

Take matters into your own hands with

DIRECT RESOLUTION

Information for CHIROPRACTORS



— COLLEGE OF —
CHIROPRACTORS
— OF ALBERTA —

What is Direct Resolution?

Direct Resolution is an informal complaint resolution process available to chiropractors and complainants. When a written complaint is received by the College of Chiropractors of Alberta (CCOA), the Complaints Director reviews the complaint and decides how best to proceed based on options outlined in the *Health Professions Act*.

One of those options is to encourage the complainant and the chiropractor to resolve the complaint between themselves, which we call Direct Resolution. The CCOA takes a step back and encourages the chiropractor to work directly with the complainant to resolve the matter. The Complaints Director is available to assist both parties through the process.

Benefits of Direct Resolution

- Resolution is timely.
- Participants report higher satisfaction compared to other resolution processes.
- Relationships between the parties are often preserved and improved.
- Efficiency— once both parties are satisfied, the process is complete and the file is closed. Compared to a full investigation, it is more cost effective for chiropractors and the CCOA.

When Direct Resolution works best

The CCOA encourages Direct Resolution for single-issue complaints where both parties involved have the right to share information freely about the complaint. In other words, there would be no breach of confidentiality.

Direct Resolution is most effective for complaints that can be resolved by the chiropractor and the complainant without a full CCOA investigation. These types of complaints often involve:

- Communication issues
- Misunderstandings about the care provided
- Access to clinical records
- Clinical reporting (including requests for insurance forms and medical legal requests)
- Issues with staff employed by the chiropractor
- Practice management issues
- Financial issues (billing)
- Intra and interdisciplinary working relationships (not involving clinical competency)

The Complaints Director will not recommend Direct Resolution when there are competency concerns, ethical concerns, possible boundary violations, allegations of disruptive or criminal behaviour.

Both the complainant and the chiropractor must be WILLING participants for Direct Resolution to be successful. If you are unsure or have questions about using this process, contact the CCOA Complaints Director at 780-420-0932.

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The Direct Resolution process, step by step

Step 1

Carefully review the complaint. Consider:

- What are the complainant's concerns?
- What are the complainant's expectations for an outcome?

Step 2

Consider how you are going to respond. The following may be helpful:

- Let the complainant know that you have heard and reflected upon their concerns.
- As appropriate, let the complainant know how their feedback has affected your practice.
- If you have made changes to your practice because of the complaint, share and explain those changes.
- Try not to be defensive in your response.

Know that help is available. Contact the Complaints Director or the Canadian Chiropractic Protective Association (CCPA) for advice on your response.

Step 3

You are now ready to contact the complainant to discuss the matter openly and honestly. You can:

- Call
- Meet in person
- Write a letter of explanation
- Write a letter of apology, where appropriate

Step 4

Notify the Complaints Director in writing of the outcome.

- When both parties have confirmed that they are satisfied with the outcome, the CCOA will close the complaint file.
- If the complaint is not resolved by this process, the Complaints Director will take next steps as set out in the *Health Professions Act*.
- The Complaints Director may ask for additional information to assist in determining next steps.

The Complaints Director is here to help you

The Complaints Director is available to work objectively with both parties to find a satisfactory outcome. The Complaints Director can:

- Explain the Direct Resolution process, including options available and possible outcomes.
- Listen and provide support as needed.
- Help alleviate some of the normal anxiety experienced with conflict resolution.
- Support both parties with their choices throughout the process.