

Doctors @ Wellington Point

Complaints Procedure

Patients and others have the opportunity to register their complaints either verbally to staff, writing a letter or an email to the Site Manager, Dawn Goldsmith at pm@drsawp.com.au
Patients should feel free to complain anonymously if desired.

All staff should be prepared to address complaints as they arise.
When receiving complaints staff should keep in mind the following in order to minimise further patient anxiety and hostility, possible leading to litigation:

- handle all complaints seriously, no matter how trivial they may seem.
- verbal complaints made in person should be addressed in a private area of the practice where possible.
- use tactful language when responding to complaints.
- don't blame other staff. Patients may not have all the facts or may distort them.
- address the patient's expectations regarding how they want the matter resolved.
- assure the patient that their complaint will be investigated, and the matter not overlooked.
- offer the patients the opportunity to complete a formal complaint form. (They may accept or decline).
- document or log all complaints and other relevant information and place this in the complaint folder so the designated complaints staff member is informed of the complaint. (even if you believe the matter has been resolved).
- alert the doctor or relevant clinical staff about disgruntled or hostile patients so he/she can diffuse the situation immediately.
- always inform the designated complaints officer if you become aware of any significant statements made by the patient or significant change in patient attitude. Often patients will tell staff when they are reluctant to tell the doctor.

The practice has identified a staff member to be the team leader responsible for feedback collection and analysis and handling complaints. This is Dawn Goldsmith. This person coordinates the investigation and resolution of complaints.

- acknowledge the patients right to complain.
- use the Acknowledgment of Complaint letter provided and respond to complaints in writing within 2 working days.
- telephone the patient to let him/her know that you are working on the problem.

- respond to all complaints promptly in an open and constructive manner including an explanation and if appropriate an apology.
- work with the patient to resolve the complaint and communicate the outcome with the patient including any changes made as a result of the complaint.
- if the complaint is of a medical nature always refer it to a doctor. Refer procedure section 8 -" Management of potential medical defence claims".
- where a complaint is made against a staff member provide them with an opportunity to discuss the details in a private setting.
- as a routine, contact the practices insurer when there is a complaint about a member of the clinical team in order to seek advice on resolving the complaint before any action is taken.
- ensure the complaint does not adversely affect the patients care.
- record the complaint, investigation, and actions, with a copy placed in the patient's medical record if related to patient care and the details also retained in the complaints file.
- ensure where appropriate complaints are reviewed at staff meetings. Analyse trends and discuss the methods of resolution. Other types of patient feedback - i.e. surveys, suggestion box is also reviewed at staff meetings.
- a record of improvement made in response to patient feedback or complaints is maintained as evidence of quality assurance activity.
- where appropriate inform the patient/s about practice improvements made as a result of their input.

If the matter cannot be resolved advise the patient about how to contact the Office of the Health Ombudsman.

Office of the Health Ombudsman
13 OHO (133 646)
PO Box 13281
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4003

Members of the public may make a notification to Australian Health practitioner regulation agency (AHPRA) <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/> (AHPRA) about the [conduct, health or performance](#) of a practitioner or the [health](#) of a student. Practitioners, employers and education providers are all mandated by law to report [notifiable conduct](#) relating to a registered practitioner or student to AHPRA.