

RESOLVE WITH CONSENT



Information for CHIROPRACTORS

What is Resolve with Consent?

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 Resolve with Consent, a complaint resolution process providing chiropractors, complainants and the CCOA an opportunity to resolve a complaint without a hearing. With this process, the chiropractor is provided a copy of the complaint letter and asked to respond. The Complaints Director reviews this response along with any other relevant information, and then works with the complainant and the chiropractor to resolve the matter.

Benefits of Resolve with Consent

- Participants are more engaged in resolving the issue(s) and report a higher satisfaction rate compared to more formal resolution processes.
- Resolution is timely. The CCOA is able to respond more quickly to the complaint, and the chiropractor is able to implement practice changes sooner.
- Efficiency – once both parties are satisfied, the process is complete and the file is closed. Subsequent reviews of the complaint are not part of this process.
- Compared to a full investigation and hearing, it is more cost effective for chiropractors and the CCOA.

When Resolve with Consent works best

The CCOA encourages Resolve with Consent for complaints that are straightforward and resolvable. With this process, the complainant's expectation is resolution, not discipline. These complaints often involve:

- Communication issues
- Misunderstandings about care provided
- Consent issues
- Clinical outcome and expectation issues
- Practice management concerns
- Intra and interdisciplinary working relationships (not involving clinical competency)

Typically, the CCOA and the complainant need the chiropractor to provide further explanation about the care provided. In some cases, we will also ask a chiropractor to make a change to his or her practice. With this process, both the complainant and the chiropractor involved must agree to participate, and agree the issues identified can be resolved without formal discipline. A formal resolution contract may be required by the Complaints Director.

The Complaints Director may not recommend Resolve with Consent when there are competency concerns, ethical concerns, possible boundary violations, or allegations of disruptive or criminal behaviour.

Both the chiropractor and the complainant must agree to be participants for Resolve with Consent to be successful. If you are unsure or have questions about this process, contact the Complaints Director at 780-420-0932.

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The Resolve with Consent process, step by step

Step 1 The Complaints Director carefully reviews the written complaint, considering:

- What are the complainant's concerns?
- Is the complaint straightforward?
- What are the complainant's expectations for an outcome?
- Are the issues resolvable through explanation, a practice change, remediation or other agreed upon sanctions?

Step 2 The Complaints Director will notify you of the complaint and ask for a written response.

Your response should:

- Describe in general terms the circumstances involved.
- Specifically address all the issues identified in the complaint.
- Explain the reasons for your actions and opinions expressed, and outline any extenuating factors.
- Include a copy of all requested items listed in the Complaints Director's letter, including a copy of the patient file.

Ensure you respond by the date identified in your letter from the Complaints Director. If you anticipate a delay in responding, notify the Complaints Director as soon as possible.

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

Step 3 The Complaints Director reviews all of the information and contacts the chiropractor and the complainant.

- The Complaints Director works with the complainant and the chiropractor to resolve the issue(s). This may include explanations, apology and/or agreement to practice improvements, remediation or other agreed upon sanctions.
- When all parties are satisfied with the outcome, the Complaints Director will close the complaint file.
- If a satisfactory outcome cannot be reached, the Complaints Director will take next steps as set out in the *Health Professions Act*.