

Bill of Rights for home and community care

Ontario's **Patient Bill of Rights** applies to home and community care services that are paid for by the government. Read more about care services starting on [page 5](#).

You get these services from Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) and Health Service Providers (HSPs).

What are my rights?

There are **13 rights** in the Patient Bill of Rights. Here they are put into plain language.

Right #1 – No abuse

You have the right to be treated politely and with respect. And you have the right to be free from physical, sexual, mental, emotional, verbal, and financial abuse.

Right #2 – Privacy and choices

You have the right to have your dignity and privacy respected.

Care providers should promote your independence. And they should let you take part in decisions about your care as long as you are mentally capable.

For example, they should:

- ask your permission before entering your home
- not look through your things or open your mail unless you ask them to
- consult with you before making decisions about your care

Right #3 – Needs and preferences

You have the right to receive services in a way that respects who you are and is sensitive to what you prefer, based on your race, religion, language, family background, and culture.

For example, you may want to eat or dress a certain way because of your culture or religion.

Right #4 – Freedom from discrimination

You have the right to receive services that do not discriminate against you for any reason listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

These reasons include your race, ancestry, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital or family status, disability, or record of offences.

Right #5 – Right to cultural safety

If you are First Nations, Metis, or Inuk, you have the right to receive services in a way that is culturally safe.

The service provider needs to respect your culture and help you feel safe when you are receiving care.

Right #6 – Right to information

You have the right to information about your services that is clear and that you can understand.

This includes:

- who is managing your services
- who will provide the services, the agency they work for, how to contact them, and when they will come
- what services you will get and for how many hours

If you have trouble seeing or hearing, or if you speak a different language, you must get the information in a way that lets you understand it.

Right #7 – Take part in decisions

You have the right to take part in deciding what services you need, and how and when you get them. Your care co-ordinator should talk with you about:

- what services you need, and
- any changes to the plan that sets out what services you receive.

Right #8 – Have someone with you for assessments

You have the right to say who you want to be with you when your care co-ordinator talks to you about what services you need. This could be a family member, a friend, or someone else who you trust and think will help you.

Right #9 – Have someone with you for care planning

You also have the right to say who you want to be with you when the plan for your care is being developed, evaluated, or changed. This person can speak for you, make suggestions, or give other input.

Right #10 – Help to co-ordinate your services

If you are getting more than one service, you have the right to get help from an HSP or OHT to co-ordinate your services.

This could mean making sure that:

- services are not scheduled at the same time,
- you get the help you need so you can get to a service on time, or
- you get the services in the right order.

Right #11 – Accept or refuse services

You have the right to accept or refuse any services that your care co-ordinator, a doctor, or another care provider says would be good for you.

If you are not happy with your care provider or the agency they work for, you can refuse their services.

Right #12 – Complain without being punished

You have the right to raise any concerns you have about your services with your care providers, people who work for the government, or anyone else.

And no one can punish you, refuse to give you services, or take away services because you have complained. This includes asking for changes in your services.

Right #13 – Legal information

You have the right to information about the laws, rules, and policies that affect how your services are provided.

If you ask, agencies that provide you with services must tell you, in writing, how to:

- make a complaint
- appeal a decision they make about your services

How to make a complaint

If you think your rights in the Patient Bill of Rights are not being respected, you may be able to make a complaint or take other legal steps.

There is information about how to do this in **Complaints and appeals about home and community care**. You can read it online at cleo.on.ca/hc_complaints. Or, you can order it for free at cleo.on.ca.

What are home and community care services?

The Patient Bill of Rights lists what your rights are when you ask for or get care services at home or in the community.

These services may include:

- **professional health services**, such as nursing, pharmacy, social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, respiratory therapy, laboratory services, and diet advice
- **personal support services**, such as help with activities of daily living like taking a bath, eating, and getting dressed

- **home-making services**, such as house cleaning, laundry, banking, shopping, and preparing meals
- **community support services**, such as meal services, adult day programs, respite care, transportation services, foot-care services, friendly visiting, education about palliative care, and many others
- **Indigenous services**, such as traditional healing and Indigenous support services

They also include services that help to **co-ordinate** the home and community services that you get.

How to get help and more information

Some local community legal clinics might be able to help with issues related to home and community care. If not, they may be able to tell you who can. To find your local clinic, visit legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics or call **1-800-668-8258**. For TTY, use Bell's Relay Service at **1-800-855-0511**.

If you are a senior with a low income, the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE) may be able to help you. Visit their website at acelaw.ca or call **1-855-598-2656**.

The Seniors Safety Line provides information, referrals, and support in over 150 languages to seniors experiencing abuse. Visit their website at eapon.ca or call **1-866-299-1011**.



Visit stepstojustice.ca for more information about health and disability law. This is general information for people in Ontario, Canada. It is not intended to be used as legal advice.

Vous pourriez avoir droit à des services en français devant les tribunaux ou auprès d'organismes gouvernementaux. Visitez justicepasapas.ca/droits-linguistiques-des-francophones.