

The COPD Patients' Global Bill of Rights was developed  
by the International Copd Coalition (ICC)



[www.internationalcopd.org](http://www.internationalcopd.org)

# COPD PATIENTS' GLOBAL BILL OF RIGHTS



COPD is a cruel disease. Everyone involved in the ICC either have COPD, have a friend or loved one with COPD, or have cared for people with COPD. We know that COPD patients need support and assistance.

COPD is a disease that working people acquire as a part of their life in society. Like arthritis where years of strain and lifting on the joints wears them down, COPD is caused by years of breathing toxic materials, especially tobacco and biomass fuel smoke, and other pollution that damages the lungs.

People with COPD worldwide have earned their right to medical care by their lives of work. These rights include all those listed below. We need to determine if the health authorities in each country are succeeding in fulfilling COPD patients' rights!

The COPD Patients' Global Bill of Rights was adopted  
by the First World Conference of COPD Patients,  
held in Rome, June 14, 2009

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# COPD PATIENTS'

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## **1. The right to receive early and accurate diagnosis**

Early and accurate diagnosis is essential for COPD patients to take the necessary steps to improve their quality of life and lung health. Physicians and national health services have a responsibility to provide this early and accurate diagnosis. National health services should have reliable information about the number of COPD patients in their country. Physicians should be willing and able to diagnose COPD.

## **2. The right for information and education about COPD**

People in each country should know what COPD is, its risk factors, especially smoking, and what symptoms it causes. COPD patients should be taught what state-of-the-art care for COPD involves.

## **3. The right for support and understanding**

Friends, family, communities, health care providers, and health services need to provide support and understanding to COPD patients for this difficult disease.

## **4. The right to receive care and treatment that will benefit them**

Proper care and treatment will benefit patients, improve their breathing and quality of life, and will help them contribute more to others. Effective medicines, smoking cessation counseling and treatment, and good health care are essential to provide this right, as is long-term follow up. Medical care for COPD patients should have both continuity and comprehensiveness.

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**5. The right to their fair share of society's involvement and investment in their welfare and care**

COPD patients have worked throughout their lives to earn their fair share of society's involvement and investment in their welfare.

**6. The right to advocate with other COPD patients and supporters for improved COPD care and COPD prevention**

COPD patients know how important good care is to their lives. They also know that every effort should be made to prevent others from suffering from this disease. It is their right and responsibility to advocate at every level for improved COPD care and prevention.

**7. The right to safe air and environment**

Unsafe air and environment are particularly harmful to COPD patients. All health care professionals have an obligation to protect their patients from conditions that are unsafe to their health. Patients and health care providers have an obligation to fight for their rights to safe air and environment.

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