

Your Rights as a Cancer Patient

For most people, being diagnosed with cancer comes as a shock. Their families, too, find it difficult to cope. Fear, insecurity, and helplessness are common reactions. What can I do? For immigrants, the language barrier is an additional hurdle. This flyer aims to offer help for English-speaking people with cancer in Potsdam.

The Right to Information, or to Not Be Informed

In a personal consultation, your doctor is obliged to give you details about the diagnosis, possible treatments, their consequences and also possible alternatives. It is important that you understand how things should proceed. All consultations are confidential. But if you want to, you can take along a relative, boyfriend or girlfriend.

If you have any questions about your disease between appointments, don't be afraid to ask. On the other hand, you can also decide NOT to be informed. You will not be informed against your will.

The Right to Examine Your Records

You have the right to see your treatment records or findings without giving reasons. Just ask your doctor.

If you like, you can also take home copies of your records. You will have to pay the cost of the photocopy. But this way, you can ask someone to translate them for you so you can read them in peace.

The Right to Make Decisions with your Doctor about Treatment

As a human being, you can decide about your life. Similarly, you can decide about your disease and the treatment. Don't be afraid to suggest things to your doctor. Be a part of the decisions. This can also help you deal better with therapies and the side effects.

The Right to a Second Opinion

Sometimes a doctor sees things differently from you. That's why it's important that you express your opinions clearly. If you think you're being misunderstood, tell your doctor clearly. Then, if you still have any doubts about the treatment being offered, you have the right to a second opinion from another doctor in an appropriate institution. You can also get in touch with your health insurance company. They will be happy to provide more information about your disease and possible treatments. Most insurance companies offer customer advice and information on patients' rights (see <http://www.patientsrights.de>). Many also provide pamphlets in different languages.

The Right to Pain Therapy

If you are in pain, tell your doctor – even if you find it difficult to talk about. These days, no-one has to suffer chronic pain. In Germany, there are specialised clinics and practitioners who treat it. A wide range of painkillers is also available. Remember, untreated pain isn't just a source of unnecessary torment. It can also have a negative effect on the course of a disease. If you can't find the proper treatment, you can also visit an Interdisciplinary Pain Conference (addresses are available from LAGO).

The Right to Welfare

As a cancer patient, you are entitled to a range of welfare payments from the authorities. To find out which, get in touch with the cancer counselling services at the Brandenburg Health Authority. You can also contact the Brandenburg Cancer Society or your health insurance company. Some of their addresses are on this leaflet. Or you can contact LAGO Brandenburg. We'll put you in touch with the right people.

The Right to a Patient's Decree

For many cancer patients, the prospect of being dependent on life support towards the end of their illness is particularly draining. More and more patients want to have a say in the way they die. This is possible through a patient's decree – the declaration of intent by a person of sound mind regarding future treatment in case of incapacitation.

It's important to note that a patient's decree records a person's wishes. The people it's addressed to (doctors, carers or relatives) aren't legally obliged to respect it. But in general, most professionals involved in the care of cancer patients do think it's a good idea. For clarity, a patient's decree is best made in written form. LAGO offices will give you a free pamphlet on making a patient's decree.

Additional Information On Your Rights

The German government has published a brochure with further details on this subject. Called "Patients' Rights in Germany", it's available in selected waiting rooms, hospitals and advisory centres. You can also download it or order it free of charge on the internet: <http://www.bmj.bund.de/Publikationen>.

There are 894 English-speaking residents living in Potsdam. This corresponds to 13% of the total number of foreigners in Potsdam (as listed in the Statistical Overview of Foreigners in Potsdam, published by the Department of Statistics and Elections, 31.12.2006). That's why this pamphlet has been produced in English. The list of addresses does not claim to be complete; nor does it amount to a recommendation. Please share your experiences with us. We have listed all the Potsdam addresses known to us.

Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Onkologische Versorgung Brandenburg e.V. (LAGO)

Gregor Mendel-Straße 10/11, 14469 Potsdam

Telefon: (0331) 2 70 71 72

Fax: (0331) 2 70 71 71

Internet: www.lago-brandenburg.de

E-mail: post@lago-brandenburg.de

Spendenkonto:

Mittelbrandenburgische Sparkasse in Potsdam
Konto: 350 3000 320, BLZ: 160 500 00

Some addresses from institutions and organisations that can further offer help:

Regional:

We speak English:

Interpreter, help in translation (free of charge)

Flüchtlingsberatungsstelle und Migrationserstberatung des Diakonischen Werks e.V.

(Immigrant's Counselling Centre)
Schloßstraße 1, 14467 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 200779-40/41/42; 20083-80/81
www.diakonie-potsdam.de

Internationaler Bund e. V. / Jugendmigrationsdienst

Schloßstraße 1, 14467 Potsdam
Dipl. Pädagogin Sabine Bittrich (Member of the Advisory Board of Foreigners)
Tel. / Fax: 0331 2370976
www.internationaler-bund.de

Marianne Ballé Moudoubou

(Interpreter)
Tel: 0331 2016927
Mobil: 0174 8495200

We speak a little English:

Advisory service free of charge:

Brandenburgische Krebsgesellschaft e.V.

(Brandenburg Cancer Society)
Charlottenstrasse 57, 14467 Potsdam
Tel 0331 864806
www.krebsgesellschaft-brandenburg.de

Unabhängige Patientenberatung Brandenburg GbR Beratungsstelle Potsdam

(independent patient's consulting service)
Babelsberger Str. 16, 14473 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 20065 60
www.unabhaengige-patientenberatung.de

national:

Krebsinformationsdienst (cancer information service)

Tel: 0800 4203040
daily 8:00 - 20:00 h
Free of charge telephone calls from the German landline.
www.krebsinformationsdienst.de

telephone counselling

if your problems are of a personal and emotional nature, you can contact the American Hotline which offers psycho-social services: 0177 8141510

Some addresses from English-speaking doctors:

Potsdam:

Klinikum Ernst von Bergmann gGmbH

Charlottenstraße 72, 14467 Potsdam
section haematology and oncology
(chief physician: Prof. Dr. Georg Maschmeyer)

St. Josefs-Krankenhaus Potsdam

Allee nach Sanssouci 7, 14471 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 9682 -0
www.alexius.de

Dr. med. Steffen Wagnitz

Facharzt für Urologie (urology)
Dorothea-Schneider-Straße 14, 14480 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 6263880

Dr. med. Jan Friedrichs

Facharzt für Innere Medizin (internal medicine)
Am Stadtrand 52, 14478 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 872255

Dr. med. Knud Gastmeier

Facharzt für Anästhesiologie (pain therapy)
Karl-Marx-Straße 42, 14482 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 743070
www.praxis-gastmeier.de

Kang-Hyeb Lee

Facharzt für Allgemeinmedizin und Psychotherapie
(general medicine and psychotherapy)
Kaiser-Friedrich-Str. 102 A, 14469 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 6011767

Dr. med. Hans-Joachim Lüdcke

Haut- und Geschlechtskrankheiten (dermatology)
Großbeerenstraße 301, 14480 Potsdam
Tel.: 0331 6261004

Stephan Menzel

Facharzt für Gastroenterologie (gastroenterology)
Gesundheitszentrum Potsdam GmbH
Hebbelstraße 1 A, 14467 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 2328272
www.gz-potsdam.de

Dr. phil. Ute Schlömer

Praxis für Psychotherapie, Psychoonkologie, Notfallpsychologie
(psychooncology, psychotherapy, psychology in emergencies)
Lindenstraße 42, 14467 Potsdam
Tel: 0331 2011690

Berlin:

Chirurgische Klinik und Hochschulambulanz I

(Cancer Therapy and Advice Centre)
Charité - Campus Benjamin Franklin
Hindenburgdamm 30, 12200 Berlin
Tel: 030 8445-2543

**Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft
Onkologische Versorgung
Brandenburg e. V.**



YOUR RIGHTS

**Information Sheet for
English-Speaking Patients
with Cancer**

