

## COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCE TIME FRAMES

All complaints and grievances received by the Ministry of Health will be assessed based on the nature and scope of the complaint/grievance. Each case will go through the set complaint and grievance process and responsible MOH staff will determine the appropriate method for processing.

MOH responsible staff will notify the complainant/grievant through mail/email/phone of the complaint/grievance status.

Most cases can be resolved quickly through immediate advocacy. In these situations, MOH acts a mediator between parties. All parties must be willing to participate in this process. Every effort is made to complete issues of immediate advocacy within set time.

More serious cases may be required to go through a quality care review. In these situations, medical records are requested, staff and patients may be interviewed, and other provider records may be reviewed. The patient's written consent may be required.

Every effort is made to complete all investigations within 2-3 months. If the case is not closed within this period, all parties will be advised of the delay and when it is expected to conclude.

The patient or his/her representative will be advised of whom to contact if not satisfied with the MOH's processing of the grievance.

A follow up contact may be made to you at the conclusion of the investigation. This contact is to determine your level of satisfaction with the grievance process. Your participation is voluntary.

## PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### PATIENT RIGHTS

Patient has the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity and as a unique individual
- Privacy and confidentiality in aspects of treatment and medical records
- Access all information on aspects of services and treatment provided
- Access or refuse any treatment or medications
- Complain about health service or treatment provided
- Receive medical report upon request

### PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Patient is responsible to:

- participate as part of healthcare team in planning his/her care
- treat other patients and staff as s/he would like to be treated with respect
- comply with the rules of the hospital/clinic
- provide complete and accurate information to service provider to receive best care
- comply with appointments or give notice as early as possible if unable to attend



GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

## PATIENTS' COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCE CHARTER



Ministry of Health

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry of Health is mandated under the Ministry of Health Act 2006, Schedule 2 part 1.4 to establish and provide for quality control and consumer complaint system for the provision of health services in accordance with any applicable law. This include ensuring patients are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

The Ministry of Health as leading agency for Samoa's health sector believes that every patient should receive quality healthcare. The Ministry can help any patient with concerns about their health care. If you have a concern, complaint/grievance, the Ministry of Health is available at any time to investigate your complaint/grievance.

The purpose of this Patients' Complaints & Grievance Policy is to:

- help patients feel comfortable taking their concerns to an appropriate authority without fear of mistreatment or retaliation; and
- help patients through the grievance process.
- keep communications open between patients and hospitals staff on issues, problems or grievances related to services provided by healthcare service providers;
- ensure complaints/grievances are solved as quickly as possible

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE POLICY:

Expected outcomes of this policy include:

- improve delivery of effective, efficient, safe and quality healthcare services
- patients' health, rights and safety are well protected
- patients' complaints/grievances are reviewed and investigated, tracked, trended and resolved to the best extent possible.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES?

**What do I do if I have a concern/complaint/grievance regarding the health service I receive?**

Firstly, try to speak with the hospital manager about your concern. They should have the internal grievance procedure in place. You are encouraged to allow the hospital to address the issue first.

However, this is not a requirement. The Ministry of Health as leading agency for the Health Sector will become involved if:

- you are not comfortable with the way the hospital handle your concerns/complaints/grievances
- you believe your concerns/complaints/grievances were not resolved at the hospital level

### Will the hospital/clinic know that I have filed a complaint/grievance?

Anonymous grievances can be processed. However, it is more difficult to gather information if the grievance is anonymous. You will be informed if that is the case. If the complaint/grievance is one that calls for immediate advocacy, the Ministry of Health requires that we must disclose your identity, but we will not proceed without your consent.

### Can someone else represent me?

You may appoint a representative or someone to help explain the problem. In this case, you may choose anyone you wish. If you have a representative, the Ministry of Health must have your authorization for this person to process the grievance on your behalf.

If you are a child, your parents or legal guardians can represent you.

### What if the issue is life-threatening?

When appropriate, Ministry of Health appoints a committee to address the issues raised in a grievance. Reviewers may include representatives of health professional councils, legal advisor and MOH relevant staff. Ministry of Health assures that conflict-of-interest procedures are followed at all times.

### How do I contact the Ministry of Health?

The Ministry of Health will investigate grievances received by phone, email, or in writing. A Patient Complaint/Grievance Form has been developed as is available from the Ministry of Health headquarters. It would be helpful to use this form. The form ensures that all the information the Ministry needs to process the grievance is provided. Having all the needed information will speed up the process.

Ministry of Health Headquarters  
Moto'otua, APIA  
Phone No.: 68100  
Email: [ceo@health.gov.ws](mailto:ceo@health.gov.ws)  
Website: <http://www.health.gov.ws>