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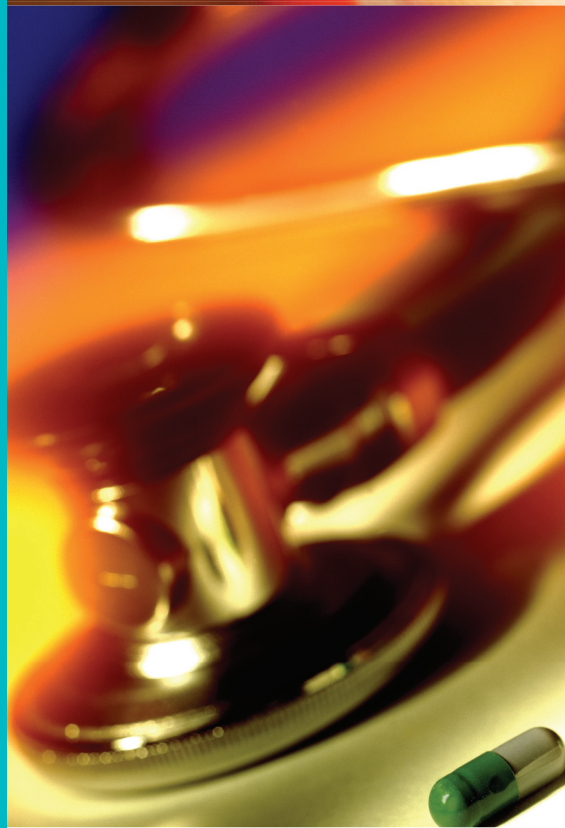
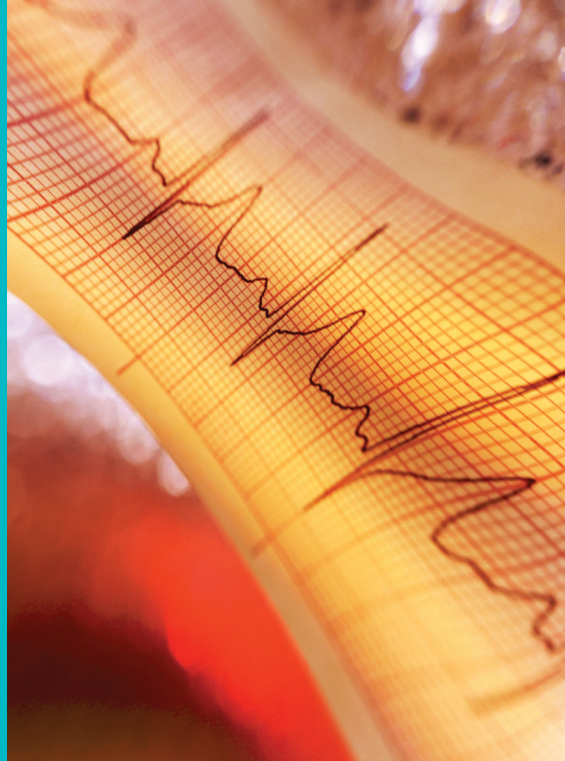
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**GUIDE
THROUGH
THE LAW ON
PATIENTS'
RIGHTS
PROTECTION**



The Law on the Protection of Patients' Rights defines the rights of patients when using healthcare, as well as the obligations of patients, healthcare institutions and workers, municipalities, and the Health Insurance Fund. The law also regulates the procedure for protecting patients' rights, as well as the supervision over its implementation.

Important rules

Who is a patient?

A "patient" is a person, whether sick or healthy, who seeks or undergoes medical intervention with the aim of preserving or improving health, preventing diseases and other health conditions, as well as for treatment, healthcare, or rehabilitation.

What is medical intervention?

"Medical intervention" is any examination, treatment, or other activity that aims to prevent, diagnose, treat, or assist in rehabilitation, and is performed by an authorized healthcare worker.

What is a medical file?

A "medical file" for a patient is a file in which all information and documents related to the patient's health condition are kept, such as diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, and other personal data.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROTECTION AND EXERCISE OF YOUR RIGHTS

The protection of your rights as a patient is based on humanity and accessibility. **Humanity means:**

- Respect for the person of the human being.
- Respect for the right to personal decision.
- Protection of physical and mental health.
- Respect for privacy.
- Maintaining human relationships between the patient and healthcare workers.
- The right to express pain and to be freed from unnecessary pain.
- Humane healthcare for people in terminal conditions.

Accessibility means:

- Healthcare services are available to all patients, without discrimination.
- Continuity of healthcare with cooperation between healthcare workers and institutions.
- Fair procedure when selecting a medical treatment.
- The possibility to choose and change a healthcare worker and institution.

Availability of Home Treatment or Care in Your Community. Equality in the Protection of the Rights of All Patients.

Your rights include:

- The right to healthcare without discrimination.
- The right to treatment that will improve your health condition, based on your needs and the possibilities of medicine.
- The right to respect for your personality and dignity.
- The right to personal security while staying in the healthcare institution.

Your Rights as a Patient:

Right to Participate in Decision-Making

You have the right to be informed and to make a decision about any medical intervention. You can accept or refuse treatments, unless it is limited for your health and as provided by the Law.

Right to Information

As a patient, you have the right to be fully informed, in a clear and understandable way, about:

- Your health and condition,
- The recommended medical interventions,
- The possible advantages and risks of these interventions,
- Your right to decide about the treatments,
- Alternatives to the proposed interventions,
- Reasons for possible differences in the results of medical treatment,
- How the treatment process will proceed,
- Recommendations for lifestyle,
- Your rights in healthcare and health insurance,
- The names and qualifications of the healthcare workers who will take care of you (this information must be publicly displayed).

Right to Refuse Information

As a patient, you have the right to refuse to receive information about your health and the expected results of the proposed medical interventions. You



can exercise this right if you refuse this information with a written statement. However, in some cases, if it is important to know the nature of your illness, to avoid endangering the health of others, this right may be restricted.

Right to a Second Opinion

As a patient, you have the right to request a second professional opin-

ion about your health. You can do this through an oral or written request. A healthcare worker with at least the same level of education as the first one has the obligation to provide you with the second opinion.

Right to Accept or Refuse Medical Intervention

You have the right to decide whether you want or do not want to receive any medical intervention. You express this by signing a statement that will be provided to you by the healthcare institution. However, if refusing the intervention could endanger your health or the health of others, this right may be limited. If you are aware or unable to make a decision, the statement will be signed by your parent or guardian.



Right to Participate in Scientific Research and Medical Education

To participate in scientific research or medical education, you must give written and voluntary consent. For scientific research, you need to receive information about the purpose, risks, and consequences of the research. For medical education, you may also give oral consent in front of two witnesses.

Right to Access Your Medical Record

You have the right to know that a medical record is being kept for you and to have access to it. You can request an extract or a copy of the data, as well as ask for an explanation. This right can also be exercised if you authorize another person. After your death, the right to access the record is granted to your close relatives or legal representative.

Right to Confidentiality (Secrecy)

You have the right for your personal and medical data to remain confidential and to be kept secret, even after your death. The data can only be disclosed with your written consent or if needed for medical intervention in another institution. For other purposes, such as scientific or research purposes, the data is processed in such a way that your identity will not be revealed, unless permitted by law for the protection of health or safety of others.

Right to Professional Contacts

You have the right to contact healthcare workers and other persons while you are in the hospital, in accordance with hospital regulations. You have the right to visits, to receive and send mail and phone calls, to listen to the radio and watch television, to participate in religious activities, and to use weekend leave if it is in accordance with your health condition.

Right to Voluntarily Leave the Healthcare Institution

If you wish to leave the healthcare institution, you must give a written statement or an oral statement in front of two witnesses. This right may be restricted if leaving the hospital could be harmful to your health or the safety of others.

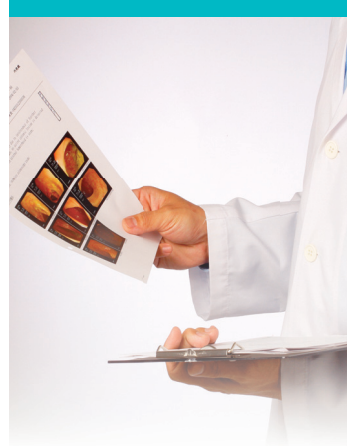
Right to Privacy

You have the right to privacy during medical interventions, especially during personal care, which is performed only in the presence of persons necessary for that. If you are in the hospital, you have the right to be placed in separate rooms from patients of the opposite sex and to have personal items, such as clothing and hygiene products, in accordance with your health. Minor patients have the right to be placed separately from adult patients.

Your Duties as a Patient

During your stay in the healthcare institution, you should take care of your health and:

- Provide accurate and sufficient information about your health condition.
- Assist the healthcare workers who care for you.
- Follow their advice for care, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- Respect the hospital rules.
- Accept activities that are part of rehabilitation and resocialization to improve your social skills.
- Respect the professionalism and dignity of the healthcare workers.



Duties of Healthcare Institutions

The healthcare institution is obliged to:

- Provide conditions for the realization of your rights.
- Ensure your personal security while you are in the institution.
- Inform you about your rights in healthcare and health insurance.
- Provide you with information within the right to information.
- Maintain a medical record for you.
- Allow you access to your medical record.
- Ensure confidentiality (secrecy) of your personal and medical data.
- Ensure the storage of samples of human substances that can identify the patient.

Duties of the Healthcare Institution

The healthcare institution is obliged to:

- Provide you with information about admission to the hospital.
- Allow you to receive visitors during your stay, according to the institution's rules, and prohibit visits by certain individuals if necessary.
- Allow you to receive and send mail and phone calls at your expense.
- Enable you to follow radio and television programs, according to the institution's capabilities.
- Allow you to participate in religious activities, if possible.
- Allow you to use weekend leave, depending on your health condition.
- Provide you with privacy during examinations and treatment, especially during personal care.



- Provide you with accommodation in separate rooms from patients of a different gender.
- Allow you to have personal items, such as clothing and hygiene products, in accordance with your health condition.
- Conduct diagnostics, treatment, and rehabilitation, as well as provide for follow-up examinations.
- Allow you to be discharged when it is determined that your health condition has improved.
- Immediately inform your relatives, legal representatives, or other persons living with you, upon admission to the institution.

Duties of Healthcare Workers

Healthcare workers who perform medical interventions are obliged to:

- Care for the realization of your rights during medical interventions.
- Conscientiously perform their work according to medical ethics.
- Provide you with the necessary information in accordance with the law.
- Provide you with a second opinion if you request it.

Duties of a Healthcare Worker

A healthcare worker is obliged to:

- Respect the patient's will regarding information and medical interventions.
- Ensure confidentiality of personal and medical data.
- Submit a written statement in the patient's medical record.
- Record in the medical file the information about the voluntary departure from the healthcare institution without prior notice and inform the relevant authorities.
- Establish humane relations with the patient, based on ethical and deontological principles.



FORMS FOR PROMOTING AND PROTECTING RIGHTS

Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Patient Rights

In your municipality or in Skopje, you can seek help from the Office of the Commission for the Protection of Patient Rights. The Commission considers complaints and proposes measures to the relevant authorities, as well as assists in submitting complaints. If necessary, it may request expert opinions to determine the condition.

Patient Rights Advisor

In the healthcare institution where patients are placed, you can request the office of the Patient Rights Advisor. The advisor provides legal advice and assistance in protecting rights, reviews complaints, proposes solutions to the director of the institution, and mediates in the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Regarding issues between the patient and the healthcare worker, the healthcare worker is obliged to keep a record of every verbal or written complaint, which, after the completion of the procedure, becomes part of the patient's medical record. In other healthcare institutions, this is the responsibility of the institution's services.

Complaint to the Director of the Healthcare Institution

If any of your rights have been violated, you have the right to submit a verbal complaint to the director of the healthcare institution, as well as a written



complaint within eight (8) days from the date of the violation of the right or from the awareness of the violation of the right. The director is obliged to examine the allegations in the complaint and, within 15 days from the receipt of the submission, inform you or inform your legal representative.

Ministry of Health

For anything related to care, treatment, and rehabilitation in the healthcare institution, you have the right to submit complaints and other submissions to the Ministry of Health, to the relevant authorities, and other institutions. The Ministry of Health is obliged to inform you about your complaint within 30 days.



Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia

The Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia is obliged to ensure the realization of your rights from health insurance in accordance with the regulations in the field of health insurance and to provide professional assistance in the realization and protection of health insurance rights. For the realization of your rights, at the regional unit of the Fund, you can request the Office for Professional Assistance for insured patients regarding the realization and protection of health insurance rights.

Judicial Protection

Judicial protection regarding the violation of your rights can be realized in the manner and procedure prescribed by law.



Supervision

Supervision over the application of the Law is carried out by the Ministry of Health. Inspectorial supervision over the implementation of this Law is carried out by the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate through state sanitary and health inspectors responsible for the protection of patient rights. If any of your rights have been violated, you should request the inspector from the regional unit closest to the municipality in which you live, who, if your request is based on the law, is authorized to order the institution and the healthcare worker to take appropriate measures and actions.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU KNOW?

If you need additional information about your rights, request the Law on the Protection of Patient Rights, which must be prominently displayed in the healthcare institution in a visible and easily accessible place.

The text of the Law is also available on the website of the Ministry of Health: www.moh.gov.mk. Remember that, in addition to the rights prescribed by this Law, you, as patients, also have other rights regulated by other laws or by ratified international agreements, conventions, declarations, and other international documents relating to the protection of patient rights.





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