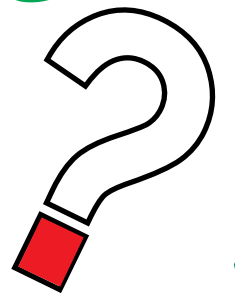


What's the PATIENTS' RIGHTS CHARTER



The Patients Charter is a result of concerted effort by the various stakeholders and the Ministry of Health. The objective of the patients' charter is to empower health consumers to demand high quality health care, to promote the rights of patients and to improve the quality of life of all Ugandans and finally eradicate poverty nationwide. The Patients' Rights Charter lists both the rights and the responsibilities of people using health services.

Why do you need to know about the Patients' Rights Charter?

When going to the nearest clinic, health center or Hospital for treatment and medicine, knowing what your rights and responsibilities are as a patient makes it easier for you to respond to doctors, nurses and other patients if they are rude to you or treat you badly.

What can the Patients' Rights Charter Do for You?

As a patient you can use it as a tool to claim your rights to good quality health care. It helps to raise awareness about human rights in the health sector and puts the Constitution and the Bill of Rights into practice by promoting access to health care, equity and patient rights that you as a patient can expect to receive and demand, just because you human. BUT you are also responsible for your own health. For example, you need to sleep for at least six to seven hours at night, exercise regularly and eat enough fruit and vegetables every day. Avoid smoking and excessive drinking.

What can't the Patients Rights Charter Do for You?

The Charter does not look at other factors that are necessary for you as a patient to be healthy such as the food you eat, your living conditions, adequate housing, clean toilets and access to running water.

Who can you complain to if you feel your right to health is not respected?

a. At the Health Facility:
Under clause 19 of the Patient Charter you have a right to redress in case of a health right violation. This charter requires that every health facility should designate a person

or a committee to be responsible for the observance of patient rights, whose duties should include:

- To give advice and assistance to a patient as to the realization of her/his rights spelt out in this document.
- To receive, investigate, and process patient's complaints. Complaints regarding the quality of medical care shall be referred to the attention of the facility in-charge.
- To educate, and instruct all medical and administrative staff in the facility in all matters regarding the patient's rights.

b. The Uganda Human Rights Commission:

Article 52 of the Constitution also empowers the UHRC to 'investigate, at its own initiative or on a complaint made by a person or group of persons against the violation of any human rights.

The commission has established a tribunal which handles human rights complaints against both the state and the individuals.

The UHRC mandate extends to:

- Receiving complaints regarding the violation of human rights;
- Investigating and report on human right violations;
- Giving people assistance when their rights have been violated or finding solutions to remedy violations of rights;
- Conducting research on human rights issues;
- Having public hearings (where people can talk about violations of their rights) to gather information on specific rights issues;
- Reporting to Parliament on matters relating to human rights;
- Regularly publishing reports on government departments' performance on realizing socio-economic rights;
- Making recommendations to government to improve the carrying out of human rights; and
- Creating awareness of human rights

For more information please contact:



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1. What are human rights?
2. The right to health
3. The patients' rights charter
4. Access to information
5. Community involvement and the right to health
6. Individual and collective rights in public health

3

The Patients' Rights Charter and redress for violations



Rights and responsibilities under Uganda's Patients' Rights Charter

RIGHTS

- **The Right to Medical Care:** Every person in need of medical care is entitled to impartial access to treatment in accordance with regulations, conditions and arrangements obtaining at any given time in the government health care system.
- **In a medical emergency:** a person is entitled to receive emergency medical care unconditionally in any health facility without having to pay any deposits or fees prior to medical care. Should a medical facility be unable to provide treatment to the patient, it shall, to the best of their facility, refer him/her to a place where he/she can receive appropriate medical care.
- **Prohibition of Discrimination:** No health facility or health provider shall discriminate between patients on ground of disease, religion, political, disability, race, sex, age, social status, ethnicity, nationality, country of birth or other such grounds;
- **Participation on decision making:** Every citizen has the right to participate or be represented in the development of health policies and systems through recognized institutions;
- **Proper Medical Care:** A patient shall be entitled to appropriate health care with regard to both its professionalism and quality assurance based on clinical need;
- **Be treated by a named health care provider:** Everyone has the right to know the identity and professional position of the person providing health care;
- **Receiving visitors:** A patient hospitalized in a health facility is entitled to receive visitors at the times, and according to the guidelines provided by the facility management.
- **Informed consent:** Every patient has the right to be given adequate and accurate information about the nature of their illness, diagnostic procedures and proposed treatment. This should be communicated to the patient at the earliest possible stage in a manner that he/she is expected to understand in order to make a free informed, and independent choice;
- **Refusal of treatment:** A person may refuse treatment and such refusal shall be verbal or in writing provided that such refusal does not endanger the health of others;
- **Confidentiality and privacy:** Patients have the right to privacy in the course of consultation and treatment. Information concerning one's health may only be disclosed with informed consent, except when required by law or on court order;
- **The Patient's Right to Medical Information:** The patient shall be entitled to obtain from the clinician or the health facility medical information concerning himself/herself, including a copy of his/her medical records

RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Provision of information:** Every patient has the responsibility to provide the health worker with relevant complete and accurate information for diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation or counseling purposes;
- **Compliance with instructions:** The patient has the responsibility to comply with the prescribed treatment or rehabilitation procedures meant to improve his/her health;
- **Refusal of treatment:** The patient takes responsibility for his/her actions if he/she refuses to receive treatment or does not follow the instructions of the health worker. In case of children below 18 years and the elderly who may depend on the decisions of the caretaker; the caretaker takes full responsibility
- **Respect and consideration:** The patient has the responsibility to respect other patients and the rights of health workers by helping to prevent spread of diseases, control noise, smoke and the number of visitors and refraining from using verbal abuse or physical violence against health workers or other patients.
- **Will:** The patient is free to advise the health care workers on his/her wishes with regard to his/ her death including dying in dignity, spiritual support as well as organ support. This is a very important management tool of patients who are terminally ill and can make the patient fully satisfied before his/ her death

