

## The Charter

Everyone who is seeking or receiving care in the Australian Health system has certain rights regarding the nature of that care. These are described in the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights. The rights included in the Charter relate to access, safety, respect, communication, participation, privacy and comment.

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights is available to everyone in the healthcare system. It allows patients, consumers, families, carers and providers to share an understanding of the rights of people receiving health care.

Patients, consumers, healthcare providers and health service organisations all have an important part to play in achieving healthcare rights and contributing to a safe and high quality healthcare system.

A genuine partnership between patients, consumers and healthcare providers is important so that everyone achieves the best possible outcomes.

Healthcare providers are aware that in some circumstances, your ability to interact with the healthcare system may be restricted. Where possible they will alert family or support services about your circumstances if they consider that you need assistance.

## Using the Charter

This brochure discusses each of the seven Charter rights and provides some guidance to patients, consumers, carers and families on ways they can contribute to ensuring that the rights are upheld.

You are entitled to raise issues about your healthcare rights. You are encouraged to read the Charter, or have it explained to you, and to discuss the Charter with your healthcare provider or family or carer.

Healthcare staff should be able to advise you how to obtain further information about your rights.

## Contacts

It is always best to try to resolve your complaint with your local health service provider. If you have tried this and are still unsatisfied, you can make a complaint to the Health Care Complaints Commissioner in your state or territory. Some useful contact information is listed below:

ACT Human Rights Commission, Health Services Commissioner  
[www.hrc.act.gov.au](http://www.hrc.act.gov.au)

NSW Healthcare Complaints Commission  
[www.hccc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au)

NT Health and Community Services Complaints Commission  
[www.hcsc.nt.gov.au](http://www.hcsc.nt.gov.au)

QLD Health Quality and Complaints Commission  
[www.hqcc.qld.gov.au](http://www.hqcc.qld.gov.au)

SA Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner  
[www.hcsc.sa.gov.au](http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au)

TASHealth Complaints Commissioner  
[www.healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au](http://www.healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au)

VIC Office of the Health Services Commissioner  
[www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc)

WA Office of Health Review  
[www.healthreview.wa.gov.au](http://www.healthreview.wa.gov.au)

For more information on the Charter and how you can contribute to achieving healthcare rights visit [www.safetyandquality.gov.au](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au)

AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON  
SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTHCARE

  
ST JOHN OF GOD  
HEALTH CARE

# The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

A guide for patients, consumers, carers and families



ST JOHN OF GOD  
HEALTH CARE

HOSPITALS    DIAGNOSTICS    OUTREACH

Ground Floor 12 Kings Park Road West Perth WA 6005  
Tel: 61 8 9213 3636 Fax: 61 8 9213 3668  
[www.sjog.org.au](http://www.sjog.org.au) Email: [info@sjog.org.au](mailto:info@sjog.org.au)

ARBN 051 960 911 ABN 21 930 207 958 (Limited Liability) Incorporated in Western Australia  
Published October 2009

## Access

A right to health care.

You have a fundamental right to adequate and timely health care. Sometimes this may not be at the healthcare facility you first attend as not all services are necessarily available everywhere.

You can contribute to the right of access by trying to meet your appointments and telling the facility when you cannot.



## Safety

A right to safe and high quality care.

If you are unsure about what is happening to you or if you think something has been missed in your care, alert your healthcare provider. Let your provider know any circumstances that might make your health care riskier.

## Respect

A right to be shown respect, dignity and consideration.

You are entitled to receive care in a way that is respectful of your culture, beliefs, values and characteristics like age and gender. It is important to tell your healthcare provider of any changes in your circumstances.

Respect also includes being mindful of healthcare staff and other patients.

## Communication

A right to be informed about services, treatment, options and costs in a clear and open way.

Healthcare providers will tell you about the care you are receiving and help you understand what is happening to you.

You can contribute to communication by being as open and honest as you can be. To understand the instructions given to you, you can ask questions if you would like more information.

You can use interpreters if English is not your first language. Interpreter services are free and can be provided in person or by phone.

## Participation

A right to be included in decisions and choices about care.

You are encouraged to participate in decisions about your care. Ask questions if you are unsure about what is happening to you. Involve your family or carer if this makes you more comfortable and sure.



## Privacy

A right to privacy and confidentiality of provided information.

You are able to see your records and ask for information to be corrected if it is wrong. In some situations your health information will need to be shared between healthcare providers.

You can also contribute by respecting the privacy and confidentiality of others.

## Comment

A right to comment on care and having concerns addressed.

Healthcare providers want to solve problems quickly, but they need to be told about the problem first. If you have any suggestions about how services could be improved please let staff know.

The procedures used by the health service organisation to comment about your care should be made available to you. You can provide verbal or written comments about the procedures and your experiences.

To commend health workers, to complain about your health care and/or to be advised of the procedure of expressing concern about your care please contact your health service provider's patient liaison representative.