
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan

“Competent caring physicians providing quality health care.”

As a patient, you may sometimes be dissatisfied with the service, attitude, or conduct of your doctor. You should feel that you can talk to your doctor about these matters in an open, honest manner. You are encouraged to do so as a means of resolving conflict, to help your physician understand your concerns, and hopefully enhance your satisfaction with future medical care.

However, if a problem or misunderstanding arises between you and your physician that cannot be resolved, you can file a complaint with the College.

There is no time limit on filing a complaint. However, successful review of a complaint may be difficult if records cannot be accessed due to the length of time between the care provided and the registering of the complaint.

The Complaints Process

The College’s complaints process seeks to resolve conflicts between patients and physicians so that they do not happen again. Some complaints may be resolved by the Executive Staff of the College while others may require review by the Complaints Resolution Advisory Committee.

The College is not the same as a court of law. In lodging a complaint, you are asking the College to examine the professional behaviour and/or medical care provided by a physician.

The College cannot order a physician to pay a patient financial compensation. Patients interested in compensation should seek legal advice.

A complaint to the College is not “actionable.” This means that you cannot be sued for what you say in a complaint to the College, as long as your complaint is directed only to the College.

Making a Complaint

The College investigates complaints from patients and from third parties acting on behalf of patients.

If you decide to proceed with a formal complaint, the College can assist you in understanding the complaints process, advise you on what information is required, and send you the necessary forms for completion.

All information is kept confidential.

Once the College receives the completed forms, a copy is sent to the physician(s) involved for his or her response.

If the complainant is the patient, he or she is sent a copy of the physician’s response asking whether it addresses the concerns, and thus resolves the complaint. If not resolved, the complaint is directed to the Complaints Resolution Advisory Committee.

Third party complainants may not receive a copy of the physician’s response unless authorized by the patient.

If the patient is deceased, the privacy rights for the patient continue after death unless one of the exceptions stated in Section 27(4)(e) of The Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) applies. When the complaint relates to circumstances surrounding the death of the patient, or services recently received by the patient, Section 27(4)(e) permits the College to disclose relevant information to a member of the patient’s immediate family, or to anyone else with whom the patient had a close personal relationship.

Third party complaints without patient authorization or complaints regarding the medical care provided to a deceased patient are, on receipt of the physician’s response, directed to the Complaints Resolution Advisory Committee.

To ensure continuity of communication when multiple members of a family are submitting a complaint, select one member as a contact designate to forward correspondence – the designate can discuss this communication with the other family members.

The Complaints Resolution Advisory Committee

The Complaints Resolution Advisory Committee consists of three physicians and three non-medical members. Its role is to determine whether a complaint is founded or unfounded, and to provide educational feedback to the complainant and the physician(s).

The Committee reviews all information gathered in regard to the complaint. The review may take several months, depending on the complexity of the complaint and the timeliness in which responses are received.

Information may be requested from other individuals who have been identified to the Complaints Committee. In some cases, an expert opinion may be sought.

When the Complaints Committee completes its review, its opinion is conveyed, in writing, to the complainant and to the physician(s) complained about. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Committee’s findings, he or she is requested to write a letter indicating the areas of disagreement. The Committee will revisit the matter.

The Council for the College

The Council is the governing body of the College. If, after completion of the Committee’s review, the Committee believes there are unresolved concerns that cannot be addressed by an educational approach, the complaint may be referred to the Registrar, or to the Council, for further review, adjudication and/or resolution.

A complainant, or physician, may make an appeal to the Council through the Registrar, if he or she believes the Committee violated the principles in Council Policy GP-14 to process issues, such as fairness, due diligence and equity, and defined by Council Policy GP-16 (Appeals to Council as a result of Complaints Process).

For More Information
Contact:

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Phone: (306) 244-7355
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1668

*O*ur staff is available to answer any questions you may have about the complaints process, and any other services provided by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.



Your Guide To

The Complaints Process

