



SOCIETY FOR EQUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS

ANTI-STIGMA & ANTI- DISCRIMINATION POLICY

*Igniting actions that drive
change.*

<https://seqher.org/>

**Abuja office: A1 Akaton Homes,
Plot 822, Durumi District, Abuja**

**Borno office: Alakaramti Giwa
Barracks, Maiduguri, Borno State**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Pages
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
INTRODUCTION	2
Rights of the Beneficiaries	2
Rights Violations.....	2
TARGET GROUPS/ACTIVITIES.....	4
Our Commitments.....	4
Anti-Stigma and Anti-Discrimination.....	5
Respectful and Nondiscriminatory Treatment	5
REPORTING STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATORY ACTS, ACTIONS, AND INACTIONS.....	7
KEY INDICATORS FOR REPORTING.....	9

INTRODUCTION

The provisions of this policy are made to protect the rights of beneficiaries of *(SEQHER) SOCIETY FOR EQUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS* against Stigma and Discrimination relating to HIV/AIDS. This policy is also a compliance to Nigerian constitution, policies surrounding client rights, and the HIV/AIDS (Anti-Discrimination Act 2014)

This policy is therefore to guide the actions of SEQHER Staff in their work with beneficiaries. It also provides for beneficiaries to report (including anonymously) cases of violations in a confidential and secure manner.

Rights of the Beneficiaries

- i. Right to be treated with courtesy and dignity
- ii. Right to accurate information
- iii. Right to respect of individual and group privacy (including confidentiality of information)
- iv. Right to be able to choose to have a relative during counselling or Vulnerable Children's service provision
- v. Right to non-discrimination
- vi. Right to informed consent

Rights Violations

The rights of persons shall be construed as having been violated by the failure to provide care, by providing substandard care, or by abusing individuals based on characteristics such as disease status (e.g. HIV status), sex, age, gender, religion, disability or ethnic background.

Lack of confidentiality undermines prevention, care and treatment efforts and increase the impact of the epidemic on individuals, families, communities and nations.

Discrimination violates people's right to health. Individuals' right to life is also threatened when access to life saving treatment such as anti-retroviral therapy or, indeed, to prevention Interventions that protect against contracting HIV is obstructed.

The right to informed consent rooted primarily in the rights to health and liberty of one's person is violated when a patient is tested for a condition without her knowledge, or is tested even after having refused to take the test. More broadly, health workers must obtain the patient's informed consent in order to administer testing, treatment, and other procedures and before disclosing patient information.

The right also addresses situations where a legal representative is required and the importance of even in those circumstances of enabling patients to be involved in decision making to the full extent that their capacity allows.

TARGET GROUPS/ACTIVITIES

As part of these efforts to reduce stigma and Discrimination in implementing EPIC communities. The following activities will be conducted

- Advocacy and capacity building for relevant stakeholders such as policymakers, community gate keepers/leaders, faith leaders, traditional rulers, youth groups, PLHIV groups,
- Community Dialogue
- Community Mobilization
- One-on One Counseling

Our Commitments

The rights of beneficiaries on the EPIC project will be respected and upheld within the ambits of the Nigerian constitution. Communities and beneficiaries will be supported to realize their rights to respectful and nondiscriminatory access to care and support by all staff of Integrated Health Program on the EPIC project.

Project beneficiaries will be encouraged to report anonymously, if they so choose, any breach of these rights by staff or community volunteers of the organization.

Reports of breach of rights or abuses by staff or Volunteers of SEQHER can be reported to the Community improvement team, (CIT) or by calling the CSO's hotline made available to community members, beneficiaries and community volunteers (CVs). The information on how to report rights infringements shall be visibly pasted in facilities where SEQHER implements within and outside the office premises.

Anti-Stigma and Anti-Discrimination

SEQHER shall not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its staff against any beneficiary/individual on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, sex, pregnancy, gender, HIV status, parental status, marital status, age, disability, HIV

The overall goal of the SEQHER adapted policy on HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination is to provide a framework for advancing the multi- sectorial response to HIV/AIDS epidemic in Benue state in order to achieve effective control by reducing the rate of new infections, providing equitable care and support for those infected and affected and mitigating the impact of the infection; thereby enabling all people in the state to be able to achieve socially and economically productive lives free of the HIV and its effect.

Services targeted at beneficiaries of the project shall inculcate human rights approach, combating stigma and discrimination, and shall be offered in a gender sensitive and gender responsive way to address social vulnerability factors such as poverty and gender discrimination.

Community services shall be offered in the context of continuum of care with strong linkages to treatment care and support

Respectful and Nondiscriminatory Treatment

All staff, volunteers and representatives of SEQHER shall:

- i. Treat every beneficiary with respect, recognizing their rights to privacy and confidentiality of information
- ii. Beware of situations that constitute stigmatization or discrimination against beneficiaries
- iii. Beware of acts that breach the rights of beneficiaries.
- iv. Encourage meaningful participation of VC and their Caregivers in community activities and decision making without discrimination.

- v. SEQHER and staff shall NOT discriminate nor stigmatize any beneficiary young or old based on his/her health or economic status.
- vi. Avoid the discrimination or stigmatization of beneficiaries based on their color, creed, sexual orientation, political affiliation, tribe, ethnic group and religion as such acts shall be considered as misconduct and attract appropriate disciplinary measures.

REPORTING STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATORY ACTS, ACTIONS, AND INACTIONS

If an allegation of stigmatization or discrimination is made against a member of staff, or volunteer or any representative of SEQHER whether or not the alleged act was committed at the organization's premises or elsewhere, the procedure below shall be followed:

- i. The allegation should be reported to the Senior Manager of SEQHER. However, if the Senior Manager is the alleged perpetrator of the act, the case shall be reported to the MWASD and SEQHER the Coordinator of the Network of people living with HIV in Local Government Area or comprehensive ART site for prompt investigation by appropriate authorities.
- ii. SEQHER will accord the investigating body the necessary support and ask all staff members to do the same.
- iii. Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with SEQHER support and advice
- iv. If a member of staff is being investigated SEQHER reserves the right to suspend such staff during the period of the investigation to allow the investigating team unhindered access to relevant documents and/or persons
- v. All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- vi. If the allegation against a staff is unfounded, all rights that were previously withheld shall be reinstated
- vii. Where a staff member is found culpable, SEQHER will refer the case to relevant organizations including the local authority, children's social care team or the police. The appointment of such staff shall be subsequently terminated.

- viii. In situations where the above point (line VIII) is applicable, SEQHER shall notify the Management of EPIC to ensure their records are updated
- ix. SEQHER retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an investigation
- x. Counselling will be available - directly delivered by SEQHER or through referral to appropriate/ qualified organization for an individual discriminated against by the staff or volunteer of SEQHER

KEY INDICATORS FOR REPORTING

The measurable indicators shall be:

- Number of advocacy visits conducted
- Number of health case workers trained on stigma
- Number of GBV cases reported based on stigma and discrimination.

CONTACT US



+234 902 048 4873



seqher2020@gmail.com



www.seqher.org



- Abuja office: Al Akaton Homes, Plot 822, Durumi District, Abuja
- Borno office: Alakaramti Giwa Barracks, Maiduguri, Borno State

**STAMP
OUT
STIGMA**