



AUSTRALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

Submission

Feedback on the draft documents:

- National Patient Charter of Rights
- National Patient Charter of Principles

Presented to:

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare

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Introduction:

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) would like to thank the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare for the opportunity to comment on the draft National Patient Charter of Rights and National Patient Charter Principles.

The APA actively supports the philosophy of health care centred on patients' needs and rights. The APA Standards for Physiotherapy Practices 8th edition (a document for physiotherapists practising in the private sector outside the realm of public sector patient charters) includes a suite of Standards explicitly based on the rights and needs of clients.

The APA Standards are designed to help physiotherapy practices deliver safe, high quality and accountable health care and incorporate the essence of all eight rights and principles outlined in the Charter being proposed by the Commission.

1. National Patient Charter of Rights and National Patient Charter of Principles

The Australian Physiotherapy Association supports the notion of both a National Patient Charter of Rights and National Patient Charter of Principles. The APA supports using a national charter to provide a model for the content, development, communication, implementation, review and updating of existing State and Territory charters across all health settings.

The APA likes the style, structure and language of the draft Charter and Charter Principles.

2. Rights included in the Charter

The rights listed in the draft Charter sufficiently cover the spectrum of rights that clients of health services in Australia should expect. These rights have the capacity to address both provider and consumer concerns / expectations.

The terminology of "patient" is a limiting factor in the draft proposal as this term is predominantly used in the medical realm. The APA recommends that the term "client" be used to encompass all health settings and providers.

3. Points included in the Principles

The detailed explanations outlined in the Principles help to clarify the rights and responsibilities of consumers and providers. Ideally, the APA would like to see further documentation regarding the utilisation of the Charter & Principles to ensure that both providers and consumers have an overall understanding of how the documents would be used in practice.

4. Rights and responsibilities

Overall, the APA considers the proposed charter and charter principles achieve an appropriate balance between the rights and responsibilities of patients and providers. However, in the interests of effective participation, the APA considers it would be helpful for the charter to have more emphasis on patient responsibilities.

5. Existing Charters

The draft National Patient Charter and Charter Principles should become the 'gold standard' document which sets out core requirements for public and private sector providers Australia wide. This will ensure minimum patient rights for all Australians.

6. Possible uses of the Charter

As indicated above, the APA believes the draft National Patient Charter and Charter Principles should become the 'gold standard' document which sets out core requirements for public and private sector providers Australia wide.

In other words, the APA believes a National patient charter and charter principles would have an important role in developing local patient charters as well as in standard setting, accreditation, education and training.

7. How the Charter applies in different sectors and settings

The APA believes the draft charter and principles contain enough detail to be clear and adaptable without being too prescriptive.