PATIENT S.A.F.E.ty LAWS 101

We support S.A.F.E. care, *do you*?

What are patient safety laws?

The proposed patient safety laws enhance the quality of care by protecting the public from avoidable harms and enhancing oversight of healthcare facilities. This ensures that health services are provided in suitable facilities, by trained health professionals, who use safe medical equipment to diagnose and treat health conditions. The laws aim to do three things:

1. Require facilities to have a licence which shows they are offering credible health services
2. Encourage necessary and appropriate care even when care delivery may be influenced by financial interests
3. Protect the public from risks and exposure to potentially dangerous equipment

The laws aim to enhance quality and keep us all S.A.F.E.:

Self-referrals, you have a right to know
Active participation in keeping costs fair
Facilities maintaining first-rate care
Equipment that is safe

What are the benefits of patient safety laws?

The proposed laws will benefit us all by:

- Enhancing patient protection against avoidable risks
- Encouraging patients to make informed decisions based on improved transparency
- Protecting the integrity and reputation of providers by confirming facilities as credible sources of health services
- Enabling health system planning that keeps costs fair

What will the laws do?

The proposed laws enhance our existing health system infrastructure and formalize standards which most health practitioners already follow including:

- Ensuring that the people delivering health services are appropriately trained to do so
- Regularly checking that high risk medical equipment meets specific safety and operational standards
- Verifying that facilities meet basic safety checks
- Informing the public about financial interests when referring for necessary and appropriate care

Why is this happening now?

Bermuda must work to align its health system with international standards and practices, like we do in the financial services, aviation, fishing, shipping, tourism, and other industries. Anyone can own and operate a health service in Bermuda which may influence the quality of services delivered. Over time, complaints about our health system have increased and become more complex. Further, what we pay out of pocket for health services is increasing and this affects access to care. Finally, there is unnecessary duplication of care that exposes the public to avoidable harms.

What type of facilities will be monitored?

Every facility that provides health or health-related services to the community will be monitored. This list is quite vast. It includes services offered by physicians, dentists, residential care, nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, physiotherapists and other allied health professionals, mental health facilities, home care services, optometrists, chiropractors and massage therapists. There are approximately 334 health service providers and some 2,470 registered health professionals. The patient safety laws will provide more concrete data on the services we have available.

How can you show your support?

1. **Ask** questions of your health professional and the facilities who deliver care
2. **Educate** yourself about options to receive and pay for care
3. **Write** to the Health Council and other decision makers
4. **Support** and **Discuss** Patient Safety Laws
5. **Participate** in decisions about your health

Visit bhec.bm/patient-safety-laws

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