

## COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

We deal with complaints about healthcare and the handling of health information in Victoria.

Our complaints resolution process is free, impartial and voluntary. It can also be an alternative to legal proceedings, though neither party needs a lawyer to participate.

We expect complaints to be raised with the health service provider first before we accept them. This is often the quickest and easiest way to resolve an issue. Some people may have a good reason why they cannot do this, or have tried this but it did not resolve the issue.

Once we decide to deal with a complaint we will begin by helping both parties clarify the unresolved issues and possible outcomes. We then assist them to negotiate, where possible, a satisfactory outcome. We are impartial throughout this process and will not make judgements, or decisions, in favour of the complainant or the provider.

Some complaints may be resolved quickly with a couple of phone calls or emails and we always prefer the least formal action that is appropriate. However, sometimes complex complaints require more formal actions, including;

- Requesting written explanations.
- Arranging and facilitating meetings between the parties.
- Seeking medical records.
- Facilitating negotiations between the parties.
- Obtaining independent expert opinions.
- Moving the complaint into conciliation.

Our process will not resolve all complaints and sometimes agreement cannot be reached. As participation is voluntary, either party can withdraw at any time. While we cannot force participation, in some cases we may investigate a health service provider that refuses to participate if we believe it is necessary.

## WHAT WE BRING TO COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

When you work with us to resolve a complaint you can expect us to be:

- Respectful in dealing with everyone involved.
- Available to talk about the complaint and the resolution process.
- Providing you regular updates.
- Fair and impartial.
- Helpful by providing possible solutions, outcomes and other perspectives.

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING TO COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION**

Complaint resolution requires good faith from all parties. We expect you to be:

- Respectful in dealing with everyone.
- Actively involved.
- Considerate of other's viewpoints.
- Considerate of alternative resolution options.
- Available to talk about the complaint and the complaint resolution process.
- In some cases, willing to compromise.

## **OUTCOMES**

Complaint resolution is focused on achieving outcomes to the satisfaction of all parties involved. These outcomes may include:

- Apologies.
- Explanations and information in writing, or in a meeting.
- Reimbursement, refunds or compensation.
- Changes to policies and procedures.
- Access to services.
- Access to or correction of health records.
- Any other undertaking agreed to by the complainant or provider.

For more information on complaint resolution, visit [hcc.vic.gov.au](http://hcc.vic.gov.au) or call **1300 582 113** between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.