

National Patient Charter of Rights  
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care  
GPO Box 5480  
Sydney NSW 2001

28 February 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the draft National Patient Charter of Rights. Discussion of the draft with staff and several consumers at Darebin Community Health has yielded the following contribution to its development.

General comments;

- The language while quite 'medical' is suitable;
- Easily accessible translations of both charters in a range of community languages are required;
- The combination of both Charters provides an accessible statement of patient rights.

Patient Charter of Rights;

- The eight key patient rights are comprehensive and appropriate;
- The Charter of Rights is clear and relevant to patients receiving care;
- The fourth right of *Communication* needs to reflect that communication is always two way and not only in the case of a problem or redress. Instead of 'I am entitled to clear communication throughout the period of care'. Suggested changes include: 'I am entitled to *give and receive* clear communication throughout period of care' or 'I am entitled to participate in clear communication with health professionals involved throughout my period of care'.

Patient Charter of Principles;

- The charter of principles is useful and gives the required explanation of the eight rights.

1. Access:

- While the charter acknowledges the right to access health care regardless of place of residence and ability to pay, the charter does not acknowledge the right for equitable access regardless of cultural background, language spoken, physical/mental ability, sexuality etc. Darebin Community Health recognises the discriminatory barriers to



access for some population groups, including indigenous people, asylum seekers and refugees for example and has established specific access policies for these communities. It is important for the charter to reflect the health care access rights of all people.

**8. Redress and 6. Participation:**

- The charter states under *Participation* that a patient is entitled to 'seek a second opinion'. This could also be added to *Redress* as patients have the right to seek alternative opinions at any point during care, including when anything goes wrong.
- The wording in both sections should be changed to 'seek alternative opinions' or 'seek other opinions' so as to broaden the scope of opinions patients have the right to seek.

Darebin Community Health supports the development of a National Charter of Patient Rights and will endeavour to provide continued support in the implementation of the final charter.

On behalf of the Management and Staff of Darebin Community Health;

Yours sincerely,

Karen Greer  
Community Liaison Coordinator