
TCSA Policies & Procedures

Section 4: Programs & Services/ Integrated Services

Reference: 4.111

Policy Title: **Complaints about Programs & Services and Appeal of Decisions**

Policy Statement:

The TCSA recognizes the need to be accountable to the public. Community members have the right to express concerns about programs and services with the expectation of having a review and getting a response. In certain instances, people also have legal rights under Government of the NWT legislation to appeal decisions made by the TCSA to the appropriate Minister. Appeals regarding Tlicho Government sponsored programs and services delivered by the TCSA may be directed to the Grand Chief.

Purpose:

The TCSA is committed to providing safe, effective and quality programs and services to the members of the Tlicho communities. Appropriate review and response to complaints as well as monitoring trends with respect to the nature of complaints and then planning and implementing improvements is an integral part of our quality improvement program. This policy will assist the Agency to improve our services by learning from the experiences of our students and their parents, clients and patients. Complaints and concerns about programs and services assist us in identifying areas of care, service or education that must be monitored or improved. An analysis of these trends supports the Agency in developing strategies for resolving the problems and/ or misunderstandings at the root of many complaints.

Guiding principles for the review and response to concerns and complaints about TCSA programs and services include the following:

1. Every person affected by the decisions and policies of the Agency has a right to make a complaint, and to expect that there is a fair process to hear and resolve their complaints. Every person may also have a formal right of appeal to the appropriate Minister of the Government of the NWT as prescribed by existing legislation such as the Mental Health Act, Safety Act, Nursing Profession Act, Child and Family Services Act, Education Act etc;

2. Every person has the right to advocacy and support throughout the complaint process. Advocacy is recognized and supported by the TCSA as a means to support improved communication with individuals, and potentially lead to an informal and more timely resolution;

3. The complaint process will be client centered and will accommodate and be sensitive to the individual's age, gender, capacity, language ability and cultural background.

4. All TCSA staff are responsible for client satisfaction;

5. Resolution to complaints and concerns should be encouraged at the local level before proceeding to more formal stages in the process;

6. No administrative or systemic barriers must be allowed to interfere with the timely resolution of the complaint process, and no-one will be subject to reprisals as a result of initiating a complaint;

7. Staff and managers must recognize the need to re-examine significant decisions if community concerns are expressed, while being sensitive to the rights of the staff whose work may be under review;

Procedures:

1. Staff will attempt to resolve all simple complaints as soon as they are brought to their attention. Staff who cannot resolve the complaint or concern must refer the complaint/complainant to their immediate manager;

2. All managers are expected to treat complaints or concerns respectfully and seriously by reviewing the circumstances of the complaint, making a determination, and providing a response to the complainant;

3. All complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner. A review and response will be conducted as soon as possible and in any case take no longer to complete than 15 days from the date of the receipt of the complaint or concern;

4. Documentation of a complaint is kept in a secure location during the review and follow-up process and photocopies are kept to a minimum. Documentation of a complaint is NOT placed in a student or client file, or patient chart;

5. Any high risk concerns or complaints, or unresolved complaints or concerns which are likely to result in political or media involvement must be brought to the attention of the CEO as soon as possible;

6. Board members who learn of a complaint or a concern about TCSA programs and services are encouraged to refer the complainant to the appropriate local manager. If the complainant is unwilling, the Board member should refer the complaint or concern to the Chief Executive Officer;

7. The TCSA will provide the services of a bilingual staff member who will be available to assist individuals who require advocacy and support through the complaint process. This service will be advertised in all facilities and through the media on a regular basis;

8. The release of any personal information related to the investigation of a complaint will be subject to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act;

9. Summaries of complaints will be used for the development and implementation of a TCSA quality assurance program.

Authorities: TCSA Act 13; Education Act, 117; Hospital Insurance & Health and Social Services Administration Act, 13(1); Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Approval Dates: May 20th, 2009.
