Hong Kong Committee on Children's Rights

Children's Charter in Hospital

The extension of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to Hong Kong in 1994 signifies Hong Kong's commitment to each child in Hong Kong.

Article 24 of the Convention states that "State Parties recognize the rights of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health." Most children in Hong Kong are born in hospitals and many use hospital services again either as an in or out-patient some time in their lives. Since 1993, a Patients' Charter for patients in general was promulgated in Hong Kong, however, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care". Children are still growing and developing and, because of their vulnerability, they need special protection and provision.

The Hong Kong Committee on Children's Rights, after discussions with some concerned individuals and organizations, has modified UK’s NAWCH (National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital) Charter for children to form a Children's Charter in Hospital for Hong Kong:

CHARTER FOR CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL

1. Children shall be admitted to hospital only if the care they require cannot be provided equally well at home or on a day basis.
2. Children in hospital shall be able to have their parents with them at all times, provided this is in the child's best interests. Accommodation shall be offered to all parents whenever possible and they should be helped and encouraged to stay. In order to share in the care of their child, parents shall be fully informed about ward routines and their active participation shall be encouraged.
3. Children shall enjoy the care of appropriately trained staff who are fully aware of the physical and emotional needs of each age group.
4. Children shall be cared for with other children of the same age group.
5. Children and/or their parents shall be provided with information appropriate to their age and understanding.
6. Children and/or their parents shall be able to participate in all decisions involving their health care and shall be provided with the relevant information for making decisions.
7. Children shall be treated with tact and understanding, and their privacy shall be respected. Children shall be protected from unnecessary medical treatment and shall
be given aid in the prevention and relief of physical and emotional distress.

8. Children shall be able to wear their own clothes whenever possible and have their own personal possessions.

9. Children shall be in an environment that is furnished and equipped for their requirements. The setting for the care of children shall conform to recognized standards of safety and supervision.

10. Children shall have the opportunity for play, recreation and education suited to their age and condition.

(Adapted from the NAWCH Charter of the National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital, UK)

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