



At Rural Health Care, Inc. (RHCI), we are committed to assuring that each patient entrusting their care to us is treated with courtesy, respect, and compassion. We recognize that each patient has unique healthcare needs, and encourage all patients to participate in discussions and decisions about their care. We encourage a partnership between our patients and the RHCI health care team.

Patient Rights

Access to care

You have the right to access quality and impartial medical care at our health centers regardless of race, religion, gender, disability or handicap, national origin, or source of payment for your care. You have the right to receive respectful and considerate care from health center staff and providers.

Appointments are scheduled in a manner which takes into account a patient's condition and the workload of the clinic. All patients are encouraged to make appointments in advance to ensure timely service; however, walk-in appointments can often be accommodated. Patients who walk-in and request a same-day appointment will be offered to wait or to come back at a later, scheduled time. Emergency cases will be seen immediately whether scheduled or not, while scheduled appointments have priority over nonemergency walk-ins.

RHCI has agreements in place with several local and regional hospitals to assure that as a patient of RHCI you have access to hospital services and to sliding fee and/or Charity Care discounts if you qualify. Please ask for additional information.

Privacy

You have the right, within the law, to personal and informational privacy. You will receive a separate "Notice of Privacy Practices" that explains your privacy rights in detail and how we may use and disclose your protected health information.

Treatment

You or your legal representative have the right to request appropriate, medically necessary treatment or to refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the medical consequences of this action. You have the right to a response to reasonable requests for care. You have the right to know the identity of providers, nurses, and others involved in your care.

Charges

You have the right to receive a copy of billed charges and have the charges explained upon request. You have the right to receive information on our Sliding Fee program, and to be provided assistance with completing the application upon request.

Education

You have the right to obtain information about your diagnosis, course of treatment, alternatives, and outcomes of care in terms you can understand. Except in emergent situations requiring urgent treatment and in which you lack decision-making capacity, you have the right, and are encouraged to participate in decisions related to your care and to the development and implementation of your care plan. You have the right to seek and receive all of the information necessary for you to understand your medical situation.

Communication

You have the right to request the services of an interpreter if needed, at no cost to you.

Safety

Your safety is RHCI's priority. You have the right to receive care in a safe setting. All staff play a role in making health care safe, and you play a vital role by becoming an active, engaged, and informed member of your health care team. Please let us know of any safety concerns you have, and your suggestions for improvement will be responded to appropriately.

Patient Responsibilities

In order to provide you with the best care possible, we ask that you accept the responsibility to:

- Provide accurate and complete information regarding your identity, medical history, and current health concerns. We ask that you bring any prescribed and over-the-counter medications you are taking with you to your appointments to assure accuracy.
- Notify the health center if you are unable to keep or no longer need a scheduled appointment. We ask that you call us as soon as you know that you will not be coming so that the time can be utilized for another patient in need. Missed appointments disrupt the health center delivery of care.

- Actively participate in your health care. This includes (but is not limited to) such activities as pursuing healthy lifestyle behaviors; scheduling medical examinations at least yearly, but more frequently as requested by your health care provider based on medical conditions; asking questions until you understand the information provided to you (regarding diagnosis, plan of care, etc.); notifying your provider of any change in your condition; following the treatment plan recommended by your provider; and accepting the consequences of your own decisions and actions if you choose to refuse treatment or not to comply with the instructions provided.
- Notify your provider if you have been seen by any other providers or treated at a hospital since the time of your last health center appointment to ensure that your provider has your most current and accurate health information.
- Work with RHCI to ensure that financial obligations related to your care are met. This includes payment of nominal fees and co-pays, making timely payments of patient balance and any charges not covered by insurance or payment arrangements, and, if you have insurance coverage, making sure that the information we have on file is accurate.
- Be considerate of other patients and RHCI staff, and follow RHCI's rules regarding patient care and conduct.

Scheduling Appointments

We ask that you call the clinic to schedule an appointment. We do have a limited number of same-day appointments available at each location, but if you do not have an appointment scheduled before you arrive at the clinic you may have to wait until an opening in the schedule is available. If you call ahead to schedule an appointment, we are better able to assure that we have adequate time to care for your needs and those of the other patients scheduled that day.

If you are running late for an appointment, a courtesy call to let us know you're coming and approximate time of arrival is appreciated. If expected to be greater than 15 minutes past your scheduled appointment time, you may be asked to reschedule.

After Hours Care

RHCI has contracted with Avera Medical Call Center to provide patient-specific medical advice after regular clinic hours. They can help you with medical questions related to treatment of a condition or medications, and can also help to determine whether medical services are needed urgently. To utilize this service, you may call the clinic's main number and your call will be directed automatically. Your clinic care team will be notified of your call and any instructions given and will follow-up with you, if needed, the next business day.

For true emergencies, such as chest pain, difficulty breathing, or severe trauma, please call 911.

Medications

RHCI participates with several local pharmacies in the 340B Federal Drug program, which results in cost savings on prescription medications purchased through the participating pharmacy. Please ask for a list of participating pharmacies in your area!

Certain medications may require laboratory testing or a visit with your provider to follow-up on the condition for which the medication was prescribed before they can be refilled. Please plan ahead and contact your pharmacy or our office at least 3 to 5 business days before your medication is due to run out. Every attempt will be made for refill requests to be addressed within 1 business day.

Antibiotics should not be called in without a visit. If you are sick enough that you think you need an antibiotic, you should be evaluated by your provider to assure that any medication prescribed is appropriate for your condition.

At Your Appointment

Upon check in, you will be asked to verify your demographic information such as address and phone number. If you have medical insurance, please present your insurance card to front desk staff at each visit. We require forms to be reviewed/completed annually, but please let us know in the interim if any of your information has changed.

You will be asked to select or verify your primary care provider. This is the provider who you see or plan to see for the majority of your primary care needs (annual physicals, chronic disease management, etc.). If you do not have a primary care provider at your RHCI clinic, our staff can assist you in selecting one.

Payment of insurance copayment and/or sliding fee nominal fee is due at the time of each visit.

To assure that your medication record is complete and accurate, please bring any prescribed and over-the-counter medications and dietary supplements that you are currently using to your visits.

If you have any questions about your visit or your provider's recommendations, you are encouraged to ask. We strive to assure that you are a well-informed, active participant in your health care. As such, you have the right to refuse treatment in most circumstances. If you choose to refuse treatment, you may be asked to sign a form verifying that the risks of non-treatment have been explained to you and you understand these risks.

Communication

Every attempt is made to return calls made to the clinic by the end of the business day; however, calls received after noon may be returned by noon the next business day.

Your privacy is important to us. Because the security of text messages and emails outside of our network cannot be guaranteed, please do not use these forms of communication to contact the clinic or your provider. We ask that you, instead, contact us via telephone or through the secure patient portal. If you have not signed up for the patient portal and wish to do so, our front desk staff will be happy to assist you.

Payment and Billing

- RHCI participates with most insurances. In addition, RHCI offers a Sliding Fee Discount Program (SFDP) based on income to assure that no patient is denied health care services due to inability to pay. RHCI is not, however, a "free clinic". Payment of insurance copayment or sliding fee nominal fee is expected at the time of your visit. After-insurance and other patient balances are expected to be paid in a timely manner. Payment plans are available upon request. Online payment option is available on our website at www.ruralhc.net.
- While the exact charge for a visit may not be known until coding and billing staff have assured that appropriate charges have been assigned, an estimate may be provided to you upon request.
- Services provided at or ordered through RHCI clinics which are performed outside of the RHCI facility and scope of services (e.g., laboratory or pathology specimens sent to a reference facility, specialty radiology services and radiologist over-reads, specialty services such as dermatology or general surgery, etc.) or which are ordered by outside providers and performed within an RHCI facility will not be billed through RHCI and you will receive a separate bill for those charges.

- Outreach and Enrollment (O&E) staff is available to assist all patients interested in applying for health insurance through state-funded programs, such as Medicaid and CHIP, as well as state and federal health insurance exchanges. O&E staff can also assist with questions regarding RHCI's Sliding Fee Discount Program and application for the program. Please let staff at your clinic know if you are interested in such assistance, and O&E staff will contact you.
- Questions related to your bill should be directed to:

Access Family Medical Clinic – Worthington	(507) 372-2921
Access Health – Brookings	(605) 697-9535
Access Health – Fulda	(605) 372-2921
Access Health – Mitchell	(605) 995-6337
Access Health – Windom	(507) 831-1703
All other locations	(833) 778-3653

Code of Conduct

In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for patients, visitors, and staff, Rural Health Care, Inc. (RHCI) expects visitors, patients and accompanying family members and friends to refrain from unacceptable behaviors that are disruptive or pose a threat to the rights or safety of other patients and staff.

The following behaviors are prohibited and may result in dismissal from the practice:

- Physical assault or inflicting bodily harm.
- Rude behaviors in person or through written, verbal, or electronic communication, including but not limited to the following: profanity, harassment, offensive or intimidating statements or gestures and threats of violence.
- Racial or cultural slurs or other derogatory remarks associated with, but not limited to, race, language, or sexual orientation.
- Intentional destruction or threat of destruction of RHCI property.

We also ask that you are courteous with the use of cell phones and other electronic devices, and respectfully request that you put your devices away while interacting with the staff, nurses and providers.

Please ensure that a parent or responsible adult attends all appointments with patients under age 15. Patients age 15 and over may be seen without adult present if RHCI's Authorization for Medical Treatment of a Minor Child form is completed by the child's parent or legal guardian.

Complaints and Grievances

At RHCI, our mission is to assure that all patients are provided access to quality health care. RHCI's Quality Improvement and Administrative teams work to assure that each member of your health care team follows a high standard of care and evidence-based practice.

If you or your legal representative has a concern about any aspect of your care at Rural Health Care, Inc., you are urged to let us know so the issue can be resolved promptly. Reporting an issue will in no way negatively impact future care. We consider it a privilege to serve your healthcare needs, and consider your comments opportunities to improve care delivery and service.

Concerns may be addressed to your health care provider or other health center staff, or you may contact RHCI's Compliance Officer at (605) 852-2815.

You or your representative will be provided a timely response to your concern.

Thank you for choosing RHCI for your health care needs!