



Patients' Rights and Responsibilities

The Health Professions Council of Zambia is a statutory regulatory body established by the Health Professions Act No. 24 Of 2009 of the Laws of Zambia. The Council is mandated to:

- * Register Health practitioners and regulate their professional conduct;
- * License public and private health facilities;
- * Accredite health services provided by health facilities and
- * To recognise and approve training programmes for health practitioners.

The Council is also mandated to ensure that it protects and assists the public in all matters relating to the health profession and in the treatment of patients. Therefore, every citizen or patient needs to know that they have Rights and Responsibilities when seeking medical attention which are as follows:

(a) PATIENTS' RIGHTS

i) To receive reasonable, respectful and safe access to health services by competent personnel that the healthcare facility is required to provide;

ii) To treatment and medical/care services without discrimination based on race, age, colour, religion, ethnicity, national or social origin, sex, sexual preferences, handicap, diagnosis, source of payment or other status;

iii) To receive, as soon as possible, the services of the translator or interpreter to facilitate communication between the patient and the hospital's healthcare personnel if the patient cannot understand the working language;

iv) To receive from the patient's health practitioner(s) or other clinical practitioner(s) an explanation of his or her complete medical condition, recommended treatment, risk(s) of the treatment, expected results and reasonable medical alternatives in terms that the patient understands. If this information shall be detrimental to the patient's health, or if the patient is not capable of understanding the information, the explanation shall be provided to his or her next of kin or guardian and be documented in the patient's medical record.

v) To give information, written consent prior to the start of specified non-emergency procedures or treatments only after a health practitioner or other clinical practitioner has explained

specific details about the recommended procedure or treatment , the risks involved, the possible duration of incapacitation and any reasonable medical alternatives for care and treatment in terms that the patient understands. If the patient is incapable of giving informed , written consent, consent shall be sought from the patients' next of kin or guardian through an advance directive, to the extent authorised by law. If the patient does not give written consent, a health practitioner or other clinical practitioner shall enter an explanation in the patients medical record;

vi) To refuse medication and treatment and to be informed of the consequences of refusing treatment/care, except in cases of sexually transmitted conditions where such refusal will pose a risk to both the patient /service user or others;

vii) To be informed if the hospital has authorised other healthcare and educational institutions to participate in the patients' treatment. The patient also shall have the right to know the identity and function of these institutions and may refuse to allow the participation in their treatment;

viii) To be transferred to another facility (say from levels 1 to 2/3 hospitals) with the reasons recorded in the patient's medical record as follows:

* The transferring healthcare facility is unable to provide the type or level of medical care appropriate for the patients' needs. The health care facility shall make an immediate effort to notify the patients' next of kin and document that the notification was received; or

* The transfer is requested by the patient, or by the patients' next of kin or guardian when the patient is mentally incapacitated or incompetent.

ix) To receive from the healthcare facility an explanation of the reasons for transferring the patient to another facility, information about alternatives to the transfer;

x) To be treated with courtesy, consideration, and respect for the patients' dignity and individuality i.e, the right to care that respects the patients' personal values and beliefs.

However, for the citizens to receive quality healthcare services , they are also expected to adhere to the following responsibilities:

(b) PATIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Every patient has the following responsibilities:

- a) To provide, to the best of the patients' knowledge, accurate and complete information regarding past medical history and issues related to the patients health including unexpected changes, to the health professional responsible for the patient's care;
 - b) To follow the course of treatment and instructions proposed by the general medical practitioner or to accept the consequences if treatment instruction is refused;
 - c) To report any changes in his or her condition or anything that appears unsafe to the responsible health professional;
 - d) To be considerate of the rights of the other patients and to respect their privacy;
 - e) To respect their caregivers;
 - f) To fulfil the financial obligation as promptly as possible;
 - g) To keep all appointments and notify hospital or the appropriate person when unable to do so;
 - h) To observe the hospital policies and procedures including those on smoking, alcohol, drug addiction, cellular phones, noise and visitors;
 - i) Be considerate of the healthcare facilities and equipment and to use them in such a manner so as not to abuse them;
 - j) Not to litter the healthcare premises
- (c) INFORMED CONSENT (PATIENTS' RIGHTS)

- i) Each healthcare facility shall protect and promote each patients' rights. This includes the establishment and implementation of written procedures for securing patients consent.
- ii) An informed consent may not be required during emergency cases or life threatening situations where the patient is not capable of giving an informed consent and his or her next of kin is not available.

iii) No photographic audio, video or other similar identification recording is made without prior informed consent of a patient

iv) The healthcare facility shall comply with relevant Laws, National and International Codes of Ethics in the case of vulnerable groups like children, women, senior citizens/elderly patient can give consent.

v) A healthcare facility shall establish and implement a process to provide patients and / their designee an appropriate education to assist in understanding the identified condition and the necessary care treatment. The public is therefore, urged to ensure that their rights are respected and followed and that every patient should adhere to their responsibilities for quality healthcare services to be offered.


The Council is encouraging Practitioners to respect Patients' Rights and Patients to exercise their responsibilities towards their health providers and facilities.

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