

# Patient power recognised in new health charter

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The new Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights released today gives welcome recognition to the evolving place of the patient as partner in decisions about their care.

The *My healthcare rights* charter has been produced by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and promotes an increased focus on person-centred care.

“The changes in this second edition of the charter reflect the evolution in the status of the patient since the first charter was released eleven years ago” the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said.

“The strong positioning of the patient’s rights, roles and responsibilities represents an important development in the part that consumers and patients can expect to play in their health care, taking a partnership role with their doctor in decisions about care, and more generally having a far greater say in health service decision-making and design.

“In the seven fundamental rights detailed in the new charter, the term “partnership” is introduced and the wording of the charter supports a more active role for patients than that presented in the 2008 version.

“It states that consumers have a right to ‘make decisions with my healthcare provider, to the extent that I choose and am able to’.

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“The charter is also more specific in terms of the rights of consumers to be informed about waiting times and to be told if something has gone wrong during their care, how it happened, how it might affect them and what is being done to make care safe.

“We congratulate the Commission. The charter, combined with the now mandatory Standard 2 of the Commission’s National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, which requires health services to include consumers in the development and design of quality health care, reinforces and signals the vital importance of working with consumers as partners. The strengthened emphasis reflects the contemporary reality. Increasingly the patient not only expects to be engaged in health decisions but should be supported in doing so in the interests of better care outcomes,” Ms Wells said.

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