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

A joint project between the
Health Consumers' Council WA Inc.
&
WA Country Health Service
Appendix 6

Introduction

The Health Consumers’ Council (HCC) 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 (DHAC) meetings. The DHAC should receive de-identified information about the compliments and complaints that the health service has received at each meeting. Reports that contain a lot of information can be confusing however, and a simple audit tool has been developed so that DHACs can receive a summarized report of compliments and complaints. The audit tool can be adopted by health services to provide a concise overview of the current situation at the health service in regard to compliments and complaints.

A consistent format is recommended.

While there is a tendency to view complaints as negative events they nevertheless provide an opportunity for significantly improving the quality and safety of health services.

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.

To use compliments and complaints to improve a service and the safety of that service is to potentially save a life and provide a better health experience for consumers and carers.

The Health Consumers’ Council welcomes feedback about the Audit Tool. If you experience any difficulty in using the tool please don’t hesitate to contact the HCC Consumer Participation Project Officer by telephone on 1800 620 780 (toll free for country callers) or email kathiem@hconc.org.au
Audit Of Compliments & 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Of Complaint</th>
<th>Number Received</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Access: Refers to availability of services in terms of location, waiting times and other constraints that limit the service</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Communication: Refers to the quality and quantity of information provided about treatment, risks and outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Decision Making: Refers to the consultation with the patient/client in the decision making process</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Quality of Clinical Care: Refers to assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation &amp; evaluation of clinical care by any health professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Costs: Refers to issues about costs and fee structures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Rights, Respect &amp; Dignity: Refers to the patient/client’s legislated human and health care rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Grievances: Refers to the individual’s rights to have timely and fair management of complaint</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Corporate Services: Corporate issues resulting in complaint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Professional Conduct: Refers to alleged unethical and alleged illegal practices</td>
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</tbody>
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Categories of complaints are as described in Western Australian Complaint Management Policy Information Series No 6.2
Appendix 6

COMPLAINT CATEGORIZATION LIST

ACCESS
1. Refers to availability of services in terms of location, waiting times and other constraints that limit the service
   Delay in admission or treatment
   Waiting list delay
   Non-attendance
   Inadequate resources/lack of service
   Refusal to provide services
   Failure to provide advice about transport options when necessary
   Physical access/entry
   1.8 Parking issues

COMMUNICATION
2. Refers to the quality and quantity of information provided about treatment, risks and outcomes
   Inadequate information about diagnostic testing, treatment procedures & risks
   Inadequate information on services available
   Misinformation or failure in communication
   Inadequate or inaccurate records
   Inadequate communication
   Inappropriate verbal/non verbal communication
   Failure to listen to patient/client/carer/family

DECISION MAKING
3. Refers to the consultation with the patient/client in the decision making process
   Failure to consult patient/client
   Public/private choice
   Consent not informed
   Consent not obtained
   Consent invalid

QUALITY OF CLINICAL CARE
4. Refers to assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation of clinical care by any health professional
   Inadequate assessment
   Inadequate treatment/therapy
   Poor co-ordination of treatment
   Failure to provide safe environment
   Pain issues
   Medication issues
   Post surgery complications
   Post procedure complications
   Inadequate infection control
   Patient’s/client’s test results not followed up
   Discharge or transfer arrangements
   Refusal to refer or assist to obtain a second opinion

COSTS
5. Refers to issues costs and fee structures
Appendix 6

Inadequate information about costs
Unsatisfactory billing practice
Amount charged
Over-servicing
Private health insurance
Lost property
Responsibility for costs and resourcing

RIGHTS, RESPECT AND DIGNITY
6 Refers to the patient’s/client’s legislated human and health care rights
Patient/client rights
Inconsiderate service/lack of courtesy
Absence of caring
Failure to ensure privacy
Breach of confidentiality
Discrimination
Failure to comply with the Mental Health Act (1996)
Translating and interpreting service problems
Certificate or report problem
Barriers to accessing personal health records

GRIEVANCES
7 Refers to the individual’s rights to have timely and fair management of complaint
Response to a complaint
Reprisal following a complaint

CORPORATE SERVICES
8 Corporate issues resulting in complaint
Administrative actions of a health service
Catering
Physical surroundings/environment
Security
Cleaning – inadequate provision and maintenance of a clean environment
Fraud/illegal practice of financial nature

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
9 Refers to alleged unethical and alleged illegal practices
Inaccuracy of records
Illegal practices – any illegal practices eg abortion, sterilization or euthanasia
Physical or mental impairment of health professional
Sexual impropriety – behaviour that is sexually demeaning to a patient/client including comments and gestures
Sexual misconduct
Aggression/assault
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.