



# Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (the Charter) is an initiative of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare and is supported and promoted in Queensland by the Office of the Health Ombudsman.

## About 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 relate to access, safety, respect, communication, participation, privacy and consent.

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

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.

The Charter outlines seven rights:

### Access

*A right to access healthcare.*

You have a fundamental right to adequate and timely healthcare. 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 healthcare 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 healthcare and/or to be advised of the procedure of expressing concern about your care please contact your health service provider's patient liaison representative.

*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 HEALTH CARE**

## Your healthcare rights—how we can help

You are entitled to raise issues about your healthcare rights. Try talking with your health service provider, as this is often the quickest and easiest way to address your concerns or fix a problem.

If you are not satisfied with their response, or you're not comfortable talking with them directly, contact the Office of the Health Ombudsman, Queensland's health service complaints agency, by:

- submitting an online complaint form at [www.oho.qld.gov.au](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)
- filling in a complaint form (available at [www.oho.qld.gov.au](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)) and
  - sending it to:  
PO Box 13281, George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4003
  - faxing it to (07) 3319 6350
  - emailing it to [complaints@oho.qld.gov.au](mailto:complaints@oho.qld.gov.au)
  - calling 133 OHO (133 646) between 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday.

Consumers requiring an interpreter can access the Office of the Health Ombudsman using the translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) by calling 131 450.

Consumers with a hearing or speech impairment can access the Office of the Health Ombudsman using the National Relay Service:

- TTY/voice call – 133 677
- Speak and Listen – 1300 555 727
- SMS relay – 0423 677 767
- Website – [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)