



HEALTH CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

JUNE 2006

DECLARATION ON PATIENT-CENTRED HEALTHCARE

Patient-centred healthcare is the way to a fair and cost-effective healthcare system

Adopted by Health Consumers' Council Board 2006

Health systems in all world regions are under pressure and cannot cope if they continue to focus on diseases rather than on patients; they require the involvement of individual patients who adhere to their treatments, make behavioural changes and self-manage. Patient-centred healthcare may be the most cost-effective way to improve health outcomes for patients.

To us, the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations, the essence of patient-centred healthcare is that the healthcare system is designed and delivered to address the healthcare needs and preferences of patients so that healthcare is appropriate and cost-effective. By promoting greater patient responsibility and optimal usage, patient-centred healthcare leads to improved health outcomes, quality of life and optimal value for healthcare investment.

Patients' priorities are different in every country and in every disease area, but from this diversity we have some common priorities. To achieve patient-centred healthcare we believe that healthcare must be based on the following Five Principles:

1. **Respect** – Patients and carers have a fundamental right to patient-centred healthcare that respects their unique needs, preferences and values, as well as their autonomy and independence.
2. **Choice and empowerment** – Patients have a right and responsibility to participate, to their level of ability and preference, as a partner in making healthcare decisions that affect their lives. This requires a responsive health care system which provides suitable choices in treatment and management options that fit in with patients' needs, and encouragement and support for patients and carers that direct and manage care to achieve the best possible quality of life. Patients' organizations must be empowered to play meaningful leadership roles in supporting patients and their families to exercise their right to make informed healthcare choices.

3. **Patient involvement in health policy** – Patients and patients’ organizations deserve to share the responsibility of healthcare policy-making through meaningful and supported engagement in all levels and at all points of decision-making, to ensure that they are designed with the patient at the centre. This should not be restricted to healthcare policy but include, for example, social policy that will ultimately impact on patients’ lives. See IAPO’s Policy Statement at: www.patientsorganizations.org/involvement.
4. **Access and support** - Patients must have access to the healthcare services warranted by their condition. This includes access to safe, quality and appropriate services, treatments, preventive care and health promotion activities. Provision should be made to ensure that *all* patients can access necessary services, regardless of their condition or socio-economic status. For patients to achieve the best possible quality of life, healthcare must support patients’ emotional requirements, and consider non-health factors such as education, employment and family issues which impact on their approach to healthcare choices and management.
5. **Information** – Accurate, relevant and comprehensive information is essential to enable patients and carers to make informed decisions about healthcare treatment and living with their condition. Information must be presented in an appropriate format according to health literacy principles and by considering the individuals’ condition, language, age, understanding, abilities and culture. See IAPO’s Policy Statement at www.patientsorganizations.org/healthliteracy.

The Health Consumers’ Council acknowledges International Association of Patient Organizations as the author of this Statement. The Health Consumers’ Council (WA) is a member of IAPO. We thank IAPO for opportunity to adopt the Statement.