



Governance - Managing Complaints Policy

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Atikokan Health and Community Services
Board of Directors
Governance – Managing Complaints Policy

1. Overview

Atikokan Health and Community Services (AHCS) remains committed to our values of Empowerment, Teamwork, Trust, Optimism, Professionalism, Respect and Integrity. This includes having clear policies and procedures on receiving, addressing, and learning from complaints. This policy outlines the expectations in Managing Complaints at the governance level.

For the purposes of this policy, Complaints refer to informal or formal submission of negative experiences while accessing services or dealing with AHCS employees that require resolution.

2. General Expectations for Board Members

- As soon as Members are approached with a complaint, inform the complainant of the AHCS policy and procedure on managing complaints.
- If complainant proceeds with sharing the complaint to the Member, the Member is expected to advise that the nature of the complaint will be shared with the CEO and the Board Chair, including the name and contact information of the complainant, with the complainant's consent.
- Should the complainant refuse to be identified, the Member advises the Complainant that without any identifying information, investigation and resolution may be limited.
- The member can give the complainant a copy of the Complaints Form (Appendix A) or they can fill out the form on behalf of the complainant. Other ways to file a complaint are listed in Appendix B Instructions for General Complaints – Members of the Public.
- Members reassure complainant of confidentiality in handling the information and are expected to undertake appropriate measures to comply with Privacy and Confidentiality as per AHCS policy.
- Members are not to share the complainant's identifying information unless the resolution necessitates the sharing with other board members
- Members reassure the complainant that there will be no retaliation of any kind because a complaint has been made.
- If the complaint received involves the CEO, members are expected to share the complaint directly to the Board Chair.

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3. Responsibilities of the CEO

- Upon receipt of a complaint from a Board Member, the CEO is responsible for ensuring that complaint was addressed as per AHCS policy for complaints.
- The CEO ensures that complaint is documented and reported back to the Board during regular and Quality Committee meetings. The report includes actions taken and resolution implemented before complaint is deemed closed.

4. Receiving Complaints Involving the CEO

- Any complaint involving the CEO must be directed to the Chair
- The Chair is responsible for getting factual information regarding the complaint before sharing with Board Members. The Chair may choose to form an investigation team comprise of other Board Members.
- Depending on the nature and urgency of the complaint, the Chair has the option of discussing the complaint during Board-Only discussion sections available during regularly scheduled meetings, or call for a special Board-only meeting.
- The Board decides on next steps including, but not limited to the following:
 - Developing an investigation plan
 - Apprising the CEO of the nature of the complaint
 - Engaging legal support if needed
 - Reporting to the Ontario Provincial Police if needed
 - Investigating the complaint fully, and if necessary, put the CEO on paid administrative leave until investigation is finalized.
 - Termination as per the CEO's Employment Contract

5. Board's Responsibility to the Complainant

- Ensure that the complainant's identity is not disclosed to the CEO unless necessary in the investigation process, or unless complainant consents to sharing identifying information.
- Ensure that complainant is aware of how the complaint will be handled including when identifying information must be shared, typically when investigation of complaint proceeded to formal legal action
- Depending on the nature of the complaint or the ensuing investigation, complainant is advised that he/she will receive a summary of the overall resolution but may not be privy to the detailed actions taken to get to the resolution.
- Advise the complainant that there is zero tolerance for retaliation of any kind due to the complaint being made.
- Advise the complainant that there is also zero tolerance for malicious or false information made deliberately to cause mischief or undue harm
- The Board will not investigate anonymous complaints or hearsays unless the complaint contains substantive information. The Board will determine whether to proceed with investigation.

6. Board's Responsibility to the CEO

- Conduct the investigation timely, thoroughly, and in a fair, objective manner
- If needed, seek legal counsel or professional experts to ensure objective processing and outcome of investigation
- Provide the CEO with necessary information to be able to respond to the complaint.

- 7. Complaint Closure** - once the complaint has been investigated, the Board is responsible for:
- Advising the Complainant in writing of the outcome of the investigation.
 - Advise the CEO in writing of the outcome of the investigation including next steps.
 - Depending on the nature of the complaint and the extent of involvement outside the CEO and complainant, implement a staff or public communication plan.
 - Ensure that a formal filing and documentation system is in place and is accessible to all board members.
- 8. Receiving Complaints Involving the Chair**
- If a Board Member received a complaint involving the Board Chair, the complaint will be directed to the Vice-Chair.
 - The Vice-Chair is responsible for getting as much information regarding the complaint before sharing with other Board Members.
 - The Vice-Chair schedules a special meeting that may include the CEO but does not include the Chair to discuss the nature of the complaint and to prepare an investigation plan as needed.
 - The Vice-Chair forms the ad hoc investigation committee who will meet with the Board Chair and who will be responsible for implementing any investigation plan
 - Once investigation is concluded, the Board decides on next steps including, but not limited to the following:
 - Advising the Complainant in writing of the outcome of the investigation
 - Advise the Board Chair in writing of the outcome of the investigation including next steps
 - Depending on the nature of the complaint and the extent of involvement outside the Board Chair and complainant, implement a staff or public communication plan
 - Ensure that a formal filing and documentation system is in place and is accessible to all board members
- 9. Receiving Complaints Involving Other Board Members**
- If a Board Member received a complaint involving other Members, the complaint will be directed to the Chair.
 - The Chair is responsible for getting as much information regarding the complaint before sharing with other Board Members.
 - The Chair schedules a special meeting that may include the CEO but does not include the Board Member involved in the complaint to discuss the nature of the complaint and to prepare an investigation plan as needed.
 - The Chair forms the ad hoc investigation committee who will meet with the Member involved and who will be responsible for implementing any investigation plan

- Once investigation is concluded, the Board decides on next steps including, but not limited to the following:
 - Advising the Complainant in writing of the outcome of the investigation
 - Advise the Member involved in writing of the outcome of the investigation including next steps
 - Depending on the nature of the complaint and the extent of involvement outside the Member involved and complainant, implement a staff or public communication plan
 - Ensure that a formal filing and documentation system is in place and is accessible to all board members

10. Investigation Timeline

- The Board / Board Member is expected to acknowledge and provide an initial response to the complainant within five (5) business days.
- The Board is expected to conclude investigations and provide written responses within 30 business days. Should the investigation require extension beyond the 30 days, the Board is to notify the parties involved that an extension is needed and set a new target date to conclude the investigation process and to provide the final resolution.

APPENDIX A:

Complaints Form – Members of the Public

Please complete all of this form. You will receive a verbal or written response within five (5) days of the Atikokan Health and Community Services having received the complaint.

Your Name	
Patient's / Resident's Name <i>(if you are not the patient or resident)</i>	
Your email	
Your Phone #	

Date of Incident	
Time of Incident	

**Please describe what happened & who was involved.
Please provide any information, which you think, will help us resolve the situation.**

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Please tell us what you would like to see happen in order to resolve the situation

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Date & Time Complaint Received	
Complaint Form Received by <i>(name of manager / supervisor)</i>	

AHCS FOLLOW UP ACTIONS	
Date & Time of Initial Response to Complainant	
AHCS Staff Initial Response by <i>(name of manager / supervisor)</i>	
Action / Investigation Notes:	
Date & Time Complaint Resolved / Closed	
Manager Signature	

APPENDIX B:**Instructions for General Complaints – Members of the Public****Who Can Submit Complaints or Concerns?**

Any member of the public can submit complaints or concerns to Atikokan Health and Community Services regarding services that the organization provides.

Any complaint related to any form of resident / patient / client abuse, please refer to Appendix B.

How do I Submit Complaints?

Complaints can be made using multiple avenues such as:

- Call the main line at 807-597-4215 and press #7 when given an option to provide feedback or you can dial extension 348 or you can press 0 and ask to speak with somebody regarding a complaint (you will be directed to our Executive Assistant);
- Request a form to be mailed or faxed by calling the general number at 807-597-4215;
- Complete the complaints form from the website at <https://aghospital.on.ca/feedback/>
- E-mail your feedback or complaints at feedback@aghospital.on.ca
- Pick-up a hard copy of the form at any AHCS location

What Information Should I Give?

- Name and contact information
(Please note that those submitting complaints without a name or contact information may not receive a response. Investigating complaints may be challenging without these basic information)
- Nature of the complaint
- Witnesses / People involved
- Date / Timeline of Events
- Resolution Requested

What Happens After I Submit a Complaint?

- AHCS has five (5) business days to acknowledge your complaints.
- AHCS has thirty (30) business days to investigate and send you a written, formal response.
- We will let you know if we need more than 30 days and we will set a target date to complete the investigation and to share with you the final resolution.

We respect and appreciate all feedback that we receive. Please know that we will address your concerns respectfully and that we would never condone any form of retaliation to any complainant.