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<b><u>POLICY TITLE</u></b> Complaints Management and the Role of the Patient Care Quality Office		<b><u>NUMBER</u></b> Patients, Residents, Clients & Families
<b><u>AUTHORIZATION</u></b> Vice President - Medicine	<b><u>DATE APPROVED</u></b> March 2006	<b><u>CURRENT VERSION DATE</u></b> May 2014

**DATE(S) REVISED / REVIEWED SUMMARY**

Version	Date	Comments / Changes
1.0	March 2005	Initial policy titled "Complaints Management"
2.0	March 2006	Policy refreshed

**INTENT / PURPOSE**

- To ensure a consistent, transparent and timely management process for any patient, client, resident, or family member with care quality complaints, requests for information and compliments, in accordance with Fraser Health's Values of Trust, Caring and Respect.
- To ensure Fraser Health Patient Care Quality Office (FH PCQ Office) operations are aligned with the requirements outlined in Ministry of Health Directives for each of the Province's Health Authorities.
- To ensure FH PCQ Office complies with provincial legislation including the Patient Care Quality Review Board Act (2008) and Regulations to manage and process care quality complaints.

**DEFINITIONS**

- PCQO is the Fraser Health Patient Care Quality Office which reviews care quality complaints to Fraser Health.
- A care quality complaint is defined as "a complaint about the quality of any health care service that a patient/client/resident received, or expected but did not receive".
- The Patient Care Quality Review Board (PCQRB) is an independent provincial body within the Patient Care Quality Office Program.

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## **POLICY**

- The PCQ Office responds to patient, client, resident or family member care quality complaints received by the Central PCQ Office or directly by a Patient Care Quality Officer (PCQO).
- This policy applies to all Fraser Health programs and staff, including medical staff and FH affiliated agencies.
- Exception to the Scope: This policy does not cover non-care quality complaints or matters for which there are other established processes for the reporting and investigation of alleged improper conduct or violations including:
  1. Grievance procedures under a collective agreement;
  2. Reports on safety hazards and unsafe conditions made in accordance with the provisions of the WCB Occupational Health and Safety Regulations;
  3. Misconduct related to behaviours identified in Fraser Health's Respectful Workplace policy which would be dealt with through the internal mechanisms of that policy;
  4. Actions or incidents which constitute privacy breaches or unauthorized access to, collection, use or disclosure of personal information, which are handled through the FH Information Privacy Office.
- The Fraser Health Patient Care Quality Office will:
  1. Promote public awareness of the role of the Patient Care Quality Office by providing brochures and posters in patient care areas as appropriate;
  2. Provide the general public with details and contact information on Fraser Health web pages (inter/intranet sites);
  3. Provide educational resources for Fraser Health employees, physicians and volunteers on effective management of concerns and complaints at point of care;
  4. Educate staff to refer care quality complaints to the PCQ Office which have not been resolved at point of care;

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5. Act as a single point of contact for the Ministry of Health regarding requests for information and care quality concerns that have been raised with the Ministry.
6. Notify and liaise with other internal departments as appropriate (e.g., IRM, Freedom of Information, Release of Information, Public Affairs, Finance, etc).
7. Liaise with external agencies as appropriate (e.g., other health authority PCQ Offices, BC Ombudsperson, etc), for complaints resolution.

## **PROCEDURE**

The Fraser Health Patient Care Quality Office will:

1. Ensure every care quality complaint received is recorded in the BC Patient Safety Learning System's Complaints Module, the provincial data management system for complaints;
2. Acknowledge the care quality complaint within two (2) business days and inform the complainant of the next steps in the process. If someone is complaining regarding another person's care experience, consent must be obtained from the patient, client or resident before it can be processed;
3. Ensure every complainant is provided with the information to request an independent review by the Patient Care Quality Review Board (PCQRB) in the event the complainant remains unsatisfied with Fraser Health's response;
4. Work in collaboration with appropriate leadership to complete the care quality complaint review and investigation within the thirty (30) business day timeframe as required by the PCQRB Act, or within timeline of negotiated extensions<sup>1</sup> when applicable;
5. Escalate a complaint to senior leadership when reviews are not responded to by the designated leads to meet legislated timelines (see steps 11B and 11E on complaint algorithm)
6. Respond to the complainant within the forty (40) business day timeline as legislated, unless an extension has been negotiated; and

<sup>1</sup> Where an extension is agreed to, the PCQO must keep the complainant updated on the progress of the complaints management process no less than once every 20 business days, either verbally or in writing, and must be documented.

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7. Provide regular reporting to Ministry of Health and Fraser Health leadership (Board, Executive and Program Quality Performance Committees) on FH PCQO activity and responses to PCQRB recommendations, as required.
- Upon receipt of recommendations from the PCQRB, Fraser Health must:
    1. Provide the Minister of Health and the PCQRB with a written response to the recommendations, which include action(s) taken or proposed to be taken, within thirty (30) business days of the PCQRB issuing its recommendations.
    2. Provide a written response to the complainant following receipt of the PCQRB's recommendations to outline the action(s) taken or proposed to be taken in response to the recommendations.

### **REFERENCES**

1. [Patient Care Quality Review Board Act \(2008\)](#) and Regulations
2. [Ministry of Health Services Ministerial Directives](#)
3. Fraser Health Patient Care Quality Office Complaint Algorithm