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South East LHIN
Compliments and Concerns Process
October, 2014

RATIONALE

The LHIN Compliments and Concerns Process (CCP) provides the public with a means of registering health care compliments and concerns. The process ensures adequate follow-up, resolution, and identifies potential systemic problems. The LHIN does not facilitate concerns of an operational nature regarding any funded or non-funded provider.

The management of every concern will be from a customer-service perspective. Concerns are seen as opportunities for learning and evaluating our local healthcare system. The South East LHIN is committed to the timely and effective resolution of concerns. All concerns will be acknowledged, and resolution processes will:

- Reflect the Vision and Values of the South East LHIN
- Be transparent, accessible, and responsive
- Be managed in a timely manner; committing to timelines within our control and communicating frequently with the individual when timelines are dependent on others

The purpose of this policy is to outline the South East LHIN's process to review compliments and concerns.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all South East LHIN employees.

POLICY

Concerns

The South East LHIN Communications Team will follow-up with the individual within two business days of receipt. The LHIN will contact the individual in the same manner the concern was received, unless otherwise requested by the individual. All individuals have the

right to raise concern about health care without fear of interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal.

All concerns (verbal or written) received by the South East LHIN will be entered in an issues database. The South East LHIN issues database is stored on a secure site, with access limited to the following:

- Communications Lead
- Communications Coordinator
- Communications Assistant

The South East LHIN is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), and in the event of a FIPPA request, personal information will be severed according to the allowable FIPPA exemptions.

Responsibilities

- The Communications Assistant is responsible to enter all concerns received into the issues database, and to monitor and complete event resolutions in the issues database
- The Communications Lead is responsible to manage concerns, and ensure a response is provided
- The Communications Lead is responsible to escalate high risk and/or unresolved concerns to the CEO, where appropriate; and to ensure documentations is maintained.

PROCEDURES

Concerns

All staff are expected to encourage individuals to resolve the issue with their health service provider (HSP). The majority of health care concerns are best resolved at the point of care. The South East LHIN may be able to address system level issues and provide information for appropriate avenues of resolution. The South East LHIN does not resolve HSP operational concerns or clinical decisions made by a health care professional.

1. IMMEDIATE ACTION PROTOCOL WHEN CONCERN IS RECEIVED:
    a. All concerns should be directed to the Communications Department upon receipt,
    b. Communication Department responsible to acknowledge the individual's concerns within two business days as per method of delivery,

c. Notify the appropriate South East LHIN staff and/or HSP to discuss the situation, review the issue, understand desired outcome, and determine an immediate plan of action,
d. Gather and review necessary information and consult with appropriate parties,
e. Review concern with client/individual to determine next steps,
f. Ensure that the plan of action is communicated to the individual and all other parties.
g. Document in the issues database.

2. CEO OR DESIGNATE IS TO BE INFORMED OF CONCERNS THAT:
    a. Are serious in nature,
    b. Involve potential litigation,
    c. Involve potential investigation by a professional college,
    d. Involve an ethical dilemma,
    e. Potential media involvement,
    f. Cannot be resolved at the Communications Lead level.

Method of Receipt

All responses will be initially drafted by Communications Lead.

Mail

- Received by Receptionist,
- All issue/concern letters directed to Communications Lead with copy for CEO file,
- Communications Assistant logs letter in issues database,
- Communications Assistant stamps accordingly,
- Communications Lead to work with appropriate South East LHIN staff member to action response,
- Action is reported back to Communications Assistant for documentation in issues database,
- Response issued to individual.

Online/Email

- Concerns should be directed through the South East LHIN website “Complaints” section,
- Helpdesk email box monitored regularly by receptionist
    - Dedicated Communications email monitored by Communications Lead and Communications Coordinator

- All emails related to issue/concern directed to Communications Lead,
- A standard response will be sent acknowledging receipt of the concern,
- Communications Lead to work with appropriate South East LHIN staff member to action response,
- Action is reported back to Communications Assistant for documentation in issues database,
- Response issued to individual.

Phone

- If Initially received through Receptionist:
    1. Forwarded to Communications Lead, if available,
    2. If Communications Lead not available, offer to transfer to Communications Coordinator, voice mail, or make an appointment for a follow-up call *(**Note:** If call is from a Francophone individual call should be sent to FLS Coordinator)*
    3. Communications Lead takes details of concern.
    4. If response can be given immediately, response provided.
    5. If response not available, make an appointment for follow-up following consultation with most appropriate staff member
    6. Action is reported back to Communications Assistant for documentation in issues database
    7. Response issued to individual

If received through Compliments/Concerns line, only steps 3-7 required

In Person

- Individual must sign in with Receptionist
- Make effort to have Communications Lead speak to the individual, with secondary support if available
- Communications Lead will make individual aware that there may not be an answer today, but will take information and nature of concern
- Appointment made with Communications Lead and most appropriate South East LHIN staff member for the next mutually available time
- Action is reported back to Communications Assistant for documentation in issues database
- Response issued to individual

EXPECTATIONS OF RESOLUTION

All efforts will be made to follow-up with the individual within two business days, however, as the health care system operates under a multidisciplinary approach, and involves various partners, it may take a few days to have information available. The South East LHIN will not provide any personal information to a third party organization without the written consent of the individual (link to consent form here).

The South East LHIN **does not facilitate concerns of an operational nature**, or regarding clinical decision of any funded or non-funded provider. ***To issue a concern about a licensed health professional, please see additional resources below.***

Individual communicating to South East LHIN staff code of conduct:

- Speak in a respectful manner
- Do not use disrespectful words
- Be proactive in finding a solution
- Cooperate with the South East LHIN staff in finding solution

South East LHIN staff code of conduct:

- Speak in a respectful manner
- Do not use disrespectful words
- Be proactive in finding a solution within the scope of the LHIN

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For Resolving Issues/Concerns

- Patient Ombudsman: **1-888-321-0339**
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's toll-free Long-Term Care ACTION Line: **1-866-434-0144**
- College of Physicians and Surgeons: **1-800-268-7096**
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – Service Ontario: **1-866-532-3161**
- South East Community Care Access Centre: **613-310-CCAC (2222)**
- Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP): **1-866-532-3161**
- College of Nurses of Ontario: **1-800-387-5526**
- Hospital Patient Advocate: **please contact the hospital from which you received service**
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA): **1-800-387-0073**
- Health Care Connect: **1-800-445-1822**