



Humber River Family Health Team Patient Complaints Policy

Purpose:

Provincial legislation (*The Excellent Care for All Act*) mandates a patient complaint policy for those providers that it regulates. While Family Health Teams are not included, the FHT Branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care strongly encourages Family Health Teams to develop and implement such a policy.

This is an emerging best practice in health care delivery, and the FHT will use this policy as a quality improvement tool for the programs and services it delivers.

Policy:

The Family Health Team will provide a high standard of care to all its patients and will introduce and implement best practices in health care delivery.

As a component of a patient-centred approach to care, the FHT values the feedback it gets from patients.

Family Health Team staff will listen to patients and take appropriate action.

Complaints from patients will be taken seriously and will be investigated promptly.

Compliments about superior staff performance will also be appropriately acknowledged and communicated to staff.

All complaints will be considered on their merits, and there will be no victimization of a complainant. Ongoing care or provision of services will be not affected by the presence of a complaint.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence. Patient information will be shared with only those staff who need to know.

The Board will review annually a summary of all complaints and will identify opportunities to improve practice for the benefit of staff and patients.

Procedure:

A complaint represents a level of dissatisfaction with service and can be provided verbally or in writing to any member of the FHT staff.

All staff who receive a complaint shall be empowered to resolve it immediately and informally as they are able.

The patient shall decide whether a complaint shall be registered formally. In this case, the patient shall present his/her complaint in writing, to any member of the FHT staff.

Complaints shall be dealt with in three stages:

Informal

Any staff member who receives an informal complaint shall make a record of it and forward to the Executive Director indicating whether:

- a) the staff member has resolved the complaint and in what manner, or
- b) the complaint requires further action.

Formal

A formal complaint is one that has been submitted in writing by the patient to any member of the FHT staff.

Formal complaints shall be forwarded to the Executive Director for action.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for determining an appropriate course of action and shall inform those staff or physicians who need to know about the complaint and/or who may be involved in resolving the complaint.

If the complaint involves a quality-of-care issue about a physician, the Executive Director will inform the Lead Physician and they will take appropriate action together.

The Executive Director will inform the Board of Directors about complaints that may have broader implications for the Family Health Team.

Appeal

If a complaint is not resolved to a patient's satisfaction, the complaint shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors for further discussion and action, as necessary.

Decisions of the Board of Directors shall be final.

The Executive Director shall prepare a report annually for the Board of Directors summarizing the number and nature of patient compliments and complaints and the disposition of any complaints.