



Patient's Bill of Rights

As Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses, we are committed to giving the best possible health care service and advocating for British Columbians when we see their health care needs not being met.

We believe that residents of British Columbia have the right to an effective publicly funded and publicly administered health care system consistent with the Canada Health Act.

We believe residents of British Columbia have the right to timely access to care appropriate to their needs from appropriately qualified health care professionals. We also believe residents both in the hospital and the community setting, have the right to choose their own physician.

We recognize the health care system does not currently have the capacity to meet patients' needs in all cases, and that funding needs to be increased at both the Federal and Provincial level in order to provide better health care. We believe the provincial government should meet with providers and develop an implementation plan to improve the health care system over the next five years.

This document describes the improvements Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses believe are needed in the system, and some of the health care rights the provincial government should be ensuring British Columbians receive.

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Access to Hospital Services

1. Residents of urban and rural communities have a right to access an emergency department within a maximum of half an hour's travel, and 98% of residents in remote communities must be able to access emergency care within 1 hour's travel.
2. Patients who access an emergency department have a right to be immediately assessed (triaged) and, consistent with national standards, assessed/treated immediately if requiring resuscitation, within 15 minutes for emergent cases, and within 30 minutes for urgent cases. Patients requiring hospital admission must not be held in emergency departments for more than six hours, and must be discharged, transferred to another hospital, or admitted to a hospital bed within that time frame.
3. Patients have the right to agreed upon maximum wait times for diagnostic, therapeutic, surgical and rehabilitative treatment, based on whether their condition is life-threatening, urgent or non-urgent.
4. Residents of British Columbia have the right to an open and transparent public process to establish maximum wait times, which includes input from the public and health care providers.
5. Patients who cannot be provided with emergent hospital treatment in their community have a right to subsidized travel to and from their community, including when their surgery or treatment is cancelled.
6. Patients whose operations are cancelled on the day of their surgery have the right to be re-booked for their operations within one month of cancellation.
7. Patients who are being discharged from hospital have the right to have arrangements made to provide them with continuing nursing or rehabilitation care, including the provision of medications and equipment, prior to discharge, and their caregiver(s) have the right to be informed of these arrangements prior to discharge.

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8. Palliative patients have the right to decide whether they want to die at home, in a hospice, or in a hospital palliative care bed.
9. Patients who require mental health care in a hospital or mental health institution have the right to access a psychiatric bed within six hours of referral.
10. Patients in hospitals and residents in long term care facilities, have the right to an environment which is clean and safe, and the right to a choice of meals suitable for their dietary needs with a choice of portion sizes.

Access to Community Services

11. Residents of rural and remote communities have a right to first care in their community by a physician, or where a doctor is not available, a nurse who is authorized to initiate medical evacuation.
12. Parents have a right to subsidized pre-natal teaching. In addition, they have a right to pre-natal care and the right to post-natal nursing follow-up in their homes.
13. Children have a right to fully funded, comprehensive health screening and education programs in their schools. These programs should include immunizations, dental, scoliosis, eye and hearing screening as well as reproductive, nutrition, and preventative health education from a school nurse.
14. Addicted patients have a right to detox and addiction treatment in a treatment centre where they can receive physical and psychological support within 48 hours of them making a decision to detox.
15. Patients who require mental health care in the community have a right to a visit from a mental health nurse within 4 hours in the daytime if referred as an urgent patient, and within 2 days if non-urgent.

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16. Patients with persistent, serious mental illness who live outside an institution, have the right to a subsidized group home or supportive housing, and fully funded medication and psychotherapy services as required.

Access to Seniors' Care

17. Seniors have the right to Home Care services, including home support, occupational and physical therapy, and nursing care, to enable them to remain as independent as possible and reside in their home and in their community as long as possible.
18. Seniors have the right to subsidized combination programs which allow older people to remain at home but link them with programs in the community, such as day health centres several times a week, where they receive meals, exercise and social contact.
19. Seniors who need residential care have the right to access Long term Care in their community within 90 days of referral. They have the right to a residential facility with 24 hour registered nursing care, medical coverage and recreational opportunities.
20. Seniors who need supportive housing (assisted living), have the right to access supportive housing in their community within 6 months of referral. They have the right to personal living spaces that allow for independence and privacy within a safe setting with adequate services as well as regular assessment by health care professionals. These forms of housing and care must be publicly regulated to ensure care standards.
21. Seniors in assisted living or long term care facilities, have the right to security of tenure so they are only moved after appropriate plans, services and accommodation have been put in place, and the family and resident have agreed to the plan.
22. Married seniors have the right to live together in the same long term care or assisted living facility if they both require care.

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Access to Information

23. Patients have a right to information about their patient records, their medical condition and their care. They also have the right to have their personal health information protected from inappropriate use and/or disclosure.
24. Residents of British Columbia have the right to a health care system which is accountable and reports regularly on its performance through various mechanisms such as report cards. Patients have the right to know how well the health authority responsible for their treatment meets its performance contract with the Ministry of Health and how patient outcomes at the hospital to which they are referred, compare with those of other hospitals.
25. Patients in hospitals and residents in long term care and their families have the right to know the registered nurse to patient ratio in the facility, the ratio of other health care professionals to patients and any proven contravention of care standards, which have been reported to regulators.
26. Patients must be provided with complete information about the services available to them and how to access those services.