

As part of our mission and vision, Hospice Palliative Care Ontario places a high value on working effectively and cooperatively with our members, volunteers, staff and the public. This policy and procedure applies to complaints received by HPCO about our activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers.

*The Definition of a Complaint:* A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by HPCO as an organization or a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of HPCO.

Examples include but are not limited to: perceived failure to do something agreed upon; failure to observe policy or procedures; error made by a staff member/volunteer; or unfair or discourteous actions/statements by staff member/volunteer.

*Who Can Make a Complaint?* Anyone personally affected can complain and their complaint will be reviewed in accordance with this procedure.

## PROCEDURE

### 1. Complaint Receipt and Handling:

- A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail, fax, email).
- An employee or volunteer who receives a complaint should first determine the proper person to handle it. This will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem.
- It is the responsibility of the person who receives the complaint to either resolve it or transfer it to another person who can resolve it. If the person who initially receives the complaint should acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by him/herself or another employee. If the complaint is transferred, the recipient must acknowledge to the complainant that he/she has received the complaint and that the issue is being sent to a specific person (name the individual and state their title) who will act on it.
- If a timeframe for action can be determined, that should be included in the acknowledgement.
- The contact information of the complainant including name, phone number and email address should immediately be recorded.

### 2. Resolving the Complaint

- Every effort should be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it immediately.
- Complaints received in writing should be acknowledged within 2 business days and staff should attempt to resolve the matter within 10 business days.
- Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it should be escalated to the CEO. The CEO makes the final determination on all complaints related to the operations and services of HPCO.
- If the complaint is about the CEO it will be handled by the Chair of the Board and the Executive Committee.
- Complainants should be kept informed of the status of their complaint.
- Every attempt should be made to resolve escalated complaints within an additional 10 business days so that all complaints are resolved within a month of having been received.

### **3. Documenting the Complaint**

- A record will be kept of any complaint that involves a dispute over money as well as any complaint that cannot be resolved on the same day it is received.
- Information about such complaints must be recorded on a complaints tracking form. Information recorded on the form includes a description of the complaint, who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, timeframe, and a description of the resolution.
- A summary of the complaints received including number and type will be reported to HPCO's Board of Directors through the President and CEO's Quarterly Compliance Report.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaints are treated with confidentiality in mind. In fairness to all involved, anonymous complaints about HPCO activities, programs, services, and operations will not be accepted. Anonymous complaints related to the HPCO code of conduct will be considered.