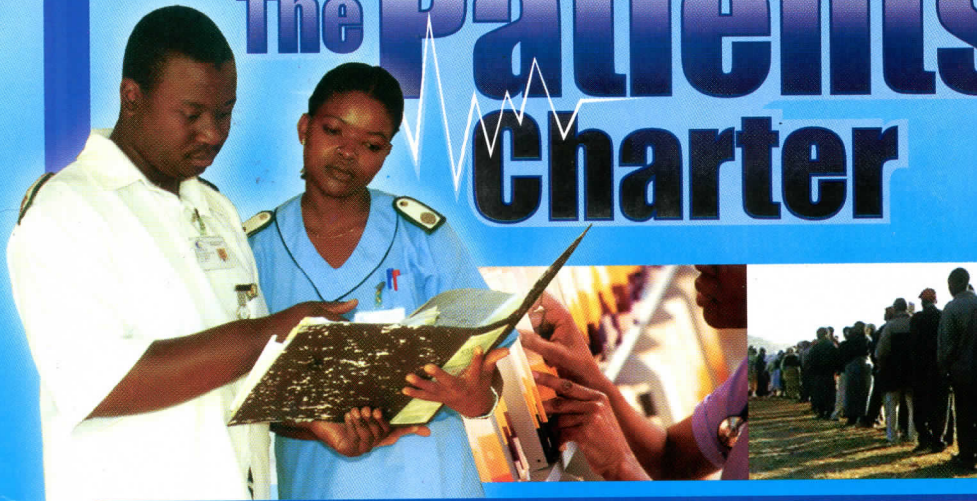




The Patients Charter



The Patient Charter aims to improve the relationship between patients and health care providers by helping or allowing the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare to:

- ▶ Listen to and act on people's views and needs
- ▶ Set the best possible standards of health services
- ▶ Provide health services which meet these standards

The Charter explains:

- ▶ The kind of service you can expect from the health care delivery system
- ▶ Your health rights
- ▶ Your responsibilities and obligations
- ▶ How you can give feedback on the quality of services you are provided with or have required.

PATIENTS' RIGHTS

Patients have the right to health care and humane treatment.

Every individual shall have access to competent health care and treatment regardless of age, sex, ethnic origin, religion, political affiliation, economic status or social class.

Health care services shall be available on the basis of clinical need regardless of the ability to pay. It shall be the responsibility of the government to ensure that every person has access to essential health services.

Every patient shall be treated with care, consideration, respect and dignity, without discrimination of any kind, including vulnerable groups such as children, women, people with physical challenges, and rural dwellers, taking into consideration issues of accessibility to both physical structures and information.

All drugs and vaccines shall be of acceptable standards in terms of quality, efficacy and safety.

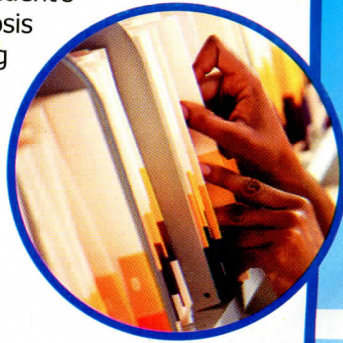
In an emergency, every individual shall have the right to prompt treatment from the nearest medical/health facility.

A child admitted to hospital shall, whenever possible, have the right to the company of a parent or guardian.

CONFIDENTIALITY

A patient shall have the right for the details of the patient's care (including the use of new technology) prognosis and all communication and other records relating to the patient's care to be treated as confidential, unless:

- ▶ Release is authorised in writing by the patient
- ▶ It is undesirable on medical grounds to seek a patient's consent, but it is in the patient's own interest that confidentiality be broken
- ▶ The information is required by due legal process.



PRIVACY

Patients shall be interviewed, examined and treated in surroundings designed to ensure reasonable privacy and shall have the right to be accompanied during any physical examination or treatment if they so wish.

RIGHT TO CHOICE OF CARE

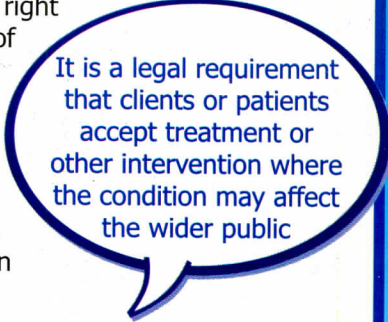
A patient shall have the right to a second opinion at any time while consulting the same medical or health care delivery system.

A patient or next of kin shall have the right to an explanation about their case history and medical records, and to have them explained. The patient or next of kin shall also have the right to authorise in writing for another health professional to obtain a copy of the medical records and to inform him or her of what they contain.

If a patient's health professional refuses to allow another health professional to be called in, or breaches any other provisions of this charter, the patient shall have the right to seek alternative service/care or to take the issue up with the Health Professions Council.

RIGHT TO SAFETY

A patient, if not incapacitated, shall have the right to a clear, concise explanation - in lay terms - of the proposed procedure and of any available alternative procedure, before any treatment or investigation. The explanation shall incorporate information on risks, side-effects, problems relating to recuperation, likelihood of success, risk of death and whether the proposed procedure to be administered is an investigation.



It is a legal requirement that clients or patients accept treatment or other intervention where the condition may affect the wider public

RIGHT TO ADEQUATE INFORMATION AND CONSENT

A patient shall have the right to know the identity and professional status of the individuals providing service to the patient and to know which health professional is primarily responsible for his or her care, including:

The right to adequate and coherent information on prescribed and purchased medicines

- ▶ The right to choose among competitive products based on unbiased information
- ▶ The right to know his or her prognosis and everything about their medical problem
- ▶ A patient's written consent shall be required for the inclusion of a patient in any research or teaching programme. The patient shall be adequately informed of the aims, methods, anticipated benefits and potential hazards of the study and any discomfort it may entail. The patient shall be informed that he or she is free not to participate in the study and that he or she is free to withdraw his or her consent to participate at any time
- ▶ To ensure that informed consent is not obtained under duress or from a patient in a dependent relationship to a health professional, the informed consent shall be obtained by a health professional who is not engaged in the investigation and who is completely independent of the official relationship between the patient and the health professional responsible for the research. In the case of a child, informed consent shall be obtained from the parent or guardian.

RIGHT TO REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES

A patient shall have access to appropriate grievance handling procedures, bearing in mind that health care delivery professionals are not superhuman.

A patient shall have the right to claim damages for injury or illness incurred or aggravated as a result of the failure of the health professional to exercise the duty and standard of care required of him or her, while treating the patient.

A patient shall have the right to legal advice regarding any malpractice by a health care professional.

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

A patient shall have the right to participate in decision making affecting his or her health:

- ▶ With the health professionals and other support staff involved in direct health care
- ▶ Through consumer representation, in planning and evaluating the system of health services, the types and qualities of services, and the conditions of service under which health services are or were delivered
- ▶ To give an assessment of the quality of services offered to him or her.

RIGHT TO HEALTH EDUCATION

Every individual shall have the right to seek and obtain comprehensive information advice regarding preventive and curative medicine, aftercare and good health.



THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

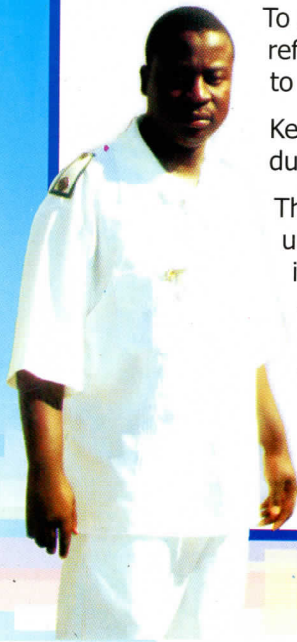
Every individual shall have the right to an environment that is conducive to good health. This includes and extends to the health professional's office, health centre, hospital room and any other facilities.

PATIENTS' AND FAMILIES' RESPONSIBILITIES/ OBLIGATIONS

Whilst you have the right to be heard, you also have an obligation to listen to medical instruction concerning your treatment.

The patient and family shall provide accurate and complete information to assist the health professional to plan for your stay and treatment adequately.

The patient and family shall produce proof of inability to pay for health care services, except in emergency cases as determined by the health care professionals.



To avoid inconvenience to yourself and to others, follow the referral chain and ensure you have the necessary documents to effect your access into hospital.

Keep your hospital notes safe and clean; you will need them during your next visit or contact with the health services.

The patient and family shall ensure that the patient understands the purpose and cost of any proposed investigations or treatment before deciding to accept it.

The patient shall insist upon explanations until he or she is adequately informed and shall consult with all relevant persons before reaching a decision.

The patient and family shall accept the consequences of the patient's own informed decisions.

The patient and family shall establish a good relationship with the health care provider and follow the treatment, determined by the health professional primarily responsible for the patients care.

The patient and family shall inform the health professional if the patient is currently consulting with, or under the care of another health professional - including traditional medical practitioners - in connection with the same complaint or any other complaint.

The patient and family shall keep appointments and shall inform the health professional if unable to keep an appointment.

Every individual has a responsibility to maintain his or her own health and that of society by refraining from indulging in:

- ▶ Consumption of unhealthy food
- ▶ Substance abuse, such as alcohol and drugs
- ▶ Life styles that have an adverse impact on health, such as sexual promiscuity, reckless activities and physical inactivity.

Every individual has a responsibility to accept all preventive measures sanctioned by law.

The patient and family must be aware of the limits of health care providers.

Patients should not expect a prescription at every visit. Many illnesses are short term and do not require medication. You do not need a pill for every sickness.

Take your medicines exactly as instructed and complete any course of treatment

Take interest in your condition and read more information to get the best out of health promotions.

Do not share prescribed medicines.

The patient shall conduct himself or herself so as not to interfere with the well being or rights of other patients or providers of health care.

SERVICES

ADMISSION AND YOUR STAY IN HOSPITAL

In the event of an accident, illness or emergency, you will be attended to by competent health workers. You will be assessed and dealt with appropriately and immediately upon arrival.

Whether you are admitted as an emergency case or not, hospital staff shall:

- ▶ Inform your relatives, next of kin or whoever you wish, where practicable
- ▶ Keep your clothes and valuables in a safe and clean place
- ▶ Give clear information about your illness and condition and the treatment plan for your recovery
- ▶ Give clear information about domestic arrangements and any other information relevant to your stay in hospital.

OUTPATIENT SERVICES

Provided you have followed the referral chain and you do not require complex diagnostic procedures, you will receive treatment promptly.

You have the right to clear information about your full treatment. Health workers will be happy to answer your concerns.

You have the right to request for assistance or help when you require it.

INTER-HOSPITAL TRANSFERS

In some cases, it will be necessary for you or your child to be transferred to another hospital for continuation of treatment.

If this is so, staff will:

- ▶ Give you information concerning the reason for the transfer and the arrangements to effect it
- ▶ Inform your relatives, or whomever you wish, of the transfer, where such communication is possible
- ▶ Upon discharge, if need be, advise your relatives to take you home.



COMMUNITY SERVICES

Health services are based on the referral chain.

This means that you are required to visit your local health centre or general practitioner in the first instance when you are not feeling well. However, if you are involved in an accident or emergency, you can go to the nearest hospital without referral.

In addition, the following Community Health Workers are available in your locality to assist you:

- ▶ Village Health Workers (formerly known as village community workers - VCWs)
- ▶ Environmental Health Technicians (EHTs)
- ▶ Field orderlies
- ▶ Community Based Distributors (CBDs) - Family Planning
- ▶ Community Nurses
- ▶ TB Co-ordinators
- ▶ Health Centre Nurses
- ▶ Other community workers
- ▶ Home based care providers.

In the community, you have a right to:

- ▶ Communicate with health workers on matters which concern your health. You do not have to wait till you are ill
- ▶ Continuing care at home, where there is need (e.g. invalidity, old age, recuperation, etc). When you are discharged, the hospital will arrange for continuing care with your nearest health facility if there is need. In the event that you request an ambulance, it will be dispatched to you as soon as possible. However, arrival time will depend on distance, condition of the roads and availability of ambulances.

FREE SERVICES IN ZIMBABWE

- ▶ Immunisation for children
- ▶ Immunisation for pregnant women
- ▶ Treatment for mental illness
- ▶ Treatment for epilepsy
- ▶ Treatment and rehabilitation for children under five years old
- ▶ Treatment for survivors of sexual abuse
- ▶ Clients attending opportunistic infection clinics and other HIV and AIDS services
- ▶ Treatment for tuberculosis
- ▶ Treatment of leprosy and its related complications
- ▶ Treatment for those aged, 65 years and above
- ▶ Other as stated in the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare Policies.



SAAIDS
Southern Africa
HIV and AIDS Information
Dissemination Service



Consumer Council
Of Zimbabwe
voice of the consumers

FORD FOUNDATION