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NABH endorses DMAI's 'Patient Charter' on rights & responsibilities of patients

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Understanding the need to protect the interest of the patients across the country, the National Board for Accreditation of Healthcare (NABH) recently endorsed and supported a unique programme called 'Patient Charter' initiated by the Disease Management Association of India (DMAI). This patient-centric programme is a first of its kind initiative propagated to facilitate the needs of the patients so as to keep them and their family informed about their rights and responsibilities while using healthcare facilities.

The Charter was drafted by DMAI in consultation with experts from the healthcare community making India the only country in Asia Pacific to have such a detailed yet crisp patient charter. Under the said charter the doctors and other healthcare providers are expected to display the charter in their reception area prominently in local, Hindi and English languages.

The Charter will basically work as a guideline for the healthcare providers to ensure that the patients are duly updated on all the healthcare needs. Most importantly it stresses on the need for adopting patient friendly environment through documented procedure for obtaining patient or family's consent for informed decision making while availing healthcare needs so as to involve the patient and family in decision making processes.

According to Rajendra Pratap Gupta, president DMAI, even though healthcare is all about helping the patients they are seldom taken into consideration in any decision making process. He insisted that it is high time for all to come together and work for the upliftment of the patient community so that they are also given a fair chance to express their concerns, issues and doubts to the concerned authority.

"Patient Charter is one such initiative that is not just a document that outlines the doctor's role, responsibilities and code of practice but also the patient's rights and his duties. Most of the medical failures happen due to either ignorance of patients or negligence of practitioners or providers of healthcare and we wish to caution both the patient and the providers on the seriousness and the outcomes of not working together," Gupta stated.

He further stressed that communication should become the first line of treatment' and that patient charter will play a significant role in empowering the patient through this initiative. Agreeing with him Dr Gayatri Vyas Mahendroo, director, NABH said that the it is important to educate patient and family members about the basic healthcare proceedings and risks so enable them to make informed decisions and involve them in the care planning and delivery process.

"Patient and families have a right to information and education about their healthcare needs and on the expected costs. Thus to empower the consumer on these issues, NABH along with DMAI fully support the patient charter and believe that it should be promoted with all healthcare providers in India, be it individual doctors or small clinics or large hospital chains, on the lines of 'Jago Grahak Jago' campaign," Mahendroo insisted.

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