

AUDIT OF REPORTS ON COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICES

Introduction

The Health Consumers' Council is an independent community based organization representing the consumers' 'voice' in health policy, planning, research and service delivery. The Council has been working in the management of complaints about the health system and health services since 1995 and in that time has developed knowledge and understanding of best practice complaints management from a consumer perspective.

Safety and quality should be standing items on the agenda of District Health Advisory Council meetings. The DHAC should receive de-identified information about the compliments and complaints that the health service has received at each meeting. Reports which contain a lot of information can be confusing however, and a simple audit tool (?template) has been developed so that DHACs can receive a summarised report of compliments and complaints. The audit tool will hopefully be adopted by health services to provide a concise overview of the current situation at the health service in regard to compliments and complaints.

While there is a tendency to view complaints as negative and negative events they nevertheless provide an opportunity for quality improvement delivery of health services and should be viewed as such.

Compliments and complaints can improve health services because they provide a different perspective from that of the health service provider. Reports on compliments and complaints can provide insight into the following:

- Areas where the health service excels in the provision of healthcare
- Areas where there are problems which need addressing.

The Health Consumers' Council welcomes feedback about the Audit Tool and if you experience any difficulty in using the tool please don't hesitate to contact the Consumer Participation Project Officer by telephone on 9221 3422 or email info@hconc.org.au

WA Country Health Service

AUDIT OF COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT A WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE

NAME OF HEALTH SERVICE: _____

TIME PERIOD OF REPORT: _____ / _____ / 200_____ to _____ / _____ / 2000_____

NUMBER OF COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD: _____

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD: _____

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED RESOLVED WITHIN 30 DAYS: _____

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS UNRESOLVED WITHIN 30 DAYS: _____

CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINTS

CATEGORY OF COMPLAINT	NUMBER RECEIVED
Access: Refers to availability of services in terms of location, waiting times and other constraints that limit the service	
Communication: Refers to the quality and quantity of information provided about treatment, risks and outcomes	
Decision Making: Refers to the consultation with the patient/client in the decision making process	
Quality of Clinical Care: Refers to assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation of clinical care by any health professional	
Costs: Refers to issues about costs and fee structures	
Rights, Respect & Dignity: Refers to the patient/client's legislated human and health care rights	
Grievances: Refers to the individual's rights to have timely and fair management of complaint	
Corporate Services: Corporate issues resulting in complaint	
Professional Conduct: Refers to alleged unethical and alleged illegal practices	

Categories of complaints are as described in Western Australian *Complaint Management Policy* Information Series No 6.2

COMPLAINT CATEGORISATION LIST

ACCESS

1 Refers to availability of services in terms of location, waiting times and other constraints that limit the service

1.1 Delay in admission or treatment

1.2 Waiting list delay

1.3 Non-attendance

1.4 Inadequate resources/lack of service

1.5 Refusal to provide services

1.6 Failure to provide advice about transport options when necessary

1.7 Physical access/entry

1.8 Parking issues

COMMUNICATION

2 Refers to the quality and quantity of information provided about treatment, risks and outcomes

2.1 Inadequate information about diagnostic testing, treatment procedures and risks

2.2 Inadequate information on services available

2.3 Misinformation or failure in communication

2.4 Inadequate or inaccurate records

2.5 Inadequate communication

2.6 Inappropriate verbal/non verbal communication

2.7 Failure to listen to patient/client/carer/family

DECISION MAKING

3 Refers to the consultation with the patient/client in the decision making process

3.1 Failure to consult patient/client

3.2 Public/private choice

3.3 Consent not informed

3.4 Consent not obtained

3.5 Consent invalid

QUALITY OF CLINICAL CARE

4 Refers to assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation of clinical care by any health professional

4.1 Inadequate assessment

4.2 Inadequate treatment/therapy

4.3 Poor co-ordination of treatment

4.4 Failure to provide safe environment

4.5 Pain issues

4.6 Medication issues

4.7 Post surgery complications

- 4.8 Post procedure complications
- 4.9 Inadequate infection control
- 4.10 Patient's/client's test results not followed up
- 4.11 Discharge or transfer arrangements
- 4.12 Refusal to refer or assist to obtain a second opinion

COSTS

- 5 Refers to issues costs and fee structures
- 5.1 Inadequate information about costs
- 5.2 Unsatisfactory billing practice
- 5.3 Amount charged
- 5.4 Over-servicing
- 5.5 Private health insurance
- 5.6 Lost property
- 5.7 Responsibility for costs and resourcing

RIGHTS, RESPECT AND DIGNITY

- 6 Refers to the patient's/client's legislated human and health care rights
- 6.1 Patient/client rights
- 6.2 Inconsiderate service/lack of courtesy
- 6.3 Absence of caring
- 6.4 Failure to ensure privacy
- 6.5 Breach of confidentiality
- 6.6 Discrimination
- 6.7 Failure to comply with the Mental Health Act (1996)
- 6.8 Translating and interpreting service problems
- 6.9 Certificate or report problem
- 6.10 Barriers to accessing personal health records

GRIEVANCES

- 7 Refers to the individual's rights to have timely and fair management of complaint
- 7.1 Response to a complaint
- 7.2 Reprisal following a complaint

CORPORATE SERVICES

- 8 Corporate issues resulting in complaint
- 8.1 Administrative actions of a health service
- 8.2 Catering
- 8.3 Physical surroundings/environment
- 8.4 Security
- 8.5 Cleaning – inadequate provision and maintenance of a clean environment
- 8.6 Fraud/illegal practice of financial nature

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- 9 Refers to alleged unethical and alleged illegal practices
- 9.1 Inaccuracy of records
- 9.2 Illegal practices – any illegal practices eg abortion, sterilisation or euthanasia

- 9.3 Physical or mental impairment of health professional
- 9.4 Sexual impropriety – behaviour that is sexually demeaning to a patient/client including comments and gestures
- 9.5 Sexual misconduct
- 9.6 Aggression/assault
- 9.7 Unprofessional behaviour eg loud, noisy language, swearing, inappropriate comments or gestures

Source: Information Series NO 6.2 Western Australian *Complaint Management Policy*;
Driving Quality Improvement by Effective Complaints Management