FDI DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT (revision)

Partnering for Better Health
- The Dentist-Patient Relationship

Revision submitted for adoption by the General Assembly:
September 2016, Poznan, Poland
Original version of Basic Rights And Responsibilities Of Dental Patients; and
Original version of Basic Responsibilities And Right Of Dentists :
October 2007, Dubai, UAE

CONTEXT

The ultimate goal of dentistry, like medicine in general, is the constant improvement of
populations’ health and well-being. To do so, dentists should improve their
competencies in research, preventive measures, and treatment techniques, and
enhance their communication and patient-relation skills, which are essential nowadays
and a guarantee of quality care.

PRINCIPLES

Achieving optimal quality care requires dentists and their patients to establish a fruitful
relationship based on trust and mutual respect. A universal commitment must be
defined based on each party accepting the rights and responsibilities of the other, well
beyond the legal or ethical rules relevant to each country. This mutual commitment is
needed to achieve the best results and the common goal of good oral health.

POLICY

The responsibilities and commitments of the dentist:
The rights of the patient are implicit
• To make sure that the patient's basic right to choose their dentist freely has been
  respected.
• To always work for the best interest of the patient, without any discrimination in
  “access to care” and “choice of treatments”.
• Not to permit any external influences (commercial or otherwise) to take over their
  professional responsibilities and freedom of practice.
• To provide quality treatment in an adequate and competent manner, in a safe and
  secure environment; this implies that the dentist provide only the care for which
  they have the necessary qualifications and that they update their skills and
  competencies throughout their professional life.
• To provide the patient or their legal representative with all the necessary
  information, including treatment costs, to enable them to take part in the decision-
  making process.
• To review and explain clearly, in detail, all the alternative treatment possibilities, to be able to obtain the informed consent of the patient.
• To acknowledge the patient’s right to have their own point of view regarding their treatment, to be offered alternative treatment options, and to seek a second professional opinion if they wish to.
• To provide confidentiality in matters of medico/dental information and patient-records in their individual relationship with the patient and as the head of the dental team.
• To provide access and make available to the patient their own medico/dental records.

The dentist’s rights:
In return, the rights of the dentist are as follows:
• To be treated with respect and dignity.
• To have the freedom of practice provided by the law and the health system relevant to the country. This freedom should give all patients equal access to oral healthcare.
• To have the right to refuse to treat any patient whose demands may go against good medical practices.
• To put an end to the dentist-patient contract partnership in case of any loss of confidence.

The patient’s commitments:
To allow the dentist to practice in a relaxed, safe and peaceful environment and to provide quality oral healthcare, the patient must:
• Respect the wellbeing of other individuals, including members of the dental team.
• Understand and accept the realities and limits of today’s dentistry.
• Accept their responsibility for their own oral health by following the advice, preventive measures and recommendations given by the dentist and members of the dental team.

Once these conditions are fulfilled, a trusting relationship between dentist and patient can be established and the common goal of optimal oral health becomes achievable.

DISCLAIMER
The information in this Policy Statement was based on the best scientific evidence available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and socio-economic constraints.

REFERENCES
Dentists' rights and responsibilities:


