

PATIENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

Dr V. Humeniuk
WESTERN BREAST CLINIC

Policy

Patient satisfaction affects health outcomes and this Practice acknowledges that patient complaints are an important source of customer feedback. Patients have a “right to complain” and need somewhere to go with their problems. We try to understand patient specific dissatisfactions and take action to rectify or limit deficiencies. Most complaints can be responded to and resolved at the time the patient (or relative, friend, other customer) makes them know to us.

Under the Health Services (Conciliation & Review) Act 1987, people with complaints should try to resolve them directly with the health service provider. If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved then the complaint can go directly to the Health Services Commissioner for action. The public may also call the Office of the Health Services Commissioner at any time concerning a query or to report one.

Under national and state laws, this practice must provide and adhere to a complaints process for privacy issues and those related to the National Privacy Principles (NPPs)/ Health Privacy Principles (HPPs).

Procedure

This Practice aims to resolve complaints as they are reported. All staff should be prepared to address complaints as they arise. Complaints are recorded and actioned with a copy placed in the patient’s record, if related to patient care.

All complaints received must be documented on a Patient Complaint Form and referred to Dr Humeniuk. Serious complaints that may involve the AMA, Professional Disciplinary Boards or the Professional Indemnity Insurers (such as threats of legal action) must be referred directly to Dr Humeniuk.

It is important to act promptly in these matters to mitigate and adverse consequences to the Practice and resolve the matter to the patient’s satisfaction. Do not take any pre-emptive action without first advising Dr Humeniuk. Although time may be of an essence, the risk of acting without informed advice or proper consideration may mean inappropriate action is taken. Advice may need to be sought from the medical indemnity insurers as to the best approach to take to avoid any action compromising the terms of insurance indemnity.

A patient’s general expression of dissatisfaction must not be ignored or dismissed. If our patients are happy with our service they will be more likely to use our services again and to recommend the practice. Unhappy patients may be more likely to act on their grievance, to make formal complaint or take legal action.

The person who receives the complaint will take ownership of the complaint at the first instance and

- Listen carefully to the patient and record the details on the Patient Complaints Form
- Tell the patient that the matter will be discussed with Dr Humeniuk and that the patient will be contacted again as soon as possible and within 2 working days.

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The Patient Complaint Form should be completed, documenting all information received and steps taken. Copies should be placed in the Risk Management File (for further risk management action) and in the patient's records.

Where a patient's grievance relates to fees the steps outlined for a general grievance should be followed. Where patients express a complaint relating to financial hardship or payment of fees, consideration will be given to

- Offering financial support by Bulk Billing and or accepting Schedule Fee Only payment
- Waiving charges – Dr Humeniuk is the only person authorised to waive fees.
- Not charging for procedures or visits necessary to remedy the immediate consequences of an adverse event.

Staff should restrict their discussions with the patient to recording the complaint and advising the patient when they will be contacted.

Patient Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. If there is a need to disclose information to a third party, the normal rules of confidentiality must be respected.

Verbal Complaints in person should be addressed in a private area. Patient re-assurance, patience and positive body language are important. Don't blame other staff or services. Acknowledge the patient's perspective (they may not have full knowledge of the facts), be non-judgemental and promise to initial an investigation. Document the complaint, your actions and place the report in the Risk Management File.

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Patient Complaint Form

Date: _____ Time: _____ Officer recording: _____

Patient's Name: _____ Contact phone number: _____

Complaint:

ADVISE PATIENT THEY WILL BE CONTACTED IN TWO DAYS / / Done

Refer complaint to Dr Humeniuk straight away / / Done

Action taken:

Copy of Patient Complaint Form on patient file / / Done

Copy of Patient Complaint Form on Risk Management File / / Done

Acknowledgment of Complaint Letter sent to patient / / Done

Situation resolved? Yes / / :No Date

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Acknowledgment of Complaint

Date: / /

Dear (name of complainant)

Thank you for your complaint / letter concerning _____
which I received on _____.

This Practice is committed to improving patient care and we are investigating the issues you have raised. We regret that you have had a difficult experience and will review our service as a result. Thus the necessary action will be taken to ensure that this doesn't re-occur.

It may be some time before we can get back to you with a resolution, as a thorough examination of the issue needs to be done. However, please do not hesitate to call the Practice (phone 83536877) during working hours if you wish to add more information or need more immediate assistance.

Yours truly,

Practice Manager for Dr. Humeniuk