	Wellmore, Inc. 141 East Main Street Waterbury, CT
Policy and Procedure: Client Grievance	
Issues by: Gary Steck, Chief Executive Officer	
Applicable Programs: All	Content Area: Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual
Date Issued: 11/17/99	Revision Dates: 4/15/2009; 11/1/11; 6/20/12; 12/1/14; 2/24/17
Related Protocol or Plans: Clients Rights and Responsibilities	
Accreditation Standards: RI.01.07.03	
Applicable Laws/Regulations: Child Guidance License Regulation Section 17a-20-34	
Policy Number: RI-C01	Number of Pages 5

PURPOSE: To present and explain the client and stakeholder's right to file a complaint regarding persons or processes based upon their experiences at Wellmore.


POLICY: Wellmore attempts to provide clients with high quality service and welcomes feedback and concerns from clients and stakeholders to improve the quality of our service. If a client or stakeholder has a concern s/he will be allowed to express their concerns and seek resolution to that issue. As such, we provide a formal means of expressing and resolving a complaint and, when necessary, offer a process for appeal. Grievances may be submitted at any time, regardless of when the incident is alleged to have occurred.

DEFINITIONS:

Complaint: An expression of verbal dissatisfaction with any condition related to their experience with Wellmore services or staff. This can include, but is not limited to, services, manner of treatment, outcomes, or experiences. A complaint is resolved via communications between the client/guardian, direct care and/or supervisory staff. This is documented in a Wellmore Incident Accident Report.

Grievance: An expression of verbal or written dissatisfaction with any condition related to their experience with Wellmore services or staff. This can include, but is not limited to, services, manner of treatment, outcomes, or experiences. A grievance situation is one that cannot be resolved at the complaint level, is document and submitted in writing and is addressed via the client grievance process described herein.

Clients' Rights Officer: The individual within the organization who is available to answer your questions, help you resolve the issue or assist you in filing a formal grievance.

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PROCEDURE:


These provisions are confined to the use of agency channels and personnel. The decision of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is final except in cases where public funds may be supporting the service a client is complaining about. In such cases, an appeal may be made to the director of the appropriate public agency.

A. General Information and Access to the Policy and Procedure

- 1) All clients and/or legal guardians (for child clients or adult clients under legal guardianship) will be presented with the Wellmore Client Grievance Policy and Procedure at admission. The client/guardian may ask questions regarding the policy or procedures and receive clarification as required by the presenting staff.
- 2) The client and/or her/his guardian will sign the Wellmore Consent form which indicates that he/she reviewed the policy and had the opportunity to discuss its content. This will appear electronically in the client's case record.
- 3) The client and/or her/his guardian will be provided a copy of the policy (in English or Spanish) upon request.
- 4) A synopsis of the Wellmore Client Grievance Policy and Procedure will be posted in English and Spanish at each Wellmore site.
- 5) Client Grievance forms will be available in English and Spanish at each Wellmore site upon request. If submitted, these will be scanned into the client record.
- 6) A client may file a complaint or submit a formal grievance regarding an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment without submitting it to or it being referred to the person who is the subject of such a complaint or grievance.
- 7) A complaint or grievance regarding an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment may be submitted at any time, regardless of when the incident is alleged to have occurred.
- 8) There will be no retaliation to any person filing a grievance. Under no circumstances will the grievance filing have any effect on the client's eligibility to receive services. The clients will continue to be provided with quality, uninterrupted services throughout the grievance resolution process.

B. Complaint Resolution

- 1) The client/guardian should first discuss the grievance with his or her Wellmore service provider, or directly with the program manager.
- 2) If an agreement cannot be reached through this discussion the service provider should assist the client to proceed to the next step, which would be to contact the service provider's manager. If not one in the same, the manager will immediately notify the Director of the complaint.

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- 3) The manager of the program about which the complaint is received must follow up directly with the complainant **within 5 working days** of being notified
- 4) The manager must document the receipt of the complaint within 24 hours of its receipt, in the Wellmore Incident/Accident Report (IAR) database. If a mutually agreed upon resolution cannot be reached by the manager, this should be documented in the IAR and forward the complaint onto the Vice President for that division.

C. Emergency Grievance

- 1) In the case of a situation in which the client may be subject to a immanent, substantial risk of harm, an emergency grievance may be filed by way of a personal or phone contact made to the Clients Rights Officer or the division Vice President.
- 2) In case of such a grievance immediate action will be taken to ensure the safety of the client while the grievance process occurs and the Vice President will commence with the process in not longer than 48 hours of notification.

D. Grievance Process

- 1) If the issues cannot be resolved at the level of the manager then the client, parent/guardian, other family member or stakeholder has the right to begin a formal, grievance process.
- 2) Grievances can be filed with a Grievance Form, a letter or a phone call to the appropriate Vice President. Client advocacy services will be available in both English and Spanish by contacting the Clients' Rights Officer.
- 3) The client may complete a Grievance form independently or s/he may ask a Wellmore staff member, the Clients' Rights Officer or another adult to fill out the Grievance Form or letter on her/his behalf.
- 4) If the client chooses to send a letter, s/he will need to include his/her name, how to best contact her/him, the nature of the grievance, and his/her requested resolution. S/he may ask a Wellmore staff member, the Clients' Rights Officer or another or another adult to complete such a letter on her/his behalf. Letters are to be sent to the appropriate Vice President.
- 5) Alternately, the client may choose file a formal grievance by way of a phone call. In this case s/he must contact the Clients' Rights Officer and agree to have him/her complete a grievance form on her/his behalf.
- 6) A child client, who wishes to file a grievance without their parent or

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guardian's help, may ask an adult to complete a grievance form or letter. Older children may complete the grievance form independently.


- 7) Upon receipt of the grievance document, the Vice President will notify the program manager involved that a formal grievance has been filed.
- 8) The Vice President will send a letter or call the client **within five (5) working days** of the receipt of the written grievance to confirm that it has been received. This must be documented.
- 9) The Vice President complete all action on the grievance **within ten (10) working days** from the date (stamped) s/he received the grievance. This includes conducting all necessary interviews, review of documents and other actions as necessary and the written response to the client. Each will action will be documented.
- 10) The Vice President will prepare the written decision to the client that will include steps taken to investigate the grievance and proposed resolution. The written response will also include information about the client's right to appeal. The response will be rendered **within ten (10) working days** from the date the grievance was received (and date stamped) by Wellmore.

E. Appeal Process

- 1) A client may appeal the Vice President's decision and request additional consideration of his/her grievance from Wellmore's Chief ~~Clinical~~ Executive Officer (CEO).
- 2) The request for appeal must be in writing and post marked **within ten (10) working days** from the date of the previous decision letter. Clients may request that another individual of the client's choice complete the appeal letter on the client's behalf. The client may request an additional five (5) working days in which in which to submit the appeal. The request for this extension must be addressed to the CEO.
- 3) The CEO will follow the same process (C 7) through 10) as above).
- 4) The decision of the CEO is final except in cases where public funds may be supporting the service a client is complaining about. In such cases, an appeal may be made to that public agency.

F. Data Maintenance: Summary Reports of Client/Stakeholder Grievances

- 1) All documentation produced as part of the grievance process will be forwarded to the Director of Systems Operations, Inc. to be kept in a locked file.

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- 2) The program manager will prepare a summary of the grievance and its resolution that will be kept in the client record.
- 3) Summary reports of client and stakeholder grievances will be compiled quarterly by the Healthcare Data Analyst, forwarded to the Director of Systems Operations for ~~and~~ reviewed by the Wellmore Quality Council.
- 4) An annual summary will be brought to the ~~Quality~~ Performance Improvement Committee of the Board of Directors by the Director of Systems Operations.
- 5) These groups may make recommendations for further actions to improve service quality.