

Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Prime Care Family Health Team is committed to providing a high quality service to our patients. In order to do this we need you to give us any comments about our service, and to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help you resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

We treat as a complaint any expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response. We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service, and incorporate them into our policies as necessary.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not.

Our policy covers complaints about:

- the standard of service we provide
- the behaviour of our staff, and
- any action or lack of action by staff affecting an individual or group

Our complaints policy does not cover

- comments about our policies or policy decisions
- matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure, or
- anonymous complaints

Our standards for handling complaints

- We treat all complaints seriously, whether they are made by telephone, by letter, by fax, or by email.
- You will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times. We would hope, too, that you will be courteous and fair in your dealings with our staff at all times.
- We will treat your complaint in confidence within the Clinic.
- We will deal with your complaint promptly. We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days and we will send you a full reply within 20 working days of receipt. If we cannot send a full reply within 20 working days of receipt, we will tell you the reason why and let you know when we will be able to reply in full.
- We will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your:
 - sex or marital status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed)
 - sexual orientation
 - colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality
 - disability
 - religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation, or
 - other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties or age

Confidentiality

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the data protection act 1998.

How to Complain

You can make a complaint to the addresses in section 9 below in a number of ways:

- By telephone
- By email
- In writing or letter
- By fax

We have a two-stage complaints procedure. At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clear detail as possible, including any documents and correspondence and stating that you are making a complaint in line with our procedure.

The stages of the complaints procedure

Stage 1

This is the first opportunity for a service to resolve a complainant's dissatisfaction, and the majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage. In the first instance, we will try to get your complaint resolved by the Head/ Director of the area against whom the complaint has been made. Upon receipt of your complaint we will contact the relevant physician and the office administrator and ask them to deal with your complaint.

Stage 2

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request a review by the Lead Physician.

Timescales for handling a complaint

Stage 1 - maximum 20 working days

Acknowledgement within 5 working days

Full response within 20 working days

Stage 2 – maximum 20 working days

Acknowledgement within 5 working days

Full response within 20 working days

Extending time limits

We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is very complex it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform them of the new deadline.

Remedies

When we get things wrong we will act to:

- accept responsibility
- explain what went wrong and why, and
- put things right by making any changes required.

The action we take to put matters right in response to a complaint can include any combination of the remedies set out in the "menu" below. The general principle we follow is that a complainant should, so far as possible, be put in the position he or she would have been in, had things not gone wrong.

The remedy chosen needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service, and take into account what people are looking for when they complain. An apology is normally appropriate, but other action may also be necessary.

- A sincere and meaningful apology, explaining what happened and or what went wrong. Remedial action, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant
- Provide service desired by complainant (immediately, if appropriate)
- Putting things right (for example change of procedures to prevent future difficulties of a similar kind, either for the complainant or others)
- Training or supervising staff; or any combination of these

Comments

Quality of service is an important measure of the effectiveness of a business. Therefore, we believe that learning from complaints is a powerful way of helping to develop and increase trust among the people who use our services. As well as learning from your complaints we are also interested in other ideas you may have on how we might do things better. We would also like you to tell us when we do things well. If you have a comment to make about our policy decisions, it will be addressed by the team concerned as rapidly as possible.

You can make your comments by telephoning or writing to the Clinic Manager, or you can email us. We will use your comments to help improve our service and the way we do things. However, the two-stage procedure outlined above does not apply to comments.

You can make your comments by telephoning or writing to any members of our staff, or you can e-mail us. We will use your comments to help improve our service and the way we do things.

Recording complaints

We will log all complaints we receive so that we can monitor the types of problems, the best way to sort them out and how long we are taking to deal with them. This also helps us to take a closer look at how we can improve our own service delivery.

We will handle your information in line with data-protection legislation.

Contacting us

All complaints and requests for review under our complaints procedures should be sent to one of the following addresses:

Email: admin-office@primecarefht.ca

Fax: (905) 878-7857

Phone: (905) 878-1720

Mail

Complaints
Prime Care Family Health Team
470 Bronte Street South, Suite 110
Milton, ON L9T 2J4