



Patient guide • Last checked 11 October 2026

Know Your Rights as a Patient in Nigeria

Powered by Health Initiative





01

Where your rights come from

Patients' Bill of Rights

Launched on 31 July 2018.
Developed by the Consumer Protection Council (now the FCCPC), the Federal Ministry of Health and other stakeholders. ^{1,2}

National Health Act 2014

The main federal health law. It covers your right to information, confidentiality, emergency treatment and to complain. ^{3,4}

Gunshot Act 2017

The Compulsory Treatment and Care for Victims of Gunshot Act requires hospitals to treat people with gunshot wounds. ⁵

This guide is general information, not legal advice.



02

Information and consent

Clear information

About your condition, treatment options, benefits, risks, costs and likely outcomes, in a language you understand.

NATIONAL HEALTH ACT S.23

Take part in decisions

You can take part in planning your treatment and in decisions about your care.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Refuse care

You can refuse care after you have been told what refusing could mean for you.

NATIONAL HEALTH ACT S.23

Research

You can agree or decline to take part in research, experimental procedures or clinical trials.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS



03

Costs, records and privacy

Costs

You should be told the cost, or an estimate, of your treatment and receive a clear, itemised bill.

Records and staff

You can access your records, information on the services offered, and the identity and qualifications of the staff treating you.

Confidentiality

Your health information is confidential. It can be shared only in limited cases, such as with your written consent, by court order or law, or where keeping it private would seriously threaten public health.⁴



04

Respect and safe care

Dignity

You must be treated with respect, whatever your gender, religion, ethnicity, location, disability or income, and even if you are accused of a crime.

A safe place

Care in a clean, safe and secure environment, and equal quality of care for people with disabilities.

Visitors

You can receive visitors, including for religious purposes, in line with the facility's rules.

Continuity of care

You should be told if the professional caring for you will stop, and be handed over safely.

Wishes at death

Your wishes, or your next of kin's, should be respected as far as the law allows, including cultural and religious preferences.

Complaints

You can raise concerns about the service or staff, including abuse.

NATIONAL HEALTH ACT S.30



05

In an emergency

112

Free national emergency line for medical emergencies, run by NEMSAS. Many states also have their own numbers.⁶

- ✓ A health worker or facility must not refuse you emergency treatment for any reason. Breaking this rule can lead to a fine of ₦100,000, up to six months in prison, or both.⁴
- ✓ Emergency care should come before cost, payment and police requirements.¹
- ✓ Hospitals must treat people with gunshot wounds, with or without police clearance.⁵
- ✓ You are still expected to pay for the care afterwards.¹



06

Your responsibilities

- 1 Give a full and honest medical history, including any medicines you take.
- 2 Ask questions until you understand your treatment plan.
- 3 Tell staff about any changes during or after treatment.
- 4 Pay your bills or arrange payment. In an emergency, show that you intend to pay.
- 5 Follow the facility's rules and your care team's advice.
- 6 Treat other patients and staff with respect.
- 7 Use the facility's complaint process first, and give enough detail.
- 8 Ask what will happen to your care if your doctor is unavailable.

From the Patients' Bill of Rights.¹

07

How to complain

STEP 1

The facility

Raise it with the facility first. Every facility must display how to complain. In public hospitals, ask for SERVICOM or customer care. In a private facility, you can complain to the head of the facility.



STEP 2

The professional council

If you are not satisfied, report the professional to their council: MDCN for doctors and dentists, NMCN for nurses and midwives.



STEP 3

The FCCPC

If it is still not resolved, complain to the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission. It is free.

For health insurance problems, contact your HMO, an NHIA office or the NHIA call centre.¹¹ Sources: 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12.



08

Before you complain

WRITE DOWN

- ✓ What happened, with dates and times
- ✓ Names or roles of the staff involved
- ✓ The name and address of the facility
- ✓ Any amount of money involved
- ✓ What you want done to put it right

KEEP COPIES OF

- ✓ Receipts and bills
- ✓ Prescriptions and test results
- ✓ Letters, messages and emails
- ✓ Any reply from the facility

Facilities must accept and acknowledge every complaint. Ask for a reference number or written acknowledgement.⁴



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Who to contact

Doctors and dentists

Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN)

Online complaint form on mdcn.gov.ng, with a sworn affidavit. Email info@mdcn.gov.ng

Nurses and midwives

Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN)

Write to the Director of Nursing Services at your State Ministry of Health. In the FCT, the Department of Health and Social Services, FCDA. Email info@nmcn.gov.ng

Services and bills

Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC)

Online portal or FCCPC Consumer Complaint App, email, letter or walk-in, at fccpc.gov.ng. Free. Most cases take 1 to 45 days.

Health insurance

National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA)

Your HMO, an NHIA office or the call centre. info@nhia.gov.ng, +234 805 928 2008, +234 806 574 4100

Emergencies

NEMSAS

Call 112



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How PBHI can help

PBH Solutions, our patient support service, helps people find their way through the health system and understand their rights as patients.

- ✓ Ask Ayani, our assistant, on our website
- ✓ Book a consultation at poweredbyhealthinitiative.com
- ✓ Email info@poweredbyhealthinitiative.com

We cannot give legal advice or act for you in a complaint. In an emergency, call 112.





Sources

- 1 Consumer Protection Council and Federal Ministry of Health. Patients' Bill of Rights. 2018 (copy hosted by Public Health Nigeria). <https://www.publichealth.com.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/patient-bill-of-rights-in-nigeria-PDF.pdf>
- 2 Delta State University Teaching Hospital. Patient rights and responsibilities (launch date of the Bill). <https://delsuth.org.ng/patients/patient-right-and-responsibilities/>
- 3 Federal Teaching Hospital Lokoja. Patients' Bill of Rights, with National Health Act references. <https://fthlokoja.gov.ng/patients-and-visitors/patients-bill-of-right>
- 4 National Health Act 2014 (sections 20, 23, 26 and 30). https://p4h.world/app/uploads/2024/06/Nigeria_National-Health-Act-2014.x80726.pdf
- 5 Compulsory Treatment and Care for Victims of Gunshot Act 2017. <https://www.judy.legal/legislation/akn/ng/act/2017/ctcgv>
- 6 Voice of Nigeria. NEMSAS reaffirms 112 emergency medical line. August 2026. <https://von.gov.ng/nemsas-reaffirms-112-emergency-medical-line/>
- 7 FCCPC. Complaint handling. <https://fccpc.gov.ng/consumers/complaint-handling/>
- 8 FCCPC. Frequently asked questions. <https://fccpc.gov.ng/about-us/faqs/>
- 9 Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria. Complaint against a doctor. <https://www.mdcn.gov.ng/page/discipline/tribunal-directions>
- 10 Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria. Reporting a nurse or midwife. <http://www.nmcn.gov.ng/reporting.html>
- 11 National Health Insurance Authority. FAQ. <https://www.nhia.gov.ng/faq/>
- 12 Lagos University Teaching Hospital. SERVICOM complaints. <https://servicom.luth.gov.ng/submit-complaint>

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