WHAT is the Patient Ombuds Service?

The Patient Ombuds Service exists to look after the interests and to safeguard the rights of all patients and clients who are using healthcare in Tyrol or who are in need of healthcare services, whether in a hospital, rehab clinic or sanatorium, in other healthcare institutions within the responsibility of the state of Tyrol, or in the ambulance and rescue sector.

WHAT can the Patient Ombuds Service do for you?

We are an independent and neutral institution that provides you with advice and information free of charge. All our staff have a duty of confidentiality towards all patients and facts disclosed to them in the course of their work, in order to protect the legitimate interests of the patient concerned.

WHAT are your rights as a patient?

All patients of Austrian healthcare institutions have rights stipulated in the Patients’ Charter, a special agreement between the Austrian government and the federal states.

Some fundamental rights of patients are:

- **the right to self-determination:** basically, this right implies that your consent must be obtained before any kind of medical treatment is initiated. There are some exceptions, for example in emergencies, in psychiatry and in epidemics control. Other exceptions are applicable to children and adolescents, and to persons unable to look after their own affairs.

- **the right to respect of your dignity and integrity:** implies that your privacy and dignity must be adequately respected, and that treatment and nursing procedures should whenever possible be consistent with the usual rhythm of life; that your data are treated as confidential; that dignified dying is provided for; and that persons close to you can stay in touch with you.

- **the right to treatment and care:** this means that you have a right to receive appropriate and adequate healthcare - irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, financial status and religious belief. It also means that diagnosis, treatment and nursing care must be based on the state of the art in medical science.

- **the right to information:** this means, among other things, that you are entitled to receive truthful and complete information about your state of health or illness, in a manner that you can understand.

   It also includes your right to see your medical records and to receive duplicates thereof, although you may be charged for photocopies of your records. Beyond this, you have a right to be informed about relevant modes of treatment, their risks and possible consequences before treatment begins.
The tasks of the Tyrolean Patient Ombuds Service as stipulated by law:

- we handle and investigate complaints and inform you of the results
- we identify deficiencies and work to put them right
- we provide information about patients’ rights and duties
- we look into suggestions and work out recommendations with a view to improving the position of patients
- we act as patient compensation ombudsperson under the Tyrolean Patient Compensation Act
- we issue statements on general patient-related issues

We can help you make a binding ‘living will’ under the Advance Decisions Act.