

Complaint Investigation and Follow-up

1. Introduction

The Providence Health Care Patient Care Quality Office endeavors to reflect the organization's commitment to be congruent with best practices to provide culturally safe experiences for all our patients and families and to align the work with the organization's commitment to the process of Truth and Reconciliation for self identified Indigenous patients and families.

1.1. Purpose

This policy outlines the care quality complaint management process available to patients, residents, tenants and families at Providence Health Care (PHC). This process is mandated by provincial legislation. The purpose and functions of the PHC Patient Care Quality Office ("PCQO") are described.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all programs and services provided by PHC and to all [Staff](#), patients, residents, and families of PHC.

2. Policy

Patients, residents, tenants and families have the right to express their concerns about the care received at a PHC facility. It is the responsibility of direct care staff and managers/leaders to assure the [Complainant](#) that their concerns are taken seriously and that a timely investigation will follow.

Attempts to resolve the [Complaint](#) are initiated at the point of service by the staff/manager/leader most familiar with the patient, resident or tenant and circumstances. If this is not possible, or if the matter remains unresolved, then the Complainant should be directed to the PCQO for assistance.

Staff and others must inform the PCQO of any matter when an allegation has been made of racism or lack of cultural safety, or matters that may generate a formal complaint, media attention, litigation, and/or presents a high risk to the organization.

The PCQO will investigate the patient's, resident's or family's concerns within the time lines established by the Patient Care Quality Review Board Act. The PCQO also provides a single point of entry for requests from the Ministry of Health for information about patient care quality concerns.

The PCQO also provides consultation and support to point of care Staff on complaint resolution processes when requested.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Staff

- Respond to Complaints in a positive, fair, confidential, and timely way;

- Assist patients, residents, tenants and/or families, where possible, to overcome barriers (i.e. physical, mental, emotional, language and cultural) they may experience in communicating their Complaint;
- Be proactive in resolving issues at the point of care whenever possible;
- Refer patients, residents, tenants and/or families to the program or service manager/leader and the PCQO when appropriate (i.e. Complaint cannot be resolved at the point of care);
- Participate in Complaint investigations as requested;
- Participate in improvement activities as appropriate.

3.2 Managers/Leaders

- Ensure this policy is implemented and integrated into practice;
- Investigate Complaints and make appropriate improvements or recommendations for improvements;
- Contact the PCQO or refer the patient, resident, or family to the PCQO if matters cannot be resolved at the point of care;
- If litigation, a claim, human rights complaint or media exposure is likely, or if the severity rating is considered high, refer to Risk Management as well as PCQO;

3.3 Patient Care Quality Office

- Contact the Complainant as indicated when issues/concerns cannot be resolved at the point of care;
- Involve managers/leaders and other point of care staff as indicated in resolving the issue;
- Investigate and work with the Complainant to resolve the issue;
- Provide information to Indigenous Complainants about supportive resources such as the Indigenous Wellness and Reconciliation (IWR) team and Knowledge Keepers and ensure that the IWR team is aware of the Complaint to align the review process with the Truth and Reconciliation process.
- Provide a verbal and/or written response to the Complainant as per legislative directives:
 - Contact the Complainant within two business days of initiating a Complaint to inform of the process that will be undertaken to investigate the concerns and issues;
 - Respond to the Complainant within 40 business days;
 - Advise the Complainant that if they are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation and response they can request a review by the provincial Patient Care Quality Review Board ("PCQRB").
- Respond to requests from the PCQRB within 15 business days with pertinent documents and a summary of the efforts made to respond to the Complainant;
- Respond to recommendations from the PCQRB within 30 business days;
- Ensure there is a complaint management policy in place that is applicable to all programs and services under Providence Health Care's mandate that is consistent with the Ministry of Health Services Policy;

- Ensure systems are in place to respond to and document Complaints, track and monitor trends, and identify and address program and system issues;
- Ensure the complaint management process is known and easily accessible to staff, patients, residents, and families;
- Prepare reports on issues, risks, and trends;
- Ensure appropriate responses to identified system issues.

4. Compliance

All Staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and monitoring their activities in accordance with the policy. Staff may warn others if they observe a violation of this policy. Failure by Staff to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, services, or privileges.

5. Definitions

“Complaint” means an expression of dissatisfaction when an expectation is not met.

“Complainant” is the person or group making the complaint.

“Staff” means all employees (including management and leadership), medical staff, residents, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors, researchers and other service providers engaged by PHC, PHSA and VCH.

6. References

[Patient Care Quality Review Board Act](#)

[Patient Care Quality Office \(PHC\)](#)

Questions

Contact the Patient Care Quality Office at 604-806-8284

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