

# PATIENTS' RIGHTS

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Patients who are well informed about their rights can participate actively in the treatment proposed to them and build a quality relationship with health-care professionals.



### 1. RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Patients have the right to be informed in a clear and appropriate manner about the state of health, medical examinations and treatment options, their consequences and any possible risks involved, as well as the prognosis and financial aspects of the treatment. At the time of their admission to a care facility, patients will receive, in principle, written information on their rights and duties and the conditions of their stay.

### 2. FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT

No treatment may be given without the free and informed consent of a patient capable of sound judgment, whether adult or minor. Patients have the right to refuse care, to interrupt treatment or to leave a health-care facility if they so wish.

### 3. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN IN ADVANCE, THERAPEUTIC REPRESENTATIVE AND MANDATE IN CASE OF INCAPACITY

Everyone has the right to give instructions in advance specifying the type of treatment they do or do not wish to receive in the event that they are no longer able to express their will. The patient may therefore designate a person, as his or her therapeutic representative. That person will be responsible for deciding on the choice of care to be given in situations where the patient's own opinion can no longer be expressed.

### 4. RIGHT OF FREE CHOICE

In the case of outpatient treatment, patients have the right to choose freely the health-care professional by whom they wish to be treated. In principle, they also have the right to choose freely the public or publicly recognised health-care facility where they wish to be treated. Free choice of the professional or health-care facility may be indirectly limited by the patient's coverage under the basic health insurance scheme, which might be only partial, particularly for hospital treatment outside the canton.

### 5. MEASURES OF RESTRAINT AND TREATMENTS WITHOUT CONSENT

In principle, the use of any measure of restraint on patients is forbidden. The same applies to treatments given without their consent. Measures restricting freedom of movement and treatment without consent may however be imposed, but only under very strict conditions.

### 6. PROFESSIONAL SECRECY

Patients have the right to confidentiality of the data concerning them. Healthcare professionals are under an obligation to observe professional secrecy, also referred to as medical confidentiality. They must keep to themselves any information that may come to their knowledge in the course of their professional activity. Except as provided otherwise by law, they may not pass on such information without the consent of their patient. Professional secrecy also applies between health professionals.

### 7. ACCESS TO CASE FILE

Patients have the right to consult their own case file and to have its meaning explained to them. In principle, they may request originals or copies of these documents free of charge, and forward them to the healthcare professional of their choice.

### 8. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

Patients staying in a health-care facility have the right to receive assistance and advice throughout their stay. They have the right to seek the support of people close to them and to maintain contact with friends and family. If they wish, they may request the presence of an accompanying person from outside the facility.

### 9. ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATIONS

Patients may decide during their lifetime to donate their organs for transplant. In such cases, the will of the deceased has priority over the decisions of his or her family. Donation of organs, tissues or cells is a freely given service, and it is prohibited to engage in such activities by way of trade.

## DO YOU NEED ANY HELP, INFORMATION OR ADVICE ?

Ask for the full brochure “Essential Information on Patients’ Rights” or contact the health authorities in your canton:

### Canton of Bern

Direction de la santé publique  
et de la prévoyance sociale

Rathausgasse 1, 3011 Berne

Tel. 031 633 79 20

info@gef.be.ch

www.gef.be.ch

### Republic and Canton of Jura

Service de la santé publique  
Médecin cantonal

Fbg des Capucins 20,  
2800 Delémont

Tel. 032 420 51 33

medecin.cantonal@jura.ch

### Canton of Valais

Service de la santé publique  
Office du médecin cantonal

Av. du Midi 7, 1950 Sion

Tel. 027 606 49 00

santepublique@admin.vs.ch

www.vs.ch/sante

### Canton of Fribourg

Service de la santé publique  
Rte des Cliniques 17, 1700 Fribourg

Tel. 026 305 29 13

ssp@fr.ch

www.fr.ch/ssp

### Canton of Neuchâtel

Service de la santé publique (DFS)  
Rue Pourtalès 2, 2000 Neuchâtel

Tel. 032 889 52 09

www.ne.ch/santepublique

### Canton of Vaud

Service de la santé publique  
Bâtiment administratif de la Pontaise

Avenue des Casernes 2,  
1014 Lausanne

Tel. 021 316 42 00

info.santepublique@vd.ch

www.vd.ch/ssp

### Republic and Canton of Geneva

Direction générale de la santé  
Service du médecin cantonal

Av. de Beau-Séjour 24,  
Case postale 76,  
1211 Genève 4 Plainpalais

Tel. 022 546 50 00

www.ge.ch/deas

### Republic and Canton of Ticino

Dipartimento della sanità  
e della socialità  
Ufficio Medico cantonale

Via Dogana 16, 6500 Bellinzona

Tel. 091 814 30 50

dss-umc@ti.ch

www.ti.ch/promozionesalute

