

**AGENCY PATIENT GRIEVANCE
POLICY AND PROCEDURE
WAC 246-341-0420(16)**

POLICY #318

The possibility exists that an individual requesting or receiving services or who received services in the past or an individual's representative may have a grievance/complaint against a staff person or program operated by the Agency. Individuals have the right to report an alleged violation of chapters 70.41, 71.05, 71.12, 71.24, 71.34 RCW and this policy consistent with WAC 246-341-0605. It is the policy of the Agency that (1) Each person requesting or receiving services has a right to have his or her grievance addressed and may do so by following this grievance procedure; (2) Any party to the complaint be informed of their rights.

PROCEDURE

- 1) Individuals shall be provided notification of the grievance process upon or prior to admit and upon request.
- 2) A grievance regarding services provided by the agency can be initiated in person, by mail or by phone.
 - a) When the grievance is filed in person or by phone, the specific issues of the grievance and a description of concerns shall be documented in writing on the agency grievance form by the staff receiving the grievance.
 - i) The staff member will document date and time the grievance is received on the form.
 - b) When a grievance is provided in writing, the grievance must be signed by the individual or the individual's authorized representative.
 - c) A grievance form is available upon request or readily available for printing on the agency website.
- 3) A person is encouraged to attempt to resolve his/her grievance with the staff person involved.
- 4) Upon receipt of a grievance the agency will:
 - a) Acknowledge receipt by sending a notification letter to the individual within 5 business days;
 - b) Fully investigate the complaint;
 - c) Attempt to resolve grievances quickly and at the lowest level possible to the individual's satisfaction;
 - d) Directors will inform the Chief Clinical Officer and the VP of Quality & Corporate Compliance of the recommended outcome then notify the individual who initiated the grievance; and
 - e) Written notification of the outcome will be provided to the individual within 90 days of receipt of the grievance.
- 5) Grievances will not be kept in the clinical record but will be kept on file in the agency for 10 years.
- 6) If an individual would like assistance in making a grievance, they may:
 - a) Contact QA by calling (360) 605-3105 or 397-8246 ext. 30297 or
 - b) Southwest Region (Clark and Klickitat County): Contact the Office of Behavioral Health Advocacy (OBHA) Advocate at (509)434-4951 or Southwestern@obhadvocacy.org
 - c) NorthSound Region (Skagit, Whatcom or Island Counties): Contact OBHA Advocate at (360)528-1799 or Northsound@obhadvocacy.org
 - i) OBHA services are provided free of charge and are confidential. They support individuals with gaining the ability to advocate for themselves effectively or can advocate on behalf of an individual. For more information go to the OBHA website <https://www.obhadvocacy.org>
 - d) Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may call Washington State Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-300-6384 to connect.

- 7) If the individual is not satisfied with the resolution or did not receive notification of the resolution within 90 calendar days, the grievance may also be initiated with the following entities:
 - a) Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
 - b) Their Managed Care Organization, Behavioral Health Organization or ASO (example: Carelon). See WAC 182-538C-110: The grievance and appeal system and agency administrative hearing for managed care organization (MCO) enrollees.
 - c) The WA. State Department of Health.
- 8) 8. Any person may submit a report to the department of an alleged violation of licensing and certification laws and rules.
- 9) The Agency will ensure the following:
 - a) The individual will be provided any reasonable assistance in completing forms and taking other procedural. This includes, but is not limited to, auxiliary aids and services, upon request, such as providing interpreter services and toll-free numbers that have adequate TTR and interpreter capability.
 - b) The individual's right to have currently authorized behavioral health services continued pending resolution of the grievance;
 - c) That a grievance is resolved even if the individual is no longer receiving behavioral health services;
 - d) That the individual will be free from retaliation; and
 - e) That the persons who make decisions on a grievance:
 - i) Were not involved in any previous level of review or decision making; and
 - ii) Are Mental Health Professionals (MHP), Substance Use Disorder Professionals (SUDP) who have appropriate clinical expertise if the grievance involves clinical issues or subject matter in the related topic of the grievance.
- 10) Lifeline's responsibility will be to ensure the following rights are upheld and determined to be fair, unbiased and equitable in the investigation process:

Complainant Rights:

- a) Right to be informed if a grievance is raised against them *unless it may cause harm to either party*;
- b) Right to receive general details of the complaint (without breaching confidentiality) *unless it may cause harm to either party*;
- c) Right to be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint made against them *unless it may cause harm to either party*;
- d) Right to be involved in trying to seek to resolve the matter according to the timelines as outlined above *unless it may cause harm to either party*;
- e) Right to be informed of the outcome of the grievance *unless it may cause harm to either party*.

Respondent's Rights (employees, contractors, interns, students, etc.)

- a) The Right to (a-e) above;
- b) Right to consult with Human Resources if desired.

11) The Quality Assurance Specialist is the primary contact and reporting person for all grievances.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

When a grievance regarding unit safety and habitability is received, a mandatory inspection will be completed by staff utilizing HOME Housing Quality Standards (HWS) Inspection Form located at www.hudexchange.info/resource/2091/home-housing-quality-standards-hqs-inspection-form

By filing a grievance, an individual's eligibility in LLC's Supportive Housing Programs will not be affected.