

QUEENSLAND HEALTH

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Policy for all Queensland Health employees and agents – including Queensland Health Central Office, Shared Service Providers, State-wide Services, Area Health Services and District Health Services with provisions for the Mater Public Hospitals

Consumer Complaints Management Policy

Effective:

- a. **02/04/2007:** For all aspects of the policy and standard which do not rely on reporting and management via a state-wide information system
- b. For all other aspects of the policy and standard, **07/04/2008** or such earlier date approved for a Health Service District by the Executive Director, Reform and Development Division.

Review: This document will be reviewed annually

Last Reviewed: 23/07/2002

Supersedes: Queensland Health Complaints Management Policy, August 2002

Objective: To demonstrate integrity and accountability to the community by having an ethical, comprehensive and consumer friendly complaints management process.

POLICY

All consumer complaints must be identified, documented, reported and managed in accordance with the relevant Implementation Standard.

- Queensland Health recognises that consumer feedback, both positive and negative, is essential in order to provide quality health care services that meet consumer and community needs.
- Queensland Health affirms and supports the right of health care consumers to provide feedback and to have complaints heard and acted upon.
- Queensland Health acknowledges the needs of particular consumer groups in the complaints management process¹.
- Queensland Health will treat all complainants with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality. Complainants will not be subjected to any prejudicial treatment as a result of making a complaint about standards of care or service. Consumer complaints will not be documented on patient health care records.

Definition

A consumer complaint is *any expression of dissatisfaction or concern, by or on behalf of a consumer or group of consumers regarding the provision of a health service and health care*. A complaint can be made verbally or in writing. It can be made by a patient, their advocate², carer or family member; groups of consumers or consumer organisations; or members of the community.

¹ Special needs consumer groups may include (but are not exclusive to) the following: people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability, children and young people, consumers with a mental illness, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the aged.

² A staff member may act as a patient advocate where that patient is aware of and has agreed to the advocacy role.

Complaints management incorporates all elements of the complaints process from the initial lodgement of a complaint through to finalisation of the matter.

This policy does not apply to

- staff complaints
- public health complaints made by consumers to Queensland Health Branches that have a responsibility to investigate public health matters
- other aspects of consumer participation beyond complaints.

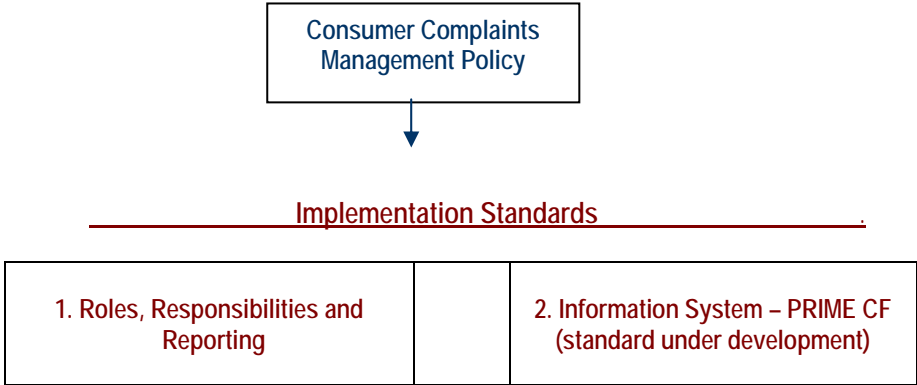
Principles

The following principles³ underpin the Queensland Health consumer complaints management process and will be reflected in consumer complaints management at all levels.

- Commitment to consumers and quality improvement
- Accessibility
- Responsiveness
- Effective assessment
- Appropriate resolution
- Privacy and open disclosure
- Gathering and using information
- Making improvements

Policy Structure

This diagram indicates the structure of the policy documents for Consumer Complaints Management.



³ Better Practice Guidelines on Complaints Management for Health Care Services, Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care, July 2004.

Implementation

The implementation of the complaints management process strives for consumer satisfaction in the handling of their complaints, and the provision of reliable and accurate information which is used to improve quality and safety in health care.

This Policy will be implemented according to the following:

Implementation Standard

1. **Roles, Responsibilities, and Reporting**
2. **Information System** – PRIME CF (Consumer Feedback)

Legislative or Other Authority

Australian Health Care Agreement 2003-2008

Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations. ISO 10002, 2004.

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (reports to Australian Health Ministers Conference)

Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006

Responsible Business Area

Policy Sponsor: Executive Director, Reform and Development Division

Policy Contact: Data Reporting and Analysis Centre, Reform and Development Division,
Email: QMSU@health.qld.gov.au

Policies and relevant Implementation Standards are to be used in conjunction with Procedures, Work Instructions, Forms and Related Documents.