

# Inspire Excellence! Practices for Ostomy Nurses to Utilize and Support Ostomy and Continent Diversion Patient Bill of Rights

The role of a **certified ostomy 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. An ostomy 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!

- **Examine how ostomy care in your healthcare setting compares with the standards outlined in UOAA's Patient Bill of Rights (PBOR).** Discuss the PBOR with your colleagues, supervisors, case managers, colorectal surgeons, and GI doctors. Explore opportunities for change and improvements. Consider on-call services for weekend ostomy surgeries.
- **Incorporate the principles of the PBOR into ALL phases of ostomy education.** Understand that ostomy education takes place across the continuum of care and throughout the patient's lifetime. Think of how a new diagnosis or the physical/emotional changes of aging affect ostomy self-care. Provide tips/guidelines related to swimming, traveling, and intimacy with an ostomy. Evaluate your current patient educational materials. Make sure they reflect current standards and practices.
- **Provide resources for the ongoing educational needs of your patients.** Provide UOAA's [website](#) and phone number. Download or request copies of the *New Patient Guide* from UOAA, suggest subscribing for lifelong learning with *The Phoenix* magazine. Show UOAA's [video](#), *Living with an Ostomy*. Provide [manufacturers'](#) web address and phone numbers to get free education, ostomy samples, and access to free ostomy nurse concierge services.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Anticipate the need for outpatient care at time of discharge.** Provide patient with supplies for at least 5 pouch changes, including accessories. Refer to home health agencies with certified ostomy nurses. Provide information of a local ostomy clinic, if your facility does not have one. Advocate for an outpatient ostomy clinic for your hospital. Discuss this with your healthcare system administrators and surgeons.
- **Educate nursing staff by providing ongoing ostomy in-services and mentoring experiences within your facility.** Consider offering ostomy education to home health agencies, long-term care, assisted living, and skilled nursing facilities. Let a student nurse shadow you for the day.
- **Form partnerships and collaborate with your surgery team to better meet the needs of your ostomy patients.** Discuss with the surgery team the importance of providing pre-operative stoma site marking to enhance quality of life. Provide pre-op teaching for all planned ostomy surgeries. Order the American College of Surgeons [Ostomy Home Skills Kit](#). Request an ostomy educational program for your facility's inpatient television network.
- **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. Include copies of UOAA's PBOR and wallet card in your patient discharge packet.