



LEGAL PROTECTION FOR PATIENTS IN HEALTH SERVICES AT COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

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Abstract

This study aims to explore aspects of legal protection for patients in the context of health services at Community Health Centers. Although Community Health Centers have an important role in providing basic health services to the community, challenges such as limited resources and lack of legal awareness are the main focus of this research. The research method used is a normative approach with analysis focused on the legal norms governing Community Health Centers. The research results identified a number of regulations, especially Law Number 36 of 2009 concerning Health, which stipulates the rights and obligations of patients within the public health center environment. The main challenges identified involve limited resources, low legal awareness among health care providers, and barriers to access to justice. In looking at opportunities for legal protection, the study highlights the relevance of the Consumer Protection Law and regulations related to Community Health Centers. Recommendations put forward to improve legal protection include increasing legal awareness among health service providers and the community, improving access to justice, strengthening regulations related to Community Health Centers, utilizing technology in the delivery of health services, and increasing supervision.

Keywords: community health center, legal protection, patients, public health, health law.

Introduction

Public health center, short for Community Health Center, is the front guard in maintaining public health in Indonesia. As one of the basic health service units, community health centers play an important role in providing various health services needed by the community, ranging from promotive, preventive, curative, to rehabilitative.

Visiting the health center is not just about seeking treatment when you are sick. Community health centers have a much broader role in maintaining public health. Various programs and activities are carried out to increase public awareness about the importance of health, prevent disease, and help patients recover.

Even though there has been much progress, community health centers still face various challenges, such as limited health personnel, facilities and funding. However, with the government's commitment, the hard work of health workers, and community participation, community health centers continue to improve themselves to provide better and better quality health services.

Regarding health services at community health centers, it refers to various factors that influence the quality and effectiveness of health services provided by community health centers. Community health centers, as one of the basic health service units, play an important role in maintaining public health and have various aspects that need to be considered to achieve this goal.

One important aspect is the responsiveness of the health center, which includes responsiveness to patient needs and the ability to provide timely services. This responsiveness includes service implementation time, service speed, and service order. In addition, the quantity and quality of human resources, including the number and qualifications of health workers, also influences the quality of services. Qualified and sufficient number of health workers can provide better services to patients (Cockcroft et al., 2011).

Adequate facilities and equipment are also important to increase patient comfort and service efficiency (Amankwah et al., 2023). This includes medical equipment, chairs for patient examinations, and benches in waiting areas. Apart from that, community participation in providing aspirations and improving the quality of community health center performance is also very important. The public can provide feedback

through complaint facilities such as suggestion boxes or discussion forums, which help public health center to respond to the needs of their community.

The head of the community health center has a crucial role in coordinating and directing health services at the community health center. The condition of the head of the community health center, including its status and number, can influence the function of the community health center. The distribution of health workers also differs between community health centers in cities and villages, which shows the importance of an even distribution of health workers throughout the region.

According to Wirth (2008); Fonn et al. (2011); Lama et al. (2020), to support health development and the provision of health services, it is necessary to improve the quality, capabilities and distribution of health workers. This includes having a national, professional attitude and having good knowledge. The government plays a role in ensuring the availability of staff at all health centers and the equitable distribution of health facilities with sufficient staff, which is important to prevent geographic disparities in access to health services. Overall, the context of health services at the Community Health Center includes various elements that are interrelated and require good coordination to achieve the goals of good health services. However, along with the increasing complexity of health services, various issues and problems also arise, one of which is related to legal protection for patients.

Patient satisfaction with the quality of public health center services is an important indicator in evaluating the effectiveness of the health service system in Indonesia. Technical factors relate to the availability of medical facilities and the expertise of medical personnel at the Community Health Center. Patients expect adequate medical services, correct diagnosis, and effective treatment. In this case, Health's success in providing adequate medical equipment and trained medical personnel can make a positive contribution to patient satisfaction (Sloan et al., 2005; Darmawan et al., 2022).

Patients have the right to receive quality, safe and professional health services. These rights are guaranteed by various statutory regulations, such as Law Number 36 of 2009 concerning Health, Law Number 44 of 2009 concerning Hospitals, and Minister of Health Regulation Number 26 of 2017 concerning Medical Records.

Apart from rights, patients also have an obligation to respect the rights of health workers, obey the regulations in force at the health center, and provide correct and complete information about their health condition (Gostin, 1997).

Legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers is an important issue that needs serious attention from all parties. Efforts to improve patient legal protection need to be carried out comprehensively and sustainably, so that patient rights can be guaranteed and the quality of health services at Community Health Centers can improve (Yanovska et al., 2019; Indaryanti et al., 2023).

The aim of this study is to analyze the legal context relating to health services at the primary level. The main focus is to understand the normative devices, legal concepts, legal principles and legal doctrine that apply in the context of primary health care. Thus, the aim of this research is to provide an in-depth understanding of the legal framework that regulates health aspects in community health centers.

This study also aims to identify and analyze challenges and opportunities related to legal protection for patients who receive health services at Community Health Centers. By focusing on legal aspects, this research seeks to detect potential obstacles and possible improvements in order to increase legal protection for patients. The main objective is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the legal context that influences the rights and obligations of patients at community health centers.

The study also aims to formulate concrete recommendations that can improve legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers. Based on research findings, efforts are made to provide suggestions and strategies that can be implemented by policy makers and health practitioners to strengthen the legal framework that protects patient rights. Thus, the aim of this research is to make a positive contribution in updating or improving policies that support the legal protection of community health center patients.

Method

In the context of this research, the approach used is a normative approach which aims to analyze legal norms. This normative approach allows researchers to systematically explore the relationship between relevant legal

provisions, as well as examine and predict possible future developments. The focus of this study involves analysis of research objects which include norms, legal concepts, legal principles, and legal doctrine.

This study focuses more on a literature study approach, where research tends to be dominant in examining secondary legal materials produced from various libraries. By relying on legal literature, researchers can delve deeper into it to understand the normative context related to the issue being studied. Apart from that, this study also adopts a legislative approach, where the author reviews laws and regulations that are directly related to the legal issues that are the focus of the research.

In the process of analyzing legislation, researchers identify applicable norms and look for the legal ratio and ontological basis behind the birth of a law. This approach provides a comprehensive framework for understanding not only the substance of existing law, but also the philosophical basis and objectives of the law that are relevant to the legal issue being discussed. Thus, the combination of a normative approach, literature study, and statutory analysis provides in-depth insight into the legal aspects that are the focus of the research.

Result and Discussion

Legal Context in Community Health Centers

The legal context in public health center (Community Health Centers) in Indonesia involves several regulations and laws that regulate health operations and services at the community level. However, specific information regarding the legal context within the Community Health Center was not found in the available sources.

The Community Health Center has a central role as a first-level health facility that provides basic health services to people in Indonesia. The main regulation governing Community Health Centers is Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 75 of 2014 concerning Community Health Centers. This regulation explains in detail the organization, duties, functions and services that must be provided by the Community Health Center. The organizational structure includes the leadership structure and health workers who work at the Community Health Center. The duties and functions of the Community Health Center involve the implementation of various public health programs,

such as immunization, maternal and child services, prevention of infectious diseases, and health promotion. Community Health Centers also have an important role in supporting national programs in efforts to improve public health. Through this regulation, it is hoped that public health center can provide equitable, affordable and quality health services, so that they are able to meet the basic health needs of the community.

In the legal context, Community Health Centers are responsible for complying with applicable laws and regulations, including in terms of health services, managing patient data, and protecting patient rights (Legemaate, 2019). Some aspects that may be covered in the legal context of Community Health Centers include:

- a. Patient Data Protection: Community Health Centers must ensure the confidentiality and privacy of patient data in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, such as the Health Law and regulations regarding personal data protection.
- b. Health Service Standards: Community Health Centers must comply with health service standards set by the Ministry of Health, including in terms of diagnosis, treatment and medical procedures carried out.
- c. Patient Rights: Community health centers must respect patient rights, such as the right to information, the right to give consent or refuse medical treatment, and the right to receive quality services.
- d. Public health center Obligations: Public health center have an obligation to provide quality health services, report the necessary data and information, and comply with applicable laws and regulations.

However, more detailed information regarding the legal context within Community Health Centers can be found in regulations and policies issued by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. An example is that there is a law that regulates medical data at Community Health Centers. Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 269 of 2008 regulates medical records. This regulation aims to provide legal certainty in the administration and management of medical records, as well as ensuring the security, confidentiality, integrity and availability of medical record data. Apart from that, Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 31 of 2019 also regulates the identity of the public health center and the management of the public health center information system, which includes the

management of patient data. In addition, Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2022 requires health service facilities, including Community Health Centers, to maintain electronic medical records. This shows that there are regulations governing the management of medical data at Community Health Centers, including in the form of electronic medical records.

In addition, regulations and policies issued by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia regarding Community Health Centers include:

- a. Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 43 of 2019 concerning Community Health Centers. This regulation regulates the general provisions, duties, functions and services that must be provided by the Community Health Center. This is the latest policy regarding Community Health Centers.
- b. Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 31 of 2019 concerning Community Health Center Information Systems. This regulation regulates the management of public health center information systems, including managing data and information quickly, accurately, up to date, continuously and responsibly.
- c. Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 64 of 2015 concerning the Organization and Work Procedures of the Ministry of Health. This regulation regulates the organization and work procedures of the Ministry of Health, which includes regulations related to Community Health Centers.
- d. Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1428/Menkes/SK/XII/2006 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Environmental Health at Community Health Centers. This decision provides guidelines regarding public health center location requirements, public health center building requirements, and public health center infrastructure.

Regulations and policies issued by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia regarding Community Health Centers provide comprehensive direction and guidelines in the implementation and management of Community Health Centers. With this regulation, Community Health Centers are directed to provide health services that are

equitable, high quality and in accordance with community needs. Information management guidelines support the efficient management of patient data, while regulations related to the public health center environment ensure the safety and suitability of the health service environment. Through the integration of these aspects, regulations and policies create a solid foundation for the management of Community Health Centers that is oriented towards quality, safety and sustainability in providing basic health services to the community.

Challenges and Opportunities for Legal Protection for Patients at Community Health Centers

Challenges and opportunities for legal protection for patients at community health centers can cover various aspects. Public health center is the first level health facility in Indonesia that provides community health services at the village or sub-district level. The following are some of the legal protection challenges and opportunities that can be encountered:

a. **Challenges of Legal Protection for Patients at Community Health Centers**

The challenges of legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers can be described as follows. First, limited resources are a significant obstacle, especially related to limited facilities, lack of medical personnel, and limited budgets. This condition has the potential to affect the quality of health services and the legal protection that can be provided to patients at Community Health Centers (Khayru & Issalillah, 2022). Second, another challenge arises in the lack of legal awareness among patients and medical personnel. Patients may not be fully aware of their rights and how to protect themselves. Meanwhile, medical personnel may not fully understand their legal obligations to patients. This lack of understanding can result in inequality in the protection of patient rights at the Community Health Center. Third, access to justice becomes an obstacle for patients at the Community Health Center if their rights are violated. Factors such as distance, cost, and lack of legal knowledge can create barriers for patients in seeking legal assistance or filing a lawsuit if necessary. Therefore, these challenges demonstrate the need for serious efforts to overcome limited resources, increase legal

awareness, and facilitate access to justice for patients at public health center.

Challenges to legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers can be identified in the context of implementing the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 28/Menkes/PER/I/2014 concerning Minimum Service Standards in the Health Sector. This decision is the legal basis that sets minimum service standards in the health sector, including services provided at Community Health Centers. Despite the aim of ensuring the quality and safety of services, challenges arise regarding understanding and implementing these standards at a practical level.

Minimum Service Standards for the Health Sector create a normative framework for Community Health Centers, but their implementation can be hampered by limited resources, both in terms of personnel and facilities (Nomani et al., 2020). Patients may face challenges in accessibility and availability of services that meet established standards. In addition, a lack of understanding regarding patient rights and dispute resolution procedures in these standards can also be an obstacle (Diseth & Høglend, 2011). To overcome these challenges, efforts need to be made to increase understanding and awareness among medical personnel and patients regarding Minimum Service Standards in the Health Sector. A comprehensive and sustainable training program must be implemented, involving related parties such as health workers at the Community Health Center and the community. Additionally, regular monitoring and evaluation of standards implementation can help identify potential improvements and ensure continued compliance.

b. Opportunities for Legal Protection for Patients at Community Health Centers

Opportunities for legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers can be explained as follows. First, patients have access to the Consumer Protection Law (UU No. 8 of 1999) as a means of protecting their rights as consumers of health services. One of the consumer rights that can be implemented is the right to information (Taylor, 2015). Patients at Community Health Centers have the right to receive clear and complete information about their health

condition, diagnosis, and available treatment options. By providing adequate information, Community Health Centers can empower patients to make informed and knowledge-based decisions. The right to receive safe services also reflects the importance of patient safety in the context of health services. Public health center has the responsibility to provide health services that meet safety standards, including cleanliness of facilities, use of sterile medical equipment, and prevention of infection. This right provides a legal basis for patients to demand safe and adequate services. In addition, the right to be protected from harmful business practices can refer to efforts to prevent practices that could harm patients, such as charging unreasonable fees or other practices that could cause financial or health harm to patients (Shaw et al., 2014). This law provides clear regulations regarding the rights and obligations of health service providers and service users, providing a strong legal basis for the protection of patients at Community Health Centers.

Second, there are statutory regulations that regulate Community Health Centers, such as Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 43 of 2019 concerning Community Health Centers. This regulation provides guidelines regarding the duties, functions and services that must be provided by Community Health Centers, providing a legal basis for protecting patient rights. Third, opportunities to increase legal awareness among patients and medical personnel at Community Health Centers can be utilized. Education and training regarding legal rights and obligations can help patients and medical personnel better understand and implement their rights and obligations. Fourth, the use of technology, such as electronic health information systems, can increase legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers. This system can assist in managing patient data, monitoring health services, and accurate reporting, presenting technological solutions that can strengthen the protection of consumer rights in the context of health services at Community Health Centers.

Recommendations for Increasing Legal Protection for Patients at Community Health Centers

The existence of effective legal protection can be a deterrent for parties who violate patient rights at community health centers. This can encourage health service providers to be more careful and comply with ethical and legal standards. For this reason, there is a need to increase legal protection for patients at community health centers. By increasing legal protection, supervision and monitoring of health services provided by Community Health Centers, accountability and transparency can be increased. Increasing legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers has a high urgency for the following reasons:

- c. Health is considered a human right, so increasing legal protection will ensure that patients have their basic rights to receive adequate and quality health services. Public trust in the health system will increase if patients feel that their rights are respected and protected. This can help strengthen the relationship between patients and healthcare providers.
- d. Legal protection provides security and certainty to patients, that their rights are recognized and protected, so they can access health services without fear of abuse or discrimination.
- e. Empowering patients by being aware of their rights, patients can participate in decision making regarding their care and take legal action if their rights are violated.

Because protection for patients is so important, recommendations for increasing legal protection for patients at Community Health Centers can be detailed as follows. First, increasing legal awareness is the main key. It is important to increase legal understanding among patients and medical personnel at Community Health Centers. Patients need to be given a better understanding of their rights, such as the right to information, privacy, and participation in care-related decisions. Meanwhile, medical personnel need to receive better training and understanding of their legal obligations towards patients.

Second, efforts are needed to increase patient access to justice. This includes providing free or subsidized legal aid to patients who need it, as well as increasing physical and informational accessibility about legal processes, ensuring that patients have easy and affordable access to the

justice system in the event of a violation of their rights (Khayru & Issalillah, 2022).

Third, the regulations and policies governing Community Health Centers need to be strengthened. This strengthening includes increasing provisions regarding confidentiality of medical data, patients' rights to obtain clear and accurate information, as well as effective dispute resolution mechanisms, thereby providing better legal protection for patients (Cortez, 2008; Harrington, 2010).

Fourth, the use of technology, such as electronic health information systems, is considered as a solution to increase legal protection. This system can help in managing patient data more safely, monitoring health services, and accurate reporting (Khayru, 2022).

Finally, stricter supervision of public health center is needed to ensure compliance with regulations and policies governing legal protection for patients. If violations occur, strict law enforcement needs to be carried out to provide a deterrent effect and ensure accountability.

Improving the quality of health services at Community Health Centers, with a focus on protecting patient rights, requires a more complete approach from a legal perspective. First of all, public health center managers need to guarantee full compliance with applicable health laws and regulations, such as Law Number 36 of 2009 concerning Health. This step involves reviewing and adjusting the activities of the Community Health Center to align with the legal norms regulated by the law.

Second, efforts to improve service quality must be accompanied by providing clear and accurate information to patients. Transparency can be increased through providing health literature, brochures, or other easily accessible communication media, fulfilling patients' rights to obtain comprehensive information. Protection of the confidentiality and integrity of patient medical data is an essential aspect (Ambrosini, 2015; Sarabdeen & Moonesar, 2018). Implementing a secure electronic medical record system and data protection policy is a crucial step that needs to be taken.

Community Health Center managers are also expected to increase patient participation in decision making regarding treatment, recognizing the patient's right to give consent or refusal to certain medical procedures. Effective complaint mechanisms and transparent dispute resolution

procedures must be in place to safeguard consumer rights and provide fair redress in cases of dissatisfaction.

Increasing legal awareness among related parties, including patients and medical personnel, is considered an important strategic step. Regular training for public health center staff regarding patient rights and obligations as well as an in-depth understanding of applicable laws and regulations will support the fulfillment of patient rights. The use of information technology, especially in patient data management, is an important aspect that can strengthen and protect consumer rights.

Thus, through this approach, it is hoped that improving the quality of health services at Community Health Centers within the framework of a legal perspective can have a positive impact on public trust in the health system.

Conclusion

This study specifically focuses on protecting consumer rights within the framework of health services provided by Community Health Centers. Key challenges such as limited resources and lack of legal awareness are the focus of attention, and the strategic recommendations put forward focus on two crucial aspects.

In responding to these challenges, the strategic recommendations proposed by this study are focused on two crucial aspects. First, in overcoming resource limitations, concrete efforts are needed to increase the allocation and efficient use of resources at Community Health Centers. This involves increasing the number and skills of medical personnel, as well as updating equipment and adequate supplies of medicines. In addition, smarter resource management strategies and choosing the right priorities can also help optimize health services.

Furthermore, to address the lack of legal awareness, the study recommends implementing a comprehensive training program for medical personnel and Community Health Center staff. This program may include an in-depth understanding of consumer rights in the context of health care, medical ethics, and dispute resolution procedures. The dissemination of clear policies and procedures, as well as the formation of consumer rights monitoring teams at Community Health Centers, can also help increase legal awareness at a practical level. In this way, it is hoped that the

protection of consumer rights within the public health center health service framework can be strengthened, providing greater benefits for patients and the local community.

From the results of this study, public health center management can formulate strategies to increase legal awareness among medical personnel, strengthen health information systems, and collaborate with external parties to increase monitoring and protection of consumer rights. It is hoped that these managerial implications can bring positive changes in protecting consumer rights and improving the quality of health services at Community Health Centers. In this way, Community Health Centers can provide better health services and meet applicable consumer rights protection standards.

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