



Family Health Team
Équipe de Santé Familiale

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Section I: Clinical and Program	Title: Service User & Community Member Complaint Process	Number: K-I-30
Sub Section K: Operational		Page: 1 of 4
Approved by: Executive Director/Lead Physician	Signature:  Signature:	Approval Date: Aug 1, 2014

Preamble

Timmins Family Health Team values and encourages the feedback of service users and community members about the programs and practices of the organization. Complaints can provide important opportunities for improving service. A complaint may be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or unmet expectation. A complaint can be made by the service user or community member with support if necessary. The complaint can relate to any aspect of the organization's programs and services. A service user or community member who believes they have experienced discrimination at Timmins Family Health Team contrary to the *Ontario Human Rights Code* can file a claim with the *Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario*. Information about the complaint process is available at www.hrto.ca.

Policy

Timmins Family Health Team is committed to listening to service user and community member complaints and responding in a fair, timely and respectful manner. All complaints will be given due consideration without reprisal or discrimination. Language support for non-English speaking service users or community members will be provided.

Timmins Family Health Team actively informs service users and community members of their right to register complaints (verbal or written) and seek resolution. This information is accessible and publicized in Timmins Family Health Team *Client Rights and Responsibilities Statement (I-V-10)*. Service users or community members who speak languages other than those covered by the latter documents or who have reading difficulties are encouraged to have this policy explained to them by a Timmins Family Health Team staff person or the counsellor at the beginning of service. Timmins Family Health Team will assist persons with disabilities to register their complaints and seek resolution.

All aspects of a complaint will be handled in confidence. However, if the complaint involves allegations of illegal or unethical behaviour, information may need to be shared with external authorities.

All complaints are documented. The maintenance of complaint files is the responsibility of department Managers.

Complaints deemed a risk to the organization are brought forward to the Board of Directors by the Executive Director. Complaints related to the violation of board governance policies are reviewed by the board. All staff will provide information about complaints to the Executive Director's office so that a summary report can be created and submitted to the board annually. Clients with questions, comments or complaints about Timmins Family Health Team privacy policies and procedures or about the collection, use or disclosure of their personal information will be directed to the Privacy Officer.

Scope

The *Service User and Community Member Complaint* policy applies to all Timmins Family Health Team programs and services.

Procedures

1. As the goal of Timmins Family Health Team is to give sufficient local authority to meet service user needs, complainants will be encouraged, but not required to work through the lines of authority within the organization.
2. To provide maximum support to the staff-service user and community member relationship, the complaint resolution process begins with the involvement of the staff person who provided service, unless this is not in the best interests of the service user or community member.

3. Receiving a Complaint

- a. If the person providing service receives the complaint the service user or community member should be offered the earliest opportunity to discuss their concern(s).
- b. If the complaint is received by any staff member or volunteer of the organization other than the person providing service the service user or community member should be directed to the person providing service with an explanation of Timmins Family Health Team policy. If the complainant is reluctant to speak directly to the person providing service they should be referred to that person's immediate manager. The person providing service should be alerted to the existence of the complaint.

4. Investigation of the Complaint

- a. In hearing a complaint the person providing service may decide to involve or consult their manager at any stage. This option should be taken if the service user brings a friend or advisor.

- b. If the complaint is handled to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the person providing service, the complaint and resolution is documented on the *Complaint Form* and a copy is forwarded to the manager of the person providing service.
- c. If the person providing service is unable to resolve a complaint, the complainant is offered the opportunity to speak with the manager. The role of the Manager is to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the service user and staff person. The preferred method is to have the manager call the service user or community member. This affords the staff person the opportunity to discuss the matter with the manager prior to any further action or outreach to the complainant. The manager will call the service user or community member as soon as possible after consulting with the person who provided the service.
- d. If a service user or community member calls a manager to complain about the person providing the service or about the service provided, the manager should hear the complaint, but offer no action without discussing the matter with the staff person involved.
- e. From the point a manager takes a call from a service user or community member or calls a complainant about a complaint, a meeting between the manager and complainant should be offered within five working days.

5. Plan for Resolution of the Complaint

- a. The staff person(s) and manager/Executive Director should jointly plan the response to the service user's or community member's complaint. Whenever possible the plan should support the integrity of the service user/community member/staff relationship and unless clearly contraindicated, the staff person will be present at any meeting between the manager and complainant.
- b. Within two weeks of meeting the service user or community member, the Manager/Executive Director or her/his designate will send a letter to the complainant setting out any agreement reached, or failing this, the Manager/Executive Director's decision regarding the complaint. The person(s) providing the service and those at the first level of authority will be kept informed throughout all attempts to resolve complaints. In instances where there is an allegation of criminal or serious ethical breach of conduct by Timmins Family Health Team personnel, the Executive Director may waive the requirement to inform personnel until legal and/or police advice is sought and may continue to refrain from informing the person during the course of an investigation providing there is no breach of a legal or contractual standard. While every attempt should be made to achieve a positive resolution with the complainant, the integrity of Timmins Family Health Team policies and the integrity and safety of Timmins Family Health Team personnel and other service users or community members must be maintained.

Service User/Community Complaint Form**Service User or Community Member Information**

Name:

File Number:

Contact:

Complaint Information

Date of Complaint:

Complaint Issues:

Solutions Sought by Service User or Community Member:
(note the solutions the complainant is seeking to each of the issues listed above)

Complaint Background:
(brief description of client's circumstances and situation leading to complaint)

Action(s) Taken

Step 1:

Date:

Staff Involved:

Notes:

Next Steps:

Step 2:

Date:

Staff Involved:

Notes:

Next Steps:

Step 3:

Date:

Staff Involved:

Notes:

Next Steps:

Step 4:

Date:

Staff Involved:

Notes:

Next Steps:

Outcome Resolution

(describe outcome of complaint and any improvements implemented as a result)

Name of Staff Member

Signature

Name of Manager

Signature

Name of Director

Signature

Date