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*MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH*  
*Guyana*

*Patient Charter*

Chief Medical Officer

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Patients Charter

Ministry of Public

Health Lot 1

Brickdam, Stabroek

Georgeto

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## GUYANA

### **Right of Information**

*Every patient has the right to access all information regarding their state of health, the health services available and how to use them.*

- The patient has the right to receive clear information from the health Care Service Provider in an easily accessible way. This should include information about the state of the patient's health, including medical data, proposed medical procedure, risk and advantages of every alternative procedure and treatment and possible effect of the non-use of medical treatment. This information should particularly take into account the religious and ethnic orientation and language understood by the patient.
- The patient has the right to view his or her clinical file and medical records, to photocopy, to ask questions about the contents and obtain the correction of any errors the records might contain.
- The patient has the right to know the name and **position** of their health care provider; the health care provider should have visible identification containing his/her name and area of specialization if any.
- **The patient has the right to be informed about rules and policies of the hospital or health center that he/she visits.**
- **The patient has the right to receive information on self care that will help to relieve symptoms, recover and will reduce risk of complications.**

### **Right to Respect**

***All patients shall have their dignity respected.***

**The patient has the right to considerate and respectful care at all times. The care of the patient includes consideration of the physical, spiritual, psychosocial and cultural background of the patient and how these might influence the patient's health and illness.**

**In the spirit of compassion and respect, care and comfort are provided to the patient with low prognosis and their families.**

**Forward**

I am pleased to issue this third edition of the Patient Charter developed jointly by the Ministry of Public Health, Guyana and several stakeholders. This publication comes on the backdrop of the Ministry's efforts as outlined in the health strategic, "*Health Vision 2020*" to ensure that a high quality of health service of an acceptable quality is delivered to our people with the aim of building confidence in the public health care system and improving the health of all in Guyana.

This charter outlined the basic elements of the rights, role and responsibly of anyone who the public health care system interacts with as a "patient." The purpose of Guyana's Patient Charter is to ensure that every Guyanese, regardless of age, gender, religion, national origin, social class or geographical location is aware of his or her rights to access health care services and their rights while in the care of a health professional.

Every patient has the right to receive services from health care providers that is based on courtesy, human dignity, patience, empathy and tolerance. Every patient has an obligation to cooperate with health workers and to actively participate in his/her own health care.

***Dr. Shamdeo  
Persaud Chief  
Medical Officer***

**Right to safe care and treatment**

*Every patient has the right to receive safe and effective medical and*

*nursing care from professional registered health care workers.*

The patient shall have the right of medical care appropriate to the needs of his or her health. These services shall be available and accessible continuously to everybody on an equal basis and without any discrimination and according to the financial, human and material resources which society is in a position to make available.

Whenever circumstances call for a selection among patients for specific medical care, this shall be made without discrimination, in a fair manner and shall be based on medical criteria.

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The patient has the right to be relieved of anything that making him or her (such as pain or distress) uncomfortable according to the available scientific knowledge.

The patient has the right to safe care and treatment according to the available local medical technical advancement

### **Right to Choice**

*Every patient has the right to make choices about utilizing available health services on the basis of adequate information.*

- The health services has the duty to provide the patient with information on the various centers and health practitioners available to provide certain preventative, diagnostic and treatment services so that the patient can make a choice about a facility to attend for a particular health problem.

- The patient has the right to discuss with the physician the treatment options, including the use of oral medications in cases where they would be equally effective as injections. They may seek and obtain a second opinion.

- The patient has the right to decide seeking a second opinion if he/she has doubts about the diagnosis or proposed treatment.
- The patient has the right to have his or her moral and cultural beliefs as well as his religious and philosophical convictions respected.

**Right to Consent** *Every patient has the right to actively participate in the decision regarding his or her health.*

- The patient should be given all information to a needed treatment or an operation, including any associated risks and discomfort, side-effects and alternatives when necessary. **This information should be given** with enough advance time **and using a language that is clear and understood** to enable the patient to actively participate in the therapeutic choices regarding his/her state of health.
- The patient has the right to refuse a treatment or a medical intervention.
- The patient has the right to refuse information about his or her health status until he/she is prepared to handle it.
- **In the case of a minor the consent shall be obtained from the parent or guardian. In the case of an adult in unconscious state or unable to understand, consent shall be obtained from the closest relative with the authority to do so.**
- **In the case of an emergency, when waiting for consent from a relative would delay urgent treatment, an exception can be made in allowing the responsible physician to take the decision regarding treatment in the best interest of the patient.**
- **A patient shall only be included in medical research with informed consent. The patient should be given clear information on the aims, methods and potential hazards or discomfort associated with participation in the research project. Every patient has the right to refuse participation and the**

right to withdraw consent at any time.

## **Right to privacy and confidentiality**

*Every individual has the right to the confidentiality of personal information, including information regarding his or her state of health and potential diagnostic or therapeutic procedures, as well as the protection of his privacy during the performance of diagnostic exams, specialist visits and medical/surgical treatment in general.*

- The patient's medical information such as the medical condition of the patient, the diagnosis, the prognosis and the treatment as well as any other information of a personal nature shall be kept confidential even after his or her death and shall not be revealed to any person or authority except as provided **by any law or court order.**
- **All data and information of the patient shall be kept in secured archives that are only accessible to authorized persons.**
- **Information of a patient's health status or treatment can only be disclosed to anyone not directly involved in the patient's care, with the patient's written informed consent or of a legally authorized representative, except when required in terms of any law or court order.**
- **The patient has the right to be interviewed and examined discretely in surroundings that provide privacy and with no other persons present who are NOT directly involved in the patient's care.**

**Right to Health Promotion and Preventative Services** *All Guyanese have the right to receive health education and health promotion and preventative services that may help them to stay healthy.*

- Every individual has the right to services in order to prevent illness such as the right to

benefit from health promotion programs developed by the health sector. This includes information to raise people's awareness on health and the sharing of results of important health research.

- Patient has the right to benefit from health promotion programs developed by the health

sector. This information is to raise people's awareness, providing health procedures at regular intervals free of charge for various groups of the population at risk, and making the results of scientific research and technological innovation available of all. **Every individual has also the right to utilize preventive health services (such as vaccination) offered by the health sector to various groups of the population at risks.**

## **Patient's Obligations**

### **The responsibility to supply information**

You have the responsibility to provide accurate information which the health professional requires about your health including, your complaints, medication, previous diseases and previous hospitalizations or visit to health care provider. You shall inform the health professional if you are under the care of another health professional or traditional healer in connection with the same complaint. You are responsible for communicating whether you have or have not understood the instructions for the treatment given to you and self care. You are responsible to provide information on any change in your conditions or adverse reactions of medicines.

The responsibility to comply with agreed treatment or rehabilitation procedures

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Once you agree with the treatment given, you are responsible to comply with the instructions specified. If in the course of the treatment you change your



opinion about continuation of the treatment given to you, for whatever reason, you have the responsibility to discuss this with the health professional.

### **The responsibility to accept consequences of one's own informed decisions**

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You are responsible for your own decisions taken, including for the consequences of refusal of treatment. Once informed, you shall accept the responsibility for engaging in unhealthy risk behavior such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption or other substance abuse, physical inactivity, unhealthy food consumption, unhealthy sexual lifestyle etc.

### **The responsibility to respect the rights of other patients and of health providers**

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Your conduct must be in such a way that it does not interfere with the well being or rights of other patients or the rights of the health staff. You shall not ask or pay a health professional to provide false certificates with incorrect information.

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### **The responsibility to utilize the health care system properly and comply with regulations**

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You shall respect the property of the hospital or health center. You shall comply with the regulations for visiting and following the rules concerning patient conduct. You shall not waste medical resources unnecessarily.

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### **The responsibility to accept all preventive measures sanctioned by policy and law**

Under provisions of the Public Health (School Children) Immunization Act Chapter 35:02 of 1974 requires that all school age children (3 years 9

months) shall be vaccinated against selected diseases according to schedule approved by the Minister. Students should not gain entry to school if not fully immunized so all parents and guardians must ensure that all children are fully immunized by 3 years 9 months of age. Vaccination against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) from the age 9 -

16 for boys and  
Girls

- **Mass Drug Treatment (MDA) against infection with parasites that may**

**cause filariasis and intestinal worms Any other prophylaxis treatment approved by the Ministry to reduce risk of infectious diseases. General preventative measures, screening, diagnosis and treatment for risk factors and disease conditions that can lead to poor health and wellbeing**

*This Charter is made with the full involvement and consent of all patients and members of the public with the right roles and responsibilities of all taken into consideration.*

*"Health for  
All"*