

Complaints Management Procedure

Effective: June 30, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA) has the authority under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to carry out its activities and govern Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Health Care Aides (HCAs)* in a manner that protects and serves the public interest. This document establishes a process for the management of all complaints received by the CLHA.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline the complaints management process so individuals involved can be confident that their complaints are being handled in a fair, objective, and transparent manner. This document is meant to be read alongside the *Complaints Management* policy.

PROCEDURE

The HPA creates the legislative authority for CLHA to receive and manage complaints about registrants. The authority to make various decisions on complaints is delegated to the CLHA's Complaints Director, Hearing Tribunal, Complaint Review Committee, Council, or a person/committee designated by the Council as set out in HPA section 65(1).

Complaint Management

The CLHA will ensure that all complaints are handled in a consistent, fair, objective, transparent, and timely manner. Complaints will be managed on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the individual circumstances and evidence provided.

Complaints must be submitted to the CLHA in writing, signed by an identifiable individual who becomes the **complainant**. Each complaint must be about a registrant or former registrant within two years of holding an active practice permit to trigger the initiation of the CLHA's complaint process. Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

* In this document, "registrants" refers to LPNs and HCAs and has the same meaning as "regulated member(s)" in the Health Professions Act.

The Complaints Director may delegate their authority and duties under the HPA to one or more persons, including but not limited to the Director of Professional Conduct and Complaints Officers of the CLHA.

The Complaint Director's pathways for handling complaints, subject to certain restrictions, is outlined by the HPA as follows:ⁱ

- encourage communication between the parties;
- attempt to resolve the complaint with consent of the parties;
- make a referral to an alternative complaint resolution process;ⁱⁱ
- request an expert to assess and provide a written report on the subject matter of the complaint;
- conduct or appoint an investigator to investigate the complaint;
- dismiss the complaint (e.g., if it is trivial/**vexatious** or has no/insufficient evidence);
- recommend an **interim condition** or **suspension** under section 65 of the HPA;
- make a direction (e.g., to submit to physical or mental examinations or direct the registrant to cease practice) under section 118 where there are grounds to believe there's an **incapacity**; and/or
- refer the matter to the Hearings Director for a hearing.

Requesting a Review or Appeal

The complainant can request a review of the dismissal decision to the Complaint Review Committee as per section 68 of the HPA.

The registrant or Complaints Director can appeal a decision of the Hearing Tribunal to a Panel of Council as per section 87 of the HPA and the CLHA's Bylaws.

CONCLUSION

This document establishes a process for the management of all complaints received by the CLHA. It outlines the CLHA's approach to complaint management and decision-making.

Documents are updated frequently. For the most current version and access to related documents and resources, please visit the Knowledge Hub on clha.com.

If after reading this document you have any questions about the complaint management process, please contact the Director of Professional Conduct at complaints@clha.com, or call 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).

DEFINITIONS

Complainant: the individual or entity that initiates a formal process to report concerns about a regulated health professional's conduct or competence.

Dismissal decision: the complaint is dismissed when the complaint is found trivial or vexatious or there is insufficient or no evidence of unprofessional conduct.

Incapacity: when an LPN suffers from a physical, mental, or emotional condition or disorder or an addiction to alcohol or drugs or other chemicals that impairs the ability to provide professional services in a safe and competent manner.

Interim condition: a temporary condition imposed on a practice permit pending the outcome of a complaint.

Suspension: a suspension imposed on a practice permit pending the outcome of a complaint.

Vexatious complaint: where a complaint is brought to harass other parties, advancing incomprehensible arguments and allegations or bringing proceedings for improper purposes, including having:

- no legal basis;
- having an intention to disrupt, pre-empt, or frustrate other litigation;
- and/or with an ulterior motive or to seek a collateral advantage.

REFERENCES

ⁱ Please see Section HPA section 50(2) for more detail and restrictions on the Complaint Director's power regarding complaint resolution.

ⁱⁱ Health Professions Act section 58(1)