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Australian Commission

28 MAR 2008

on Safety and Quality
in Health Care



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Department of Health

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08OCE/0175

Professor Chris Baggoley
Chief Executive
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
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→ Nicola

Please prepare a draft
response from me to
Tony Heron.

Dear Professor Baggoley

Chris

RE: NATIONAL PATIENT CHARTER OF RIGHTS

egb 1/4/08.

Thank you for your letter dated 22 January 2008 enclosing the draft National Patient Charter of Rights. I would appreciate you considering the following comments and questions about the consultation paper.

Scope The National Patient Charter of Rights consultation paper and supporting documents do not define what the parameters for application of the charter are. Does the Charter apply to people receiving care in the public system outside of hospitals?

Review of Patient Charter The 2003-2008 Australian Health Care Agreement (AHCA) requires all States and Territories to review and update their patient charters; South Australia's review is well advanced and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) was advised of this in December 2007. The consultation paper incorrectly states that the AHCA requires each State to have its patient charter reviewed by the ACSQHC. Schedule D Part 2 (a) states '.....the review should be conducted with the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care or any successor.'

Accessibility of the Charter of Rights The Charter is a concise statement of eight rights, describing a consumer's reasonable expectations from the health system. It will be a useful resource for display in waiting rooms and provision as a brochure. The consultation paper does not mention whether the Charter will be translated into languages other than English, or whether it will be published in a variety of formats to overcome the jargon and formality which may prove inaccessible to some patients.

National Patient Charter Principles The principles provide detail about the rights and highlight the dual responsibilities of consumers and health care providers. They also need to be provided in different languages and styles to ensure that the information is accessible. The principles are written in an impersonal way which should be amended (for example, 'a patient is entitled to' should read 'as a patient you are entitled to'). If the principles are to apply to primary health and/or community

settings the term 'consumer' or 'health consumer' would be more comprehensive than 'patient'.

Possible uses of the Charter It would be appropriate for the Charter to be used in standard setting (and therefore review of jurisdictional charters), accreditation, education and training. It may inform future AHCA discussions. It would be valuable to understand how the ACSQHC intends the Charter to be used and what funding is available to promulgate it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft charter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Sherbon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

DR TONY SHERBON
Chief Executive

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