

RESOURCES TO ASSIST WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHARTER OF HEALTHCARE RIGHTS

Documents available from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care:

Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights A4 Flier (English)	Word, PDF, Indesign, Audio, Braille
Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights A3 Poster	PDF, Illustrator
Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (17 community languages)	PDF, Indesign
Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights – A guide for patients, consumers, carers and families (English)	PDF, Word, Indesign, audio, Braille
Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights – A guide for patients, consumers, carers and families (17 community languages)	PDF, Indesign
Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights – A guide for healthcare providers	PDF, Word, Indesign
Roles in realising the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights	PDF, Word, Indesign
Using the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in your health service	PDF, Word, Indesign
Your role in using the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights	Powerpoint presentation

Relevant jurisdictional websites

ACT: www.health.act.gov.au	TAS: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au
NSW: www.health.nsw.gov.au	VIC: www.health.vic.gov.au
QLD: www.health.qld.gov.au	WA: www.health.wa.gov.au
SA: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au	

Complaints Commissioners

ACT Human Rights Commission, Health Services Commission www.hrc.act.gov.au	SA Health and Community Services Complaints Commission www.hcsc.sa.gov.au
NSW Health Care Complaints Commission www.hccc.nsw.gov.au	TAS Health Complaints Commission www.healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au
NHealth and Community Services Complaints Commission www.hcsc.nt.gov.au	VIC Office of the Health Services Commissioner www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc
QLD Office of the Health Ombudsman www.oho.qld.gov.au	WA Health and Disability Services Complaints Office www.hadsco.wa.gov.au

Department of Health Private Patients' Hospital Charter - <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-privatehealth-consumers-charter-index.htm>

Australian Council on Healthcare Standards EQUIP standards: www.achs.org.au

For more information please visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au

USING THE AUSTRALIAN CHARTER OF HEALTHCARE RIGHTS IN YOUR HEALTH SERVICE

The Australian Health Ministers adopted the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in 2008. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care recommends use of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in all health service organisations in Australia. All healthcare charters in use in Australia should reflect the rights and principles included in it.

Everyone who is seeking or receiving care in the Australian health system has certain rights regarding the nature of that care. The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights can be used by health service organisations to tell patients and consumers about their rights in our healthcare system.

The Charter provides a platform for discussions about health rights between patients, consumers, families, carers and healthcare providers.

A shared understanding of the rights of patients contributes to the provision of safe and high quality care. Informing patients of their rights and involving them in decision making about their care improves the experiences of patients, clinical outcomes and use of resources.

This brochure has been developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to help small and large health service organisations embed the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in their organisation.

The brochure describes actions that can be taken to provide information about health rights to patients, consumers, families, carers and staff and to incorporate the Charter in the systems of the health service organisation.

The Charter applies to all types of healthcare providers and health service organisations, including small and large public and private hospitals, multi-purpose services, general practices, specialist rooms, day procedure facilities, community health centres and private allied health providers. Different approaches and activities will be required to embed the Charter in these different settings. This brochure provides general guidance that can be adapted as needed. Some organisations already have a charter of rights in place; this brochure also provides guidance about how these can be aligned to the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.

The brochure has been informed by material developed by the Department of Human Services in Victoria, and the Commission appreciates the assistance of the Department of Human Services in allowing this work to be shared nationally.



DOES YOUR HEALTH SERVICE ALREADY HAVE A CHARTER OF RIGHTS?

NO MY ORGANISATION DOES NOT HAVE A CHARTER OF RIGHTS

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights can be used to provide information about the rights of people seeking and receiving health care in Australia.

You should look at the type of services delivered by your organisation and the patients who use these services

to determine whether or not there are additional rights or information that need to be added to the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights. The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights can be adapted to the specific needs of health service organisations as long as the seven rights included in it remain.

YES MY ORGANISATION ALREADY HAS A CHARTER OF RIGHTS

If you already have a charter in place you should review how it aligns with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.

Areas where there may be differences include:

- Who the charter applies to
- The rights included in the charter, and the nature of these rights
- Whether the charter also includes information about the responsibilities of patients
- Whether the charter includes specific rights relating to the nature of the health services you provide.

This review will help identify what changes might need to be made to your existing charter to align it with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, or what parts of your existing charter are different from the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, but are needed for the services you provide.

Once you have reviewed your existing charter against the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights there are a number of possible actions you could take. Public hospitals and health services will need to ensure that any actions they take to change their existing charter are consistent with decisions that have been made by their State or Territory Health Department regarding use of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights. In some cases your State or Territory Health Department will be responsible for reviewing and developing new charters for all facilities. Links to the websites for State and Territory charters are provided at the end of this brochure.

Actions that you could take include:

- **Replace your existing charter with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.** If there are no fundamental differences between your existing charter and the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, replacing your existing charter with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights may be the best option. The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights has been recommended for use in all healthcare settings and has been developed following wide, national, consultation. The decision to replace your existing charter with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights should be made jointly with all parts of your health service currently using your existing charter, as having more than one charter will be confusing for your patients.
- **Edit your existing charter or the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.** If there are differences between your existing charter and the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, you may wish to edit your existing charter to ensure that the rights and principles in the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights are included in it. Alternatively, you can edit the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights to add specific information or rights relevant to your health service.
- **Keep your existing charter.** If there are no differences between your existing charter and the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, you may choose to keep your existing charter as it stands. If you do so, it would be worthwhile noting that your existing charter is consistent with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.

USING THE AUSTRALIAN CHARTER OF HEALTHCARE RIGHTS IN YOUR HEALTH SERVICE

Irrespective of whether or not you already have an existing charter of rights, there are a number of actions you could take to support the use of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights or other charters in your organisation. In deciding what actions to take to promote the Charter you will need to consider the characteristics of your organisation, the services you deliver, the patients you see and the nature of your local population.

Inform patients, consumers, families and carers of their rights. One of the key purposes of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights is to inform patients of their rights and help them to understand them. Strategies to do this include:

- discuss the rights in the Charter with patients
- display the Charter brochures and posters at reception desks, in waiting areas, wards, corridors, consulting rooms and other strategic locations
- include information about patient rights and the Charter in corporate communications such as the organisation's website and information brochures
- include the Charter in information packs being sent to elective patients prior to admission
- make information available for patients at their bedside
- ensure copies of the Charter are available in community languages and provide copies to interpreters
- provide information on tapes for patients who are visually impaired.

Inform healthcare providers and other staff about the rights of patients. The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights is designed to provide a platform for discussion between patients and providers about healthcare rights. For this to occur healthcare providers and other staff need to be aware of the Charter and the rights included in it. Strategies to do this include:

- include a copy of the Charter in the employment orientation package for all new staff
- include a discussion of the Charter in all orientation and refresher training for staff
- ensure key staff such as social workers and patient liaison officers have information about the Charter and are aware of how the Charter can support them in their roles.

Build the Charter into organisational systems. As well as providing information to patients and staff when healthcare services are delivered, the Charter can be built into organisational systems to guide health service planning and delivery in an ongoing way. Strategies to do this can include:

- engage local consumer groups in discussions about the Charter and patient rights
- engage executive and senior management in discussions about the Charter and patient rights by including standing items regarding issues such as the importance of the Charter towards patient-centred care on agendas
- use the Charter as a framework when reviewing organisational policies to ensure the rights are reflected in organisation vision, plans and policy statements
- ensure accreditation requirements are met regarding the provision of information about rights and responsibilities to patients
- incorporate the rights and principles in the Charter in organisational codes of ethics and codes of conduct
- provide information about the Charter to local organisations that you deal with such as hostels, nursing homes and community centres.
- ensure the Charter is used as a reference point in the management of complaints.

Measure the impact of the Charter. It is important to examine whether or not your efforts to promote the Charter are successful, and whether this is having effect on the experience of patients in your organisation. Strategies to do this include:

- include questions in patient satisfaction or patient experience surveys about whether patients have received the Charter, and whether the rights in the Charter have been respected
- conduct surveys of staff regarding their awareness of and attitudes towards the Charter
- monitor patient requests for the Charter
- monitor printing of the Charter.