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BREAKING NEWS 22 cases of COVID-19 Delta variant confirmed in Jamaica

Patients' Bill of Rights

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Published: Wednesday | January 4, 2012 | 12:00 AM

Hilda Ming, Contributor

As she steps into his office, she wonders what he will say to her. She has been to two doctors already, but she heard that this one was different. She certainly did not want any long talking today. All she wanted was for someone to tell her what to do.

He walked in and sat before her. He seemed pleasant and she felt comfortable. As she listened, her fears became real. There he goes ending with those dreaded words, "The choice is yours". In fact, to her this meant 'I have given you enough information for you to make the decision'.

Like it or not, as a recipient of medical care there are certain rights and responsibilities that you are privileged to, one of which is the right to participate in decisions about your treatment. Some persons think it is the responsibility of the doctor/nurse to make decisions for them, and see them as shirking responsibility when this is not the case.

While some welcome the idea of participating, others are not aware of their rights. By and large the medical communities locally, regionally, and internationally do have patients' charters/bills of rights, and, these bills of rights do have



common elements. The following is a part of a direct quotation from the in-patient guide of one of our leading medical facilities in Jamaica.

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Your Rights as A Patient

You are entitled to these rights regardless of sex, race, culture, economic, educational or religious background.

You have the right to:

Considerate and respectful care;

Obtain from your physician complete, current information concerning your diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis, in terms that you can reasonably expect to understand;

Receive from your physician information necessary to give an informed consent prior to the start of any procedure and/treatment;

Refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law, and to be informed of the medical consequences of your action:

Every consideration of your privacy concerning your own medical-care programme;

Expect that all communications and records pertaining to your care should be treated as confidential;

Expect that within its capacity the hospital must make a reasonable response to your request for services;

Obtain information as to any relationship of your hospital to other health-care and educational institutions insofar as your care is concerned;

Expect reasonable continuity of care;

Examine and receive an explanation of your bill, regardless of the source of payment;

Know what hospital rules and regulations apply to you as a patient.

Note: No catalogue of rights can guarantee for you the kind of treatment you have the right to expect.

Therefore, we as a people need to be involved at all levels. Worldwide, health care is big cost and big business. No longer can clients sit before medical personnel and say "I take a little white tablet". We need to know!

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