor violates these guidelines, a staff member will remind them of the guidelines. On-going violations may result in repeating HIPAA training or re-evaluation of membership status.

**HH Patients/Family Members:** To maintain appropriate and confidential handling of personal information, no ALH patient and/or family member will be discussed by name during PFAC meetings.

**HIPAA & Confidentially Form:** All PFAC members will sign a confidentially statement that pertains to any ALH data regarding patient and family members.

### **Termination**

The hospital reserves the right to change membership on the Council in certain circumstances, such as non-compliance with any ALH polices, including confidentiality, HIPAA and maintenance of a drug and tobacco free environment while on campus.

If a member has missed three consecutive meetings without notifying the PFAC Steering/Panning Committee, this will be considered a resignation from the PFAC.