



Complaints/Grievances and Dispute Resolution

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Policy Approver(s): Deputy Program Officers	

Policy Purpose:

Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) makes every effort to be responsive to concerns raised by persons served, their family members, other stakeholders, and staff. The purpose of this policy is to identify clear protocols and policies and procedures for timely processing of complaints and grievances. RMHS utilizes information obtained through the complaints/grievances protocols and procedures to regularly evaluate and improve services provided.

Scope:

This policy applies to RMHS employees and stakeholders including but not limited to individuals accepting services, parents, legal guardians, or authorized representatives (if within the scope of their duties), providers, and/or community agencies.

Policy Statement:

The RMHS complaints/grievances/dispute resolution procedure is provided to persons accepting services or their parents/guardians as required by State or Federal agencies. A copy of this procedure will be available upon request at any time.

RMHS shall provide complaints/grievances/dispute resolution process information in a manner that is easily understood through varied methods of communication as may be necessary to enhance understanding.

Persons accepting RMHS services, parents, legal guardians, or authorized representatives (if within the scope of their duties) may initiate the complaint/grievance/dispute resolution process; and shall be offered a means for the timely resolution of complaints or grievances submitted verbally or in writing.

Non-Retaliation:

Use of the complaints/grievances/dispute resolution process will not prejudice the future provision of appropriate services or supports. No individual will be coerced, intimidated, threatened, or retaliated against because the individual has exercised his or her right to file a complaint/grievance or has participated in the complaints/grievances process.

In the event a complaint/grievance is filed internally within RMHS or through an outside agency, it is the strict policy of RMHS that the complaint will not:

- result in retaliation toward the complainant
- create a barrier to the provision of services
- result in the refusal by RMHS to assist a complainant in identifying and consulting with an advocate.

A. Definitions:

- **Complaints or Grievances:**
Complaints or grievances involve any concern, disagreement or objection arising out of the provision of services or supports, including case management.

Complaints or grievances may include, but are not limited to, such issues as the quality of services provided, the person providing services, the timeliness of services, the accessibility of service locations or the availability of staff.

Federal and state regulators use the terms "complaint" and "grievance" indiscriminately and sometimes synonymously; therefore, either a *verbal or written complaint/grievance* presented to RMHS will be considered and addressed appropriately through the process defined below.

- **Complainant:**
The petitioner or party who makes the complaint.
- **Dispute Resolution:**
The response, investigation, and determination of a conclusion to a complaint. RMHS shall consider a complaint resolved when the complaint process has been completed including appropriate escalation and a satisfactory solution or definitive conclusion.

B. Complaints/Grievances/Dispute Resolution Procedures:

1. RMHS shall respectfully manage all reported complaints in a confidential manner.
2. The complainant and responding staff may reach an agreement on an extension timeline due to unique circumstances.
3. RMHS shall adhere to the following procedures in a timely manner as outlined below in each level of the complaint resolution process:

- a. Submitting a Complaint: Informal Complaint Submission and potential resolution at a staff level (Level 1)
- b. Supervisor/Manager Complaint Resolution (Level 2)
- c. Director/Program Officer Written Complaint/Grievance Submission (Level 3)
- d. Compliance Investigation and Resolution Process (Level 4)
- e. Escalated Submission to RMHS Executive Director (Level 5)

C. Submitting a Complaint: Informal Complaint Resolution (Level 1)

1. When possible, complainant(s) should first bring the issue to the attention of the person that is involved in their care/services, their RMHS service coordinator/case manager, or the person(s) that contributed to the complaint.
2. The RMHS main phone line (303-636-5600) may be called and the RMHS representative taking the call can assist in directing the complainant to the RMHS staff person who can address their complaint.
3. RMHS staff receiving the initial complaint will attempt to resolve the concern/complaint directly. The complainant and reported issues will be managed with respect and confidentiality.
4. If the complainant does not feel comfortable addressing the issue with the involved RMHS staff, they may request contact with the staff person's supervisor.
5. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the individual should discuss the situation verbally, or through a preferred method of communication, with the supervisor or manager of the involved RMHS staff or program through which they receive services.

D. Informal Resolution Process (Level 1):

1. The RMHS staff receiving the complaint shall review the complaint and work to resolve the issue as soon as possible, generally within 5 business days.
2. If the RMHS staff receiving the complaint resolves the complaint to the individual's satisfaction, complaint does not to be logged.

E. Supervisor/Manager Complaint Resolution (Level 2)

1. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant should discuss the situation verbally, or through a preferred method of communication, with the RMHS Department Supervisor or Manager.
2. Upon referral, the Supervisor shall log the complaint within 2 business days in the program/department complaint log and initiate an assessment of the complaint details and any response and actions taken to resolve the complaint.
 - a. The Supervisor shall work with the complainant and staff associated with the complaint to seek a mutually acceptable compromise and/or solution to resolve the complaint.
 - b. If the Supervisor resolves the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, they shall document the outcome and date of resolution on the RMHS Complaint Log.
3. If the Supervisor is unable to resolve the complaint at Level 2, the complainant will be assisted in submitting a complaint in written form.
4. Level 2 discussions and actions taken will be thoroughly documented for future reference.

F. Director/Program Officer Written Complaint/Grievance Submission (Level 3)

1. Written complaints/grievances shall include the following:
 - a. The complainant's contact information
 - b. A thorough and complete written explanation of the issue
 - c. The desired outcome
 - d. Complete names of individuals involved
 - e. The occurrence date and date the complaint/grievance is submitted
 - f. The complainant's signature
2. Written complaints/grievances should be submitted to:
Program Manager/Director
Rocky Mountain Human Services
9900 East Iliff Avenue
Denver, CO 80231
3. When a written complaint is received, it shall be forwarded to the Director/Program Officer or designee.
4. The Director/Program Officer will review and assess the complaint.

5. If English is not the complainant's primary language, interpretation services will be made available as appropriate.
6. Level 3 discussions and actions taken will be thoroughly documented for future reference.

G. Compliance Investigation and Resolution Process (Level 4)

1. The RMHS Compliance Team will investigate and discuss each level 4 written complaint/grievance with the complainant and involved parties within ten (10) business days of receipt of the complaint/grievance. The discussion may include the use of an advocate or independent mediation if both parties voluntarily agree to this process.
2. The Compliance Team will provide a written response identifying the relevant issues and stating the outcome of the meeting within ten (10) business days of the discussion.
3. If the Compliance Team has made good faith efforts to contact the complainant and schedule a discussion within ten (10) business days of receiving the written complaint/grievance and is unable to contact the complainant, then the complaint/grievance will be dismissed unless there are extenuating circumstances that warrant an extension.
4. Level 4 discussions and actions taken will be thoroughly documented for future reference.

H. Escalated Submission to the RMHS Executive Director (Level 5)

1. If, after the level 4 complaint process has been completed, the complainant continues to be dissatisfied, he or she may request a meeting with the RMHS Executive Director (or his/her designee).
2. The RMHS Executive Director (or his/her designee) will meet with the complainant and any other involved RMHS staff in order to discuss the complaint/grievance. This meeting should be scheduled within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written response and expression of continued dissatisfaction by the complainant.
3. The RMHS Executive Director (or his/her designee) will provide a written response identifying the relevant issues and the outcome of the meeting. Most decisions will be rendered within ten (10) business days of the meeting with the complainant. If additional time is required due to extenuating circumstances, the complainant will be notified.

4. Level 5 discussions and actions taken will be thoroughly documented for future reference.

I. Review of Data:

1. RMHS utilizes information obtained through the complaint resolution process to regularly evaluate and improve services provided.
2. Complaint/Grievance information received through the Complaints/Grievances process shall be logged, analyzed, and reported quarterly to
 - the Executive Director
 - the Director of Performance and Quality Improvement
 - the RMHS Compliance Committee
 - applicable Program Directors
3. Trend information will be used in the quality improvement process.
4. Complainants also have the right to utilize mechanisms to report their complaint to appropriate State and Federal agencies. This reporting agency information shall be provided upon request.

References/Related Documents:

- Previous Policy Numeration: LSS-104 Grievance and Complaint; RMHS-106 Complaints/Grievances
- 10 C.C.R. 2505-10 Section 8.605.5
- Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing, Health First Colorado: [Member Complaints & Escalations | Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing](#)
- Medicaid Ombudsman through Disability Law Colorado: [Medicaid Ombudsman | Disability Law Colorado](#)
- Early Intervention Colorado, Dispute Resolution: [Early Intervention Colorado | Ei boards | Boards \(force.com\)](#)
- SSVF Program Office at <https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.html>