

Take matters into your own hands with

# DIRECT RESOLVE



A new opportunity to resolve complaints

## WHAT IS DIRECT RESOLVE?

Direct Resolve is an informal complaint resolution process available to physicians and complainants. When a written complaint is submitted, the College's Complaints Director reviews the complaint and decides how to proceed based on options outlined in the Health Professions Act.

One of those options is Direct Resolve. With this process, the College takes a step back and encourages the physician to work directly with the complainant to resolve the matter. A Resolution Advisor is available to assist both parties throughout the process.

## BENEFITS OF DIRECT RESOLVE

- Participants report a higher satisfaction rate compared to other resolution processes.
- Relationships between the parties are often preserved and improved.
- Resolution is timely (our goal is resolution in 30 days).
- Efficient - once both parties are satisfied, the process is finished and the file is closed. Subsequent reviews are not part of this process.
- It is more cost effective than a full investigation for physicians and the College.

**Over 90% of Direct Resolve participants successfully resolve the complaint.**

## WHEN DIRECT RESOLVE WORKS BEST

The College encourages Direct Resolve for single-issue complaints where both parties involved have the right to share information freely about the complaint – that is, there would be no breach of confidentiality.

Direct Resolve is most effective for complaints that can be resolved by the physician and the complainant without a full College investigation. These often surround:

- Communication issues
- Misunderstandings of care provided
- Access to medical records
- Medical reporting (including requests for insurance forms and medical legal requests)
- Issues with staff employed by the physician
- Practice management (including the referral process and booking tests)
- Financial issues (including billing for uninsured services)
- Intra and interdisciplinary working relationships (not involving clinical competency).

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

**Both the physician and the complainant must be willing participants for Direct Resolve to be successful. Physicians who are unsure or have questions about using Direct Resolve should contact a Resolution Advisor.**

## **DIRECT RESOLVE: 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 College's Resolution Advisor or the Canadian Medical Protective Association 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, or
- Write a letter of apology, when appropriate.

### **Step 4** Notify the Resolution Advisor of the outcome.

- When both parties are satisfied with the outcome, the College will close the complaint file.
- If the complaint is not resolved by this process, it will be referred back to the College's Complaints Director for further action.
- The Resolution Advisor may ask for additional information to assist the Complaints Director in determining the next steps.

## **RESOLUTION ADVISORS ARE HERE TO HELP YOU!**

A Resolution Advisor is available to work objectively with both parties to find a satisfactory outcome. A Resolution Advisor can:

- Explain the Direct Resolve 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.

**Your Resolution Advisor is Dawn Sunde.**

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