



Enabling Informed Patient Decisions

Standard 1.2 of The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards for General Practices: 4th edition, states that amongst the information provided by a practice to their patients, is sufficient information to enable patients and their carers to make informed decisions about managing their health care.

To do this effectively, practices need to provide information that is easy to understand and, preferably, that can be taken away and considered and discussed with family, so that informed decisions can be made. This may include:

- Alternatives
- Benefits
- Importance
- Possible costs
- Purpose
- Referrals
- Risks

It is also important to avoid the use of jargon or complicated medical terms and, if possible, provide diagrams or written information such as brochures or leaflets from your practice software for the patient to review and consider.

Second opinions

Patients also have the right to seek further clinical opinion from other healthcare providers, including complementary or alternative therapies. Where a patient indicates their intention to seek a further clinical opinion, providers should record this information in the patient's health record.

Patients should also be encouraged to notify their medical practitioner when they are choosing to follow another healthcare provider's management advice. This will allow the medical practitioner the opportunity to reinforce any potential risks of this decision.

Writing your practice policy

When writing your practice policy on this Standard, consider the description and the Indicators as a guide.

In the 4th edition Standards these are:

Our practice gives patients sufficient information about the purpose, importance, benefits, risks and possible costs associated with proposed investigations, referrals or treatments, to enable patients to make informed decisions about their health.

In addition, each of the Indicators are mandatory:

- Our clinical team can demonstrate how we provide information to our patients about the purpose, importance, benefits, risks and possible costs of proposed investigations, referrals or treatments.
- Our clinical team can describe how we use leaflets, brochures or written or electronic information to support our explanation of the diagnosis and management of conditions when appropriate.
- Our clinical team can describe how we provide information (printed or otherwise) about medicines and medicine safety to patients.

Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.

References

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)

Standards for General Practices:4th edition

[http://www.racgp.org.au/your-](http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/standards4thedition/)

[practice/standards/standards4thedition/](http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/standards4thedition/)

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