

# MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS' RIGHTS



MOSAIC FOREST

Alice Washington, 2004

**Mental health patients have the same legal rights guaranteed to everyone by the Constitution and laws of the United States and California.**

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:**

- To dignity, privacy and humane care
- To be free from harm including unnecessary or excessive physical restraint, medication, isolation, abuse and neglect
- To receive information about your treatment and to participate in planning your treatment
- To consent or refuse to consent to treatment, unless there is a legally- defined emergency or a legal determination of incapacity
- To client-centered services designed to meet your individual goals, diverse needs, concerns, strengths, motivations and disabilities
- To treatment services which increase your ability to be more independent
- To prompt medical care and treatment
- To services and information in a language you can understand and that is sensitive to cultural diversity and special needs
- To keep and use your own personal possessions including toilet articles
- To have access to individual storage space for your private use
- To keep and spend a reasonable sum of your own money for small purchases
- To have reasonable access to telephones—both to make and to receive confidential calls or have such calls made for you
- To have access to letter-writing material and stamps—to mail and to receive unopened correspondence
- To social interaction, participation in community activities, physical exercise and recreational opportunities
- To see visitors every day
- To wear your own clothes
- To see and receive the services of a patient-advocate who has no direct or indirect clinical or administrative responsibility for the person receiving mental health services
- To religious freedom and practice
- To participate in appropriate programs of publicly supported education
- To be free from hazardous procedures
- And all other rights as provided by law or regulation

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR  
LOCAL COUNTY PATIENTS' RIGHTS ADVOCATE:

Mental Health Patient's Rights Advocate Program  
1357 W Shaw Ave Ste 101  
Fresno CA 93711  
559-492-1652

California Office of Patients' Rights  
1831 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95811-4114  
(916) 504-5810, <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/>  
Department of Health Care Services  
Mental Health Services Division Ombudsman  
(800) 896-4042 or Email: [mhombudsman@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:mhombudsman@dhcs.ca.gov)