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Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
The first International Conference on Health Promotion was held in Ottawa, Canada in November 1986. The aim of the conference was action to achieve Health for all by the year 2000 and beyond. The Ottawa Conference is one of five International Health Promotion Conferences, exploring key health promotion strategies or issues.

The first International Conference on Health Promotion was held in Ottawa, Canada in November, 1986. The conference was primarily a response to growing expectations for a new public health movement around the world. Discussions focused on needs within industrialised countries, but took into account similar concerns in all other regions.

The aim of the conference was to continue to identify action to achieve the objectives of the World Health Organization (WHO) Health for all by the year 2000 initiative, launched in 1981.

The Ottawa Conference was preceded by the Alma Ata Primary Health Care Conference in 1978, and followed by further international health promotion conferences in Adelaide (1988), Sundsvall (1991), Jakarta (1997), Mexico (2000), Bangkok (2005) and Nairobi (2009).

Each conference continues to strengthen health promotion principles and practice, such as healthy public policy, supportive environments, building healthy alliances and bridging the equity gap.

The following information is taken from the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion.

Health promotion

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health. Health is seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy lifestyles to wellbeing.

The fundamental conditions and resources needed for good health are:

- Peace
- Shelter
- Education
- Food
- Income
- A stable ecosystem
- Sustainable resources
- Social justice and equity.

Three basic strategies for health promotion

The Ottawa Charter identifies three basic strategies for health promotion:

- **Advocate** – good health is a major resource for social, economic and personal development, and an important dimension of quality of life. Political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, behavioural and biological factors can all favour or harm health. Health promotion aims to make these conditions favourable, through advocacy for health.
- **Enable** – health promotion focuses on achieving equity in health. Health promotion action aims to reduce differences in current health status and to ensure the availability of equal opportunities and resources to enable all people to achieve their full health potential. This includes a secure foundation in a supportive environment, access to information, life skills and opportunities to make healthy choices. People cannot achieve their fullest health potential unless they are able to control those things that determine their health. This must apply equally to women and men.
- **Mediate** – the prerequisites and prospects for health cannot be ensured by the health sector alone. Health promotion demands coordinated action by all concerned, including governments, health and other social and economic sectors, non-government and voluntary organisations, local authorities, industry and the media.

Local needs and possibilities

People from all walks of life are involved as individuals and as members of families and communities. Professional and social groups, and health personnel, have a major responsibility to mediate between differing interests in society for the pursuit of health. Health promotion strategies and programs should be adapted to the local needs and possibilities of individual countries and regions to take into account differing social, cultural and economic systems.
Areas for priority action

Health promotion priority action areas identified in the Ottawa Charter are:

- **Build healthy public policy** – health promotion policy combines diverse but complementary approaches, including legislation, fiscal measures, taxation and organisation change. Health promotion policy requires the identification of obstacles to the adoption of healthy public policies in non-health sectors and the development of ways to remove them.
- **Create supportive environments** – the protection of the natural and built environments, and the conservation of natural resources must be addressed in any health promotion strategy.
- **Strengthen community actions** – community development draws on existing human and material resources to enhance self-help and social support, and to develop flexible systems for strengthening public participation in, and direction of, health matters. This requires full and continuous access to information and learning opportunities for health, as well as funding support.
- **Develop personal skills** – enabling people to learn (throughout life) to prepare themselves for all of its stages and to cope with chronic illness and injuries is essential. This has to be facilitated in school, home, work and community settings.
- **Reorient health services** – the role of the health sector must move increasingly in a health promotion direction, beyond its responsibility for providing clinical and curative services. Reorienting health services also requires stronger attention to health research, as well as changes in professional education and training.
- **Moving into the future** – caring, holism and ecology are essential issues in developing strategies for health promotion. A guiding principle should be that women and men should become equal partners in each phase of planning, implementation and evaluation of health promotion activities.

Commitment to health promotion

The participants at the conference pledged to:

- Move into the arena of healthy public policy and advocate a clear political commitment to health and equity in all sectors
- Counteract the pressures towards harmful products, resource depletion, unhealthy living conditions and environments, and bad nutrition, and focus attention on public health issues such as pollution, occupational hazards, housing and settlements
- Respond to the health gap within and between societies, and tackle the inequities in health produced by the rules and practices of these societies
- Acknowledge people as the main health resource – to support and enable them to keep themselves, their families and friends healthy through financial and other means – and accept the community as the essential voice in matters of its health, living conditions and wellbeing
- Reorient health services and their resources towards the promotion of health, and share power with other sectors, disciplines and with people
- Recognise health and its maintenance as a major social investment and challenge, and address the overall ecological issues of our ways of living.

Organisations operating within the principles of the charter

Organisations that operate in accordance with the principles of the charter include:

- Community health services
- Primary care partnerships
- Some hospitals
- Some local governments
- Some social welfare agencies
- Some non-government organisations
- Some peak organisations.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Community health centres
- Health Promotion, Department of Health, Victoria Tel. (03) 9096 5753

Things to remember

- The first International Conference on Health Promotion was held in Ottawa, Canada in November 1986.
- The aim of the conference was action to achieve Health for all by the year 2000 and beyond.
- The Ottawa Conference is one of five International Health Promotion Conferences, exploring key health promotion strategies or issues.

References

- Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, Department of Health Promotion, NCD Prevention and Surveillance (HPS), World Health Organization, Geneva. More information here.

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More information

Browse planning and coordinating healthcare topics
Health system explained

Healthcare system in Victoria
The Victorian healthcare system comprises a wide range of health professionals working alongside one another to provide medical and health services.

Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia (video)
Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved.

Patient-centred care explained
Patient-centred care, also known as ‘person-centred care’, is about treating the person receiving the care in the way they want to be treated.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) helps cover the cost of a wide range of prescription medicines, making them more affordable.

Primary healthcare explained
Primary healthcare is the first contact a person has with the health care system when they have a health problem. This is usually your general practitioner (GP) or pharmacist.

Who's who in your healthcare team
Your healthcare team may include a doctor, dentist, pharmacist, medical specialists, allied health professionals and complementary medicine practitioners.

Working with your healthcare team
If you see a number of healthcare professionals, it is important to tell them about any other healthcare services you are using.

Prepare and research

3 steps to better health (video)
Ways to improve your understanding of your health.

Finding reliable health information
Trusted health information can be found through your local doctor or pharmacy and other reliable health providers.

General practitioner (GP) services
A general practitioner (GP) is a doctor who is also qualified in general medical practice. GPs are often the first point of contact for someone, of any age, who feels sick or has a health concern.

Healthcare decision-making – options, benefits and risks
Ask a doctor and research health information when making a health decision. This will include the cost, timing and regularity of medical treatment.

Health information and health products online
Don't use online health information to self-diagnose - always see your doctor or healthcare professional.

Medical tourism and insurance
People may choose to travel overseas to seek medical or surgical treatment that is unavailable in their home country. This is called medical tourism, and it's a booming industry worldwide. People.

Medicine information leaflets for consumers
A Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) leaflet gives you accurate information about the safety of your medication and how best to take it.
Making decisions on treatment and care

- **Advance care plans**
  Advance care plans can help the people close to you and those caring for you to know what is important to you about the level of healthcare and quality of life you would want.

- **After-hours healthcare options**
  For unexpected after-hours medical issues, there are telephone helplines, pharmacies, after-hours medical clinics or doctors who can visit you at home.

- **Making healthcare decisions for someone else**
  Family members may be involved in making healthcare decisions for you if you are unable to make decisions and it is not a medical emergency.

- **Medical tourism and insurance**
  People may choose to travel overseas to seek medical or surgical treatment that is unavailable in their home country. This is called medical tourism, and it's a booming industry worldwide.

- **Second opinions**
  You have the right to ask a doctor for a second opinion if you are unsure about your doctor's suggested medical treatment or a diagnosis.

- **Types of doctors and health professionals**
  Doctors and other health professionals all have a different role to play in your healthcare.

Maintaining and tracking health and care

- **Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia (video)**
  Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries and individuals who have moved.

- **Making plans and decisions for the end of your life**
  Planning and making decisions about the end of your life can be a positive experience. It is a good opportunity to reflect on the things that are important to you and to make arrangements that suit.

- **Managing long-term illness and chronic conditions**
  Chronic condition management includes positive lifestyle factors like a healthy diet, regular exercise, good sleep and social support.

- **Managing your health**
  You can manage your health by learning about healthy living, taking steps to prevent disease and having regular health checks with your doctor.

- **Regular health checks**
  Regular health checks can help you identify any early signs of health issues.

- **Safe medication use**
  Find out how to use medication properly so you can avoid problems such as unwanted effects and other adverse reactions.

Taking charge of rights and responsibilities

- **Advance care plans**
  Advance care plans can help the people close to you and those caring for you to know what is important to you about the level of healthcare and quality of life you would want.

- **Complaints about health services**
  The Health Complaints Commissioner can accept complaints about anyone who claims to provide a health service.

- **Confidentiality and privacy in healthcare**
  There are laws that set out how healthcare professionals can collect and store your health information and when they are allowed to share it.

Paying for healthcare

- **Medical tourism and insurance**
  People may choose to travel overseas to seek medical or surgical treatment that is unavailable in their home country. This is called medical tourism, and it's a booming industry worldwide.

- **Paying for healthcare**
Ask your doctor and healthcare providers what you will be charged for each new service, what is covered by Medicare and what is included in your healthcare plan.

- **Understanding health insurance**
  
  There are many health insurance providers on the market that offer a wide variety of healthcare plans.

- **Understanding Medicare**
  
  Medicare is Australia’s national public health insurance, providing free or subsidised healthcare to all Australians and most permanent residents.

**Communicating about health**

- **3 steps to better health (video)**
  
  Ways to improve your understanding of your health.

- **Advance care plans**
  
  Advance care plans can help the people close to you and those caring for you to know what is important to you about the level of healthcare and quality of life you would want.

- **Preparing for a health or medical appointment**
  
  Get the most out of your consultation by preparing for your health or medical appointment.

- **Second opinions**
  
  You have the right to ask a doctor for a second opinion if you are unsure about your doctor's suggested medical treatment or a diagnosis.

- **Talking with your doctor about sensitive issues**
  
  Building a strong, trusting relationship with your doctor can make it easier to talk with them about sensitive issues.

- **Translating and Interpreting Service**
  
  The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is an Australian Government interpreting service for people who do not speak English and for organisations that need to speak with their non...

- **Working with your healthcare team**
  
  If you see a number of healthcare professionals, it is important to tell them about any other healthcare services you are using.

**Home and community support and equipment**

- **Aids and equipment at home**
  
  Disability aids and equipment such as wheelchairs, walking frames and braces can help people with disabilities and the elderly gain more independence.

- **Children and health services**
  
  There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria.

- **Healthcare and support at home**
  
  Home care services are available for people recovering from illness or surgery, frail older people, the elderly and people with disabilities.

- **Healthcare and support in the community**
  
  There is a range of community health services and supports available for people with disabilities and the elderly still living independently at home.

- **Support groups**
  
  Support groups offer valuable advice and support and give you the chance to share information with others in a similar situation to you.

**Related Information**

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- [3 steps to better health (video)]

Ways to improve your understanding of your health...

Home

Related information on other websites

- Australian Health Promotion Association.
- WHO - World Health Organization.

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Need to find a doctor in your local area. Take a look at the general practitioners entry in our health service profiles.

General practitioner (GP) services

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Type a minimum of three characters then press UP or DOWN on the keyboard to navigate the autocomplete search results

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