

## CONSUMER FACT SHEET 3: PARTNERING WITH CONSUMERS STANDARD



### About this fact sheet

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) has developed a series of fact sheets for consumers and carers about the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (second edition). This fact sheet provides information about one of the eight NSQHS Standards, the Partnering with Consumers Standard.

### What is the Partnering with Consumers Standard?

The Partnering with Consumers Standard focuses on supporting consumers, carers and/or their families to be actively involved in planning and making decisions about their care. It also supports them to be involved in the supervision and administrative decision making of their health service organisation, as well as its policy and planning, and evaluation of its performance.

This is supported by evidence that effective partnerships help promote a positive consumer experience, as well as high quality health care and improved safety.

### The Partnering with Consumers Standard promotes consumer involvement in all aspects of care.

This means consumers, carers and/or their families are:

- **Involved in planning and decisions about your own care in the following ways:**
  - you should receive care that is respectful to you as a person, to your culture, beliefs, values and choices
  - you are supported to ask questions and be involved to the extent that you want to be involved in planning and decision-making about your care

- the information you receive from clinicians about your care and treatment options should be clear, easy to understand and provided in a format appropriate to you
- you can choose to involve your carer, family or representative in decisions about your care, including when you don't have capacity to make decisions for yourself.
- **Involvement in quality improvement and organisational governance, policy and planning in the following ways:**
  - you may have the opportunity to be involved in providing advice as part of quality improvement processes or redesigning a service or program of a health service
  - you may also have the opportunity to be part of a committee or other group that provides advice about governance, policy, planning and evaluation of performance on an ongoing basis
  - if you are involved in quality improvement or other policy activities, you should receive information about the organisation, the purpose of the meetings or groups you will be attending, information on how consumers can contribute, and what will be done with the feedback and comments you provide
  - as a community member, you will receive information about the health service organisation's safety and quality performance.

### **National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards**

The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards were developed by the Commission in collaboration with the Australian Government, state and territories, the private sector, clinical experts, patients and carers. The primary aims of the NSQHS Standards are to protect the public from harm and to improve the quality of health care provision. They provide a quality-assurance mechanism that tests whether relevant systems are in place to ensure expected standards of safety and quality are met.

# What to expect from your health service organisation

Health service organisations are required to produce evidence of how they meet the actions within the Partnering with Consumers Standard as part of the accreditation process (see *Consumer Fact Sheet 2 – Accreditation of health services in Australia* for information on the accreditation process).

The actions within the Partnering with Consumers Standard are grouped into four criteria that are shown in the following table, along with an explanation of what this means for you as a consumer.

Criterion	What does this mean?	What can I expect?
1. Clinical governance to support and quality improvement systems to support partnering with consumers.	Systems are designed and used to support you to be a partner in the planning, design, measurement and evaluation of your own health care, and that of the people you are caring for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about the safety and quality of your health service organisation is easy to find and understandable</li> <li>You are supported to provide feedback about your experiences and outcomes of care</li> <li>You are engaged in quality improvement processes to improve both partnerships and the safety and quality of care provided.</li> </ul>
2. Partnering with patients in their own care	Systems that are based on partnering with patients in their own care are used to support the delivery of your care. You are a partner in your own care to the extent that you choose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your rights as described in the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights are upheld and information about the Charter is accessible</li> <li>You receive care that is respectful to you as a person, to your culture, beliefs, values and choices</li> <li>You are supported to ask questions and can choose the extent involved in decision-making and planning about your care</li> <li>You are fully informed and understand the risks and benefits of any medical test, treatment and procedure</li> <li>You are asked to identify any support people you want involved in communications and decision-making about your care, including when you do not have capacity to make decisions for yourself.</li> </ul>



<p>3. Health literacy</p>	<p>Health service organisations communicate with you in a way that supports effective partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information about your care is easy to find, understand and use</li><li>• You have the opportunity to be involved in the development and review of the information the organisation provides to consumers</li><li>• Clinicians support you to fully understand, communicate and participate in making decisions about your care</li><li>• You receive information when you leave a health service organisation about why you came, the care you received, the plan of action when you leave and any follow-up appointments.</li></ul>
<p>4. Partnering with consumers in organisational design and governance</p>	<p>You have the opportunity to be a partner in the design and governance of the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You have the opportunity to be consulted or involved at multiple levels of the health service organisation, including in governance and service design</li><li>• You are provided with orientation, support and education if you are involved in governance and service design</li><li>• The health service organisation seeks to consult and involve a diverse range of consumers using its services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and culturally and linguistically diverse consumers and communities</li><li>• If you would like it to, your story could be used in the training and education of the organisation's workforce to improve the way care is provided.</li></ul>



# Actions to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers

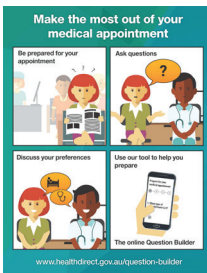
There are six specific actions relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the NSQHS Standards (second edition). The actions require health service organisations to consult with and involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations, consumers and carers. If you would like to be involved in these processes, contact your local health service organisation.

## Useful information to help you be an active partner in your own care



**Top Tips for Safe Health Care** This consumer guide provides you with practical advice on how you can be more involved in planning and decision-making for your care when you visit your doctor and other health providers.

Available at: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips)



**Question Builder** This website helps you prepare a list of questions to take to your next appointment with a doctor or specialist, so that you have the information you need to participate in making decisions with your doctor about your own care.

Available at: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/questionbuilder](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/questionbuilder)



**Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights** The Charter describes your rights to take an active role in your health care and participate as fully as you wish in the decisions about your care.

Available at: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/national-priorities/charter-of-healthcare-rights](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/national-priorities/charter-of-healthcare-rights)

## Further information

For more information about the NSQHS Standards, accreditation and the Partnering with Consumers Standard, visit our website: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au).