

# Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services

## Policies and Procedures

**Policy Name: Client Grievance**

**Date Effective: April 2012**

**Department: All**

**Date Revised: July 2012**

### **Policy:**

GFCFS's policy is to provide clients a method to express dissatisfaction with services provided by GFCFS. The grievance procedure is a problem-solving tool where every attempt is made to resolve issues at the lowest level of authority, with the least amount of program interruption. A grievance is a written complaint alleging that Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services:

1. Failed to follow it's policies and/or procedures; or
2. Administered its policies and/or procedures in a discriminatory (unequal) fashion\*; or
3. Administered its policies and/or procedures in an arbitrary and capricious (unfair) fashion; or
4. Failed to deliver services in a manner satisfactory to the client.

\* GFCFS is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services based on race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Situations may arise that are not covered by existing policies and procedures that could merit action; these situations would be addressed by the Executive Director, and subsequently by the development of new policies and procedures that apply to that type of situation.

All formal and informal complaints that involve volunteers should be addressed with a staff member and not with the volunteer.

A copy of this policy and procedure is located on our website at [www.GoochlandFreeClinicAndFamilyServices.org](http://www.GoochlandFreeClinicAndFamilyServices.org) and will be provided to any client upon request.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before a grievance can be filed, discussion must take place between the person(s) with the complaint and the GFCFS staff member involved.
2. Failing resolution at that level, the person with the complaint must attempt to resolve the issue by discussing the complaint with supervisor of the staff involved. The supervisor will document the discussion and provide a copy of this procedure to the complainant. If a Title IV complaint is made to a supervisor, it will reported to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation as required.
3. If the issue is not resolved through conversation, the person with the complaint may submit a written complaint to the appropriate Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will respond in writing to the complaint within a timely manner. If a meeting with the complainant is held, the Program Coordinator and another GFCFS staff person must attend the meeting. All actions and decisions will be documented.
4. If the issue is not resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the person with the complaint may submit a written complaint to Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services' Executive Director. The Executive Director will respond either by holding a meeting with all parties' involved or taking appropriate

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action to resolve the issue within a timely manner. If a meeting with the person with the complaint is held, the Executive Director and another GFCFS staff person must attend the meeting.

All decisions will be documented.

5. If the issue is not resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the person with the complaint may submit a written complaint to Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services' Board of Directors President. The President will respond either by holding a meeting with all parties' involved or taking appropriate action to resolve the issue. The President has final authority in resolving the complaint. All decisions will be documented.
6. The following principles will be used for the written grievance procedure:
  - a. Client submits information in writing with the grievance signed and dated;
  - b. No anonymous complaints will be accepted or considered;
  - c. Witnesses may be interviewed at the discretion of the parties involved;
  - d. Additional written information and supporting the complaint may be submitted;
  - e. Statements made in all meetings, as well as correspondence between the complainant and GFCFS, are kept confidential, unless the complainant discusses the complaint with persons other than GFCFS staff. In such a case, staff may discuss the issue with the same persons.
  - f. Mediators or other neutral parties may be asked to assist in resolving grievances anytime after Operational Procedure #4, above.
  - g. Grievances alleging criminal acts or immediate danger are to be dealt with immediately by program officials and legal authorities as appropriate.
7. Once a person has taken a grievance through all the steps, the same grievance may not be re-alleged.