

# Inspire Excellence! Nursing Practices to Utilize and Support Ostomy and Continent Diversion Patient Bill Of Rights

The role of a nurse is multifaceted and holistic. In caring for the patient with an ostomy/continent diversion, nurses are expected to provide guidance in the physical aspects of care. They provide emotional comfort as patients adapt to their new lifestyle, and encouragement as they strive to achieve and resume a fulfilling life. A nurse is also a patient advocate - one who makes recommendations on behalf of their patient to ensure that they receive optimal care. United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA) encourages you to use this tool to assist in being a strong advocate for this underserved population. Your voice matters!

- **Review ostomy policy and procedures at your healthcare facility.** Examine how they compare with the standards outlined in UOAA's Patient Bill of Rights (PBOR). Discuss your findings with your supervisor and explore opportunities for change.
- **Educate yourself on ostomy care.** Know how to use and order ostomy supplies at your facility. Review [UOAA](#) educational materials. Utilize ostomy manufacturers' websites for instructional videos and product catalogs. Locate and mentor for a day with your nearest [certified ostomy nurse](#) or [ostomy management specialist](#). No ostomy nurse at your facility? Discuss the need with hospital administration.
- **Become an ostomy resource nurse for your facility.** Provide knowledge and encouragement to nurses who may feel intimidated about ostomy care. Create posters and provide educational in-services. Consider becoming a [certified ostomy nurse](#), [ostomy care associate](#) or [ostomy management specialist](#). Ostomy nurses are needed across the continuum of care.
- **Offer information on a local UOAA Affiliated Support Group (ASG) to meet others living with an ostomy.** Encourage patients to attend an [ASG meeting](#) prior to and after surgery. Suggest social media ostomy support groups for those who prefer online networking. Show your support and extend your understanding of people living with an ostomy by attending meetings. No local support groups? Contact UOAA for assistance with starting one in your local area.
- **Refer to support services within your facility.** Occupational therapists, nutritionists, chaplains, social workers, and psychologists can assist with the physical and emotional needs that come with a life-altering illness.

- **Provide resources for the ongoing educational needs of your patients.** Provide UOAA resources including [website](#), phone number and guidelines related to nutrition, swimming, traveling, and intimacy with an ostomy. Download or request copies of the *New Patient Guide* from UOAA. Suggest subscribing to *The Phoenix* magazine for lifelong learning. Show UOAA's *Living with an Ostomy* [video](#). Provide [ostomy manufacturers'](#) web address and phone numbers to get free education, ostomy samples, and assistance from help lines.
- **Collaborate discharge needs with case managers, surgeons, and family/significant others/patient advocate.** Provide patient with adequate supplies for at least 5 pouch changes, including accessories (stoma powder and skin protectant barrier film). Ensure patient can demonstrate emptying and changing of pouch. Refer to home health agencies or rehab with certified ostomy nurses. Provide contact information for a local outpatient ostomy clinic. Not a clinic affiliated with your hospital? Advocate for one with your healthcare system administrators and surgeons.
- **Tell your patients they are not restricted to the products that were provided in the hospital.** Advise them they have [ostomy supply choices](#). Inform patients that their stoma may change over time and that they may benefit from different pouching options. Prior to discharge, collaborate with case managers to advise patients on how to order supplies, as well as provide information on durable medical equipment suppliers and a patient prescription for supplies.
- **Share the Patient Bill of Rights (PBOR) with hospitalists, colorectal surgeons, urologists, gastroenterologists, nursing administration, case managers/discharge planners, and your patients.** Frame it and ask your facility to post the [PBOR](#) as an ongoing reminder that you strive for excellence in care.