



6 March 2008

Australian Commission

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on Safety and Quality  
in Health Care

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Professor Chris Baggoley  
Chief Executive  
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care  
GPO Box 5480  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Professor Baggoley

**Re: Draft National Patient Charter of Rights**

I refer to your letter and thank you for the opportunity to submit the Victorian Quality Council's (VQC) views on the draft National Patient Charter of Rights (the Charter). The VQC considered the Charter at its meeting on 25 February 2008 and is extremely supportive of this initiative. The council believes the Charter is well written and easily understood there are just a few comments we would like to offer for your consideration that may further enhance the document:

- There is no obvious inclusion of carers or the ability to interchange patients and carers when referring to the rights of the patient and therefore it limits the ability for a carer to advocate on behalf of a patient when necessary.
- There should be the generic right of patients and therefore communities to have access to quality and safety information about health care providers.
- The language could at times be more simplistic, that is, the intent of the words "redress" and "access" may not be understood by all patients.
- Open Disclosure should be more explicitly stated in the Principles under 3. Safety.
- Under the Charter's Principles: 4. Communication; patients should have the right to an interpreter, rather than where possible and the term "qualified health interpreter" is not a title Victorian health system uses.
- Consideration should be given to clearly articulating in the Charter the responsibilities of the patient in the process of ensuring that high quality care is delivered.
- The VQC discussed the issue of health care workers rights and the responsibilities of patients in this context. This is an important issue but should be part of a separate document and not part of the Charter of Patients Rights.

The Council looks forward to receiving a final copy of the National Patient Charter of Rights in due course.

Yours sincerely

**Associate Professor Christine Kilpatrick**  
Chair  
Victorian Quality Council