

POLICY AND PROCEDURE	
Subject: Patient Feedback, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy	Category: Human Resources
Date Approved: Jan 20, 2022	Date Revised: Oct 21, 2022
Author: Clinic Manager	Reviewing Body: MHC Physicians
Specific to: All Staff, All Patients	Next Review Date: Oct 21, 2024

DATE(S) REVISED/REVIEWED SUMMARY

Version	Date	Comments/Changes
1.0	Jan 20, 2022	Initial Policy
2.0	Oct 21, 2022	Reformatted

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines and procedures for patient feedback, patient complaints and dispute resolution.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, physicians, visitors, patients, volunteers, learners/students, affiliates, and patients of the Mapleton Health Centre. Learners completing placements at the Mapleton Health Centre will follow the policies and procedures set out by their discipline's governing body or alternatively by their affiliated academic institution as well as the Mapleton Health Centre.

POLICY

The Mapleton Health Centre will provide a high standard of care to its patients and is genuinely interested in receiving feedback from patients. As such, any patient complaints and allegations are taken very seriously and responded to in a timely and respectful way.

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

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

Accountability for resolving complaints or allegations regarding Mapleton Health Centre employees and services provided by the Mapleton Health Centre employees shall rest with the clinic manager.

1. Patient Feedback

- 1.1 Patient feedback is encouraged by the Mapleton Health Centre. Verbal feedback, surveys, letters and a feedback loop are examples of mechanisms that will be used to encourage patient feedback.
- 1.2 The clinic manager or designate will review patient feedback. Patient complaints are to be dealt with using the process outlined in sections 2 and 3.

2. Patient Complaints by Telephone or in Person

- 2.1 Informal resolution of difficulties should be sought between the employee and the patient whenever possible before a more formal procedure is put into place.
- 2.2 The clinic manager determines if the patient has discussed the concern with the attending Mapleton Health Centre employee(s). If not, the patient is encouraged to contact the employee to do so and, if the satisfaction is not achieved, to return to the clinic manager for assistance. If required, the clinic manager can become involved immediately.
- 2.3 If the clinic manager becomes involved, he/she notifies the employee of the patient complaint and asks for his/her comments in writing, regarding the issue. Usually, the concern can be resolved by the clinic manager acting as a liaison between the employee and the patient.
- 2.4 If the issue is not resolved to the patient's satisfaction, the clinic manager will inform the physicians and seek legal advice (if warranted). The clinic manager takes responsibility for contact and follow-up with the patient.
- 2.5 The onus is on the patient to take further action if not satisfied with the outcome.

3. Complaints by Letter

- 3.1 The clinic manager receives the letter of complaint and forwards a copy of the letter to the Mapleton Health Centre employee. The employee is asked to prepare comments in response to the letter within 10 business days.
- 3.2 Upon receiving the letter of complaint from the patient, the clinic manager provides acknowledgement to the patient of receiving the letter.
- 3.3 The clinic manager discusses the complaint with the employee and determines a course of action to address the complaint.
- 3.4 The clinic manager notifies the patient of the course of action to address the complaint. If the issue is not resolved to the patient's satisfaction, the clinic manager will inform the physicians and seek legal advice (if warranted). The clinic manager takes responsibility for contact and follow-up with the patient.

3.5 A written response outlining the process and the resolution of the complaint (including recommendations or changes in practice) will be completed and provided to the complainant within 30 days of receipt of the complaint.

3.6 The onus is on the patient to take further action if not satisfied with the outcome.

4. Professional Misconduct, Incompetence, or Incapacity

4.1 If in the opinion of the clinic manager that sufficient evidence exists to indicate possible professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity, the clinic manager asks the employee to prepare a written response to the particular allegation/incident.

4.2 The clinic manager informs the employee/provider of his/her to seek independent legal advice.

4.3 The clinic manager informs the Mapleton Health Centre's physicians of the issue and steps taken.

4.4 Following legal advice, the clinic manager decides how to proceed with further investigation of the allegation.

4.5 In the event that the incident calls into question the ability of the employee to function competently, the clinic manager may suspend the person from work. This suspension may be with or without pay during the period of investigation, depending on the circumstances.

4.6 Upon completion of all investigative procedures, and depending on the outcome and damages to either the provider, the patient or the Mapleton Health Centre, the clinic manager makes a decision to do one of the following:

- Reinstatement the employee with or without restriction
- Provide a leave of absence for therapy
- Provide therapy while on the job
- Relocate the employee
- Terminate

4.7 For regulated health professionals, if the outcome is termination of employment, the clinic manager prepares a letter (with legal counsel) notifying the respective college of the termination and conditions surrounding the termination within 30 days of termination.

5. Litigation and Insurance Claims/Coverage

5.1 When a patient provides notice, oral or written, of an intention to commence a claim against the Mapleton Health Centre or any of its employees, the clinic manager is to be immediately informed.

5.2 The clinic manager ensures a notation is made in the patient's chart regarding the patient's intent to commence a claim and notifies the patient's primary care provider (physician/nurse practitioner). A copy of the patient's chart is to be made and the photocopy of the chart is to be placed in a secure, locked location.

5.3 Documentation regarding the detail of the claim against the Mapleton Health Centre of any of its providers and the investigative process is to be kept separate from the patient chart.

5.4 Upon receipt of an impending claim regarding a Mapleton Health Centre employee, the clinic manager contacts the Mapleton Health Centre's insurer to discuss the situation and the possibility of a claim, and the clinic manager will also seek legal advice, as needed. If the matter concerns a patient-physician matter, the clinic manager will advise the respective physician and encourage the physician to contact the CMPA.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a biannual (every 2 years) basis to ensure its policy statements and reporting procedures remain clear, relevant, and practical for the organization. The policy will be amended as considered necessary.