



TITLE

**PATIENT CONCERNS RESOLUTION PROCESS**

SCOPE

Provincial

DOCUMENT #

PRR-02

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Executive Leadership Team

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE

September 4, 2012

SPONSOR

Patient Concerns Officer

REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE

December 3, 2018

PARENT DOCUMENT TITLE, TYPE AND NUMBER

Not applicable

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

December 03, 2021

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**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the information in this document, please contact the Policy & Forms Department at [policy@ahs.ca](mailto:policy@ahs.ca). The Policy & Forms website is the official source of current approved policies, procedures, directives, standards, protocols and guidelines.

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## OBJECTIVES

- To enhance the experience of **patients** and their **families** by applying the principles of **patient and family-centred care** when managing **concerns**.
- To inform and support quality patient care through listening and responding to patient concerns.
- To facilitate a **Patient Concerns Resolution Process (PCRP)** within Alberta Health Services (AHS).
- To enable **staff, medical staff** and **midwifery staff**, to address concerns in a manner consistent with the AHS values, **just culture** and principles of fairness.

## PRINCIPLES

### Accessibility

Patients and persons acting on behalf of a patient (**complainant**) must feel free and be empowered with the information necessary to bring forward their concerns. Even though there may sometimes be a reluctance to register concerns, patients' well-being remains of central importance. AHS is committed to ensuring no one shall experience adverse consequences for bringing a concern forward.

### Responsiveness and Effectiveness

Patients and other persons bringing concerns forward shall experience an effective and efficient process to review the concern.

### Procedural Fairness

The Patient Concerns Resolution Process (PCRP) within AHS shall be respectful, inclusive, transparent, timely, and fair; those involved shall be kept well informed while respecting the patient's privacy. The PCRP shall endeavor to resolve the complainant's concern whenever possible, or continue until all reasonable efforts at **resolution** have been exhausted.

### Empowerment

Within their scope of responsibility all staff, medical staff and midwifery staff, and persons acting on behalf of AHS are to address concerns as they arise.

## **APPLICABILITY**

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

## **ELEMENTS**

### **1. Patient Concerns Resolution Process (PCRP)**

- 1.1 Patients and persons acting on behalf of a patient may raise concerns with AHS about health care experiences.
- 1.2 Complainants shall be encouraged to raise their concerns as close to the time and place where the concern arose.
- 1.3 All information related to concerns received, and responses provided, shall be handled in accordance with AHS policies and applicable legislation including, but not limited to, those regarding privacy and confidentiality.
- 1.4 Concerns shall be reviewed in a respectful, inclusive, transparent and fair manner and reasonable efforts shall be made to resolve the concern in a timely manner suitable to the nature of the concern.
- 1.5 AHS should keep complainants informed regarding the status of their concern throughout the review process.
- 1.6 AHS shall advise complainants of the options available to them to discuss and resolve their concerns within AHS as well as providing referrals to applicable external organizations or agencies with authority to address the concern.
- 1.7 Whenever possible the complainant shall be provided with a response following the review of their concern.
- 1.8 Concerns may be discontinued by the Patient Concerns Officer where the Patient Concerns Officer is satisfied that:
  - a) the concern is deemed to be frivolous or vexatious;

- b) a fair review is not possible due to a delay greater than two (2) years in making the complaint; and/or
- c) an anonymous complaint is made and there is not sufficient information to conduct a fair review.

## 2. Delegation of the Patient Concerns Officer's Powers and Duties

- 2.1 The Patient Concerns Officer may delegate any power or duty conferred or imposed under the Patient Concerns Resolution Process as outlined in this Policy suite and the *Patient Concerns Resolution Process Regulation*.
  - a) This power is in effect unless limited by this Policy suite, the *Patient Concerns Resolution Process Regulation* or any other relevant statute or regulation governing AHS operations.
- 2.2 Unless otherwise stated in the delegation, the Patient Concerns Officer reserves the right to revoke such delegation.

## DEFINITIONS

**Complainant** means a person who brings forward a concern. This may be a patient or someone acting on behalf of, or in the interest of, a patient, who is either living or deceased.

**Concern** means a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction that may be related to:

- the provision of goods and services to a patient,
- a failure or refusal to provide goods and services to a patient,
- terms and conditions under which goods and services are provided to the patient, by Alberta Health Services or by a service provider under the direction, control or authority of Alberta Health Services. It may also include dissatisfaction with professional practice and/or an allegation of unprofessional conduct. The concern may be clinical or non-clinical and may be directed at any member of the organization or the organization as a whole. The concern may also include the dissatisfaction with an Alberta Health Services owned or operated facility.

**Family** means one or more individuals identified by the patient as an important support, and who the patient wishes to be included in any encounters with the health care system, including, but not limited to, family members, legal guardians, friends and informal caregivers.

**Just Culture** means an environment where everyone feels safe, encouraged, and enabled to discuss quality and safety issues, where reporting and learning are key elements.

**Medical Staff** means physicians, dentists, oral & maxillofacial surgeons, podiatrists, or scientist leaders who have an Alberta Health Services Medical Staff appointment.

**Midwifery Staff** means registered midwife who have an Alberta Health Services Midwifery appointment.

**Patient** means an adult or child who receives or has requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers or individuals authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents, clients and outpatients.

**Patient Concerns Resolution Process (PCRP)** means the process of review and resolution of concern(s) raised by complainants within Alberta Health Services.

**Patient and family-centred care** means care provided working in partnership with patients and families by encouraging active participation of patients and families in all aspects of care, as integral members of the patient's care and support team, and as partners in planning and improving facilities and services. Patient and family-centred care applies to patients of all ages and to all areas of health care.

**Patient Relations Department** means the department of Alberta Health Services, led by the Patient Concerns Officer and Executive Director, who facilitates the Patient Concerns Resolution Process as guided by the *Patient Concerns Resolution Process Regulation* and supports Patients and Staff/management/Medical and Midwifery Staff involved in the process.

**Resolution** means, for the purpose of this policy suite, the point at which the *Patient Concerns Resolution Process* Policy and Procedure is concluded after all reasonable efforts to resolve the complainant's concern have been made. Complainant may be satisfied with both, either or neither the process and outcome.

**Staff** means all Alberta Health Services employees, midwifery staff, students, and other persons acting on behalf of or in conjunction with Alberta Health Services.

## REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - *Medical Staff Bylaws*
  - *Midwifery Staff Bylaws*
  - *Patient Concerns Resolution Process Procedure (#PRR-02-01)*
- AHS non-governance documents
  - *AHS cares (Our Values)*
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Patient Concerns Resolution Process Regulation (Alberta)*

## VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action Taken
December 03, 2018	Revised, includes change in title from "Patient Concerns Resolution"