

*"Committed To Excellence
in Rural Health Care"*



Patient/Clients Information Book

- ♦ **Access to Health Records**
- ♦ **Rights/Responsibilities**
- ♦ **Privacy**
- ♦ **Complaints**
- ♦ **Advocacy**

2006

Multi Purpose Service



"Committed to Excellence in Rural Health Care"

Orbost Regional Health is a Multi Purpose Service, incorporating The Hollands Wing Acute Hospital, Waratah Lodge Nursing Home, Lochiel House Hostel and Community Services.

Each and every department and service is committed to providing the best possible care to patients and clients of the organisation.

This brochure outlines not only what every user of the service has the right to expect, but also the *responsibilities* of being a service user.

You can expect:

- ♦ an open relationship with staff and your service provider based on mutual respect, trust, honesty and dignity.
- ♦ to receive medical care on the basis of need, without discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, culture and diagnosis or whether or not you have health insurance.
- ♦ to be treated with respect, dignity and consideration at all times taking into account any religious or cultural requirements.
- ♦ your health care to be managed in cooperation with yourself, family and carers.
- ♦ complete information regarding your diagnosis, treatment options and expected outcomes in a clear and open manner.
- ♦ to be informed of any side effects or risks involved with your treatment
- ♦ to be asked for your consent before any further case consultation.
- ♦ before any treatment or procedure commences, you will be asked to provide written or verbal consent.
- ♦ that you have the right to withdraw consent and refuse treatment at any time. You are responsible for your actions if you refuse treatment or do not follow your practitioners instructions.
- ♦ that your privacy will be respected, any discussions or treatment will be conducted with dignity and discretion.
- ♦ that only those involved with your care will have access to your medical information.
- ♦ that your comfort and safety are of a high priority.
- ♦ to be offered a choice of diet taking into account cultural, religious and medical personal requirements.

Discharge at own Risk:

You have the right to leave the hospital at any time, except in the case of some infectious diseases or psychiatric disorders.

If you are in inpatient and leave Orbost Regional Health against medical advice, you will be asked to sign a 'Discharge at Own Risk' form and you will be responsible for any injury or illness caused by your action.

Access to Health Records

Under the Freedom of Information Act (Amended 1st July 1999) you are generally entitled to information contained in your records.

To access this information simply write personally, or via your solicitor, to Orbost Regional Health with a cheque for the sum of \$25.00 to cover costs.

Valuables & Belongings

Orbost Regional Health will not accept responsibility for any cash or valuables belonging to patients/clients which have not been placed in safe security.

Interpreter Service

Orbost Regional Health has access to an interpreter service if required, plus support from local Auslan interpreters for the hearing impaired.

To ensure that your stay/visit can run as smoothly as possible, we will ask you:

- ☺ to provide us with information about your present illness, past illnesses, hospitalisation, medication and other matters relating to your state of health.
- ☺ to provide us with information on any cultural or religious requirements which may need to be taken into account during your stay and care
- ☺ If you have any concerns you need to discuss your issues with a relevant staff member.
- ☺ to follow the treatment plan recommended by the practitioner primarily responsible for your care.
- ☺ You are responsible to conduct yourself in a manner which does not affect others while on the premises of Orbost Regional Health.
- ☺ Also you must be mindful of the number of visitors you have, noise levels through radios, television, and visitors must be kept to a minimum, and definitely no smoking.
- ☺ to respect the rights of staff to work in an environment which is harassment free.
- ☺ to be respectful of the property of other people and of the organisation.
- ☺ to inform the facility in advance if you are unable to keep an appointment.
- ☺ to answer correspondence received from ORH.
- ☺ to pay accounts rendered by the organisation as promptly as possible (if you are having trouble paying an account, please contact the Accountant to make alternative arrangements).

Privacy

Orbost regional Health makes every effort to comply with Information Privacy Principles of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth: amended 2000) and the Health Records Act 2001 (Victoria) .

Orbost Regional Health is required by law to pass on statistical information about some of the information it collects on the people who receive services which are funded under our Health Service Agreement. This information is used for planning purposes, to ensure that resource levels are adequate and that the right services are available to meet demand.

Some patient information will be sent to the Victorian Department of Human Services. This Department has information Privacy Principles, and uses strict security measures to prevent unauthorised access to the patient data base. The Department of Human Services will forward some of this information to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care for statistical purposes.

Personal health information is stored securely at Orbost Regional Health. We will keep your health records for a minimum of 7 years after your last visit. Health record information may be requested in writing under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. Some limits may apply where certain circumstances prevent us from releasing information.

The right exists for you to correct any information in the record that is believed to be incorrect, incomplete, out of date or misleading.

However, information held on the health record cannot be removed, though it may be requested that a correcting statement be added to it. This is not retrospective, so the request cannot be backdated prior to the introduction of the new legislation which commenced on the 1st of July 2002.

Orbost Regional Health staff members abide by a Code of Conduct and contractual clauses to treat information confidentially

Sometimes we may recommend that other professional health care providers become involved in your care.

Only information relevant to your ongoing care will be shared with other professional health providers, and this will only happen when consent has been obtained. If you do not wish to consent, you have the right to refuse.

In some cases, people may not be able to give consent because they are legally unable to make a decision about release of their information. In such cases, a decision will be sought from the person's authorised representative.

In certain circumstances, Orbost Regional Health may be required to release personal information about patients, clients and residents, without their consent, e.g. reporting of notifiable diseases to the Department of Human Services; providing health records to a court, when required, in relation to legal proceedings where a Court Order has been issued; in an emergency situation, medical information would have to be released to aid emergency treatment.

If any of these circumstances apply, the person will be advised (as accurately and as soon as possible) when the information is released.

If you are not satisfied with the way in which we handle personal information or deal with concerns a formal complaint may be made to:

**the Complaints officer, by calling
(03) 5154 6666**

Or in writing to:

The Complaints Officer
Orbost Regional Health
PO BOX 238
Orbost vVc 3888

Alternatively you may call

- ◆ *The Health Services Commissioner on (03) 8601 5222*

We thank you for taking the time to read this very important information. If you have any questions please feel free to ask any staff member.

Who can make a complaint?

- ◆ Any Patient - Client or Customer
- ◆ Any visitor or Family member
- ◆ A guardian or next of kin



When should you make a complaint?

If you feel that the services provided to you have not lived up to your expectations within reason

- ◆ When you feel that your specific needs are not being adequately addressed.
- ◆ Types of Complaints

Informal:

Informal complaints are usually verbal and should be dealt with immediately

Formal:

These include all written complaints and any verbal complaints which cannot be dealt with immediately.

These types of complaints usually arise and need to be formalised through Management.

Public Hospital Charter Principles

Public Hospital charter Principles have been developed to ensure you have:

Access to:

- ♦ A wide range of public hospital services
- ♦ Treatment regardless of ability to pay or whether you have health insurance.
- ♦ Your medical records

Choice & Participation in:

- ♦ Making decisions about your treatment
- ♦ Decisions and information about your discharge from hospital
- ♦ Whether you wish to have treatment as a public or private patient

Information about:

- ♦ Which hospital staff will provide your care
- ♦ Your health care and, where necessary, a second medical opinion
- ♦ What steps the hospital takes to improve quality of care.

Quality, including:

- ♦ Treatment with respect, dignity and consideration for privacy
- ♦ High quality services
- ♦ Interpreter serviced if required
- ♦ Confidentiality relating to your personal information

A complaints Resolution Service, with:

- ♦ The ability to discuss any questions or complaints you may have concerning your treatment
- ♦ The ability to make a complaint to an independent body

We want to

- ♦ Have a system that respects your rights, privacy and dignity
- ♦ Lets you have the ability to make a complaint about the facilities or any aspect of your treatment
- ♦ Have complaints dealt with thoroughly, efficiently and quickly
- ♦ For us to provide a better service to the community we encourage your input and feedback
- ♦ We ensure confidentiality and professionalism is maintained.

Suggestions, Problems & Complaints

Suggestions, comments and complaints can be made via the Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire and the Complaints brochure/form, if you wish to pass on compliments, or offer a suggestion, or if you are unhappy with any aspect of your care. These forms are available throughout ORH, and in the Patient Services Directory, or via the back page of this brochure.

You can discuss any aspect of care with your Health Care Professional who will also give you more information about your rights as a patient/client and answer questions about the organisation's services, policies and procedures.

Ongoing concerns can be addressed to the Complaints Officer by letter as our organisation is committed to resolving issues efficiently. Receiving information from patients can alert staff to issues which have not previously been identified.

Should you still be unsatisfied the **Health Service Commissioner** acts as a 'Health Ombudsman'.

The Health Services Commissioner listens to complaints and advises how they might be resolved. This might include further discussions with the organisation, conciliation or investigation may be undertaken by the Health Service Commissioner or through referral to Health Profession Registration board.

Contact: Healthline on 03 9655-5200 or Tollfree: 1800-136-066

The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)

With regard to health services, the OPA has a range of services for people with disabilities, their families and the people who work with them:

- Independent guardianship, under orders of the Guardianship List of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
- The Community Visitors program, monitoring residential services.

Our Telephone Advice Service also provides information and assistance with:

- Complaints about services or treatment.
- Guardianship and administration.
- Medical and financial enduring powers of attorney.
- Issues around consent to medical treatment.

Contacts:

Office of the Public Advocate

Address: Level 5, 436 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000

Phone: 9603 9500 Free Call 1800 136829

Email: publicadvocate@justice.vic.gov.au



Boundary Road (PO Box 238)
Orbost Vic 3888
Telephone: 03 5154-6666
Fax: 03 5154-2366

Website: www.orbostregionalhealth.com.au
Email: orh@orh.com.au

Edited and produced by Orbost Regional Health for information purposes only.