
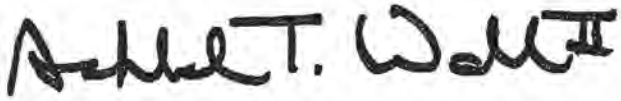


# RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

	<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b> 18.11-2 DOC	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> 06/23/08	<b>PAGE 1 OF 3</b>
	<b>SUPERCEDES:</b> 18.11-1 DOC	<b>DIRECTOR:</b> <span style="float: right;">Please use BLUE ink.</span> 	
<b>SECTION:</b> HEALTH CARE		<b>SUBJECT:</b> INMATE COMPLAINTS RELATIVE TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES	
<b>AUTHORITY:</b> Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL) § 42-56-10 (22), Powers of the director			
<b>REFERENCES:</b> NCCHC standards J-A- and P-A-11 (important) Grievance Mechanism for Health Complaints; ACA standard 4-4344 (mandatory) Unimpeded Access to Care; policy # 13.10-1 DOC, Inmate Grievance Procedure			
<b>INMATE / PUBLIC ACCESS?</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	
<b>AVAILABLE IN SPANISH?</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	

**I. PURPOSE:**

To establish a mechanism to address Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) inmates' complaints about Health Care Services in a timely manner.

**II. POLICY:**

- A. Consistent with RIDOC's Inmate Grievance Procedure policy, health care is not a "grievable" area of institutional life, except as pertains to the interpretation and/or application of RIDOC and/or facility-specific rules and procedures.
- B. However, RIDOC provides a mechanism to allow inmates to submit complaints relative to Health Care Services.
- C. Each inmate complaint is addressed in a timely manner.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. Legitimate inmate complaints relative to RIDOC's Health Care Services program should be resolved informally and at the lowest level of the chain of command whenever possible.

1. Inmates are therefore encouraged to seek relief from the Health Care Services staff in their facilities (nurses, physicians, etc.).

In some cases, submission of a second sick call medical request may suffice.

2. In those instances when complaints cannot be resolved on an informal or facility level, inmates should write to the Associate Director of Health Care Services (Corrections) regarding non-medical issues. For complaints regarding specific medical issues, inmates should write to the Medical Program Director.
3. If the Associate Director of Health Care Services (Corrections) does not resolve a complaint to the inmate's satisfaction, he/she may appeal to the Medical Program Director.

B. Any staff member who receives an inmate complaint relative to Health Care Services may:

1. Consult Health Care Services staff in order to investigate the complaint;
2. Respond to the inmate, in writing, within a reasonable time.
3. Forward copies of the inmate's complaint and written response to the Associate Director of Health Care Services (Corrections).

The Associate Director of Health Care Services (Corrections) reviews all such correspondence and reports results to the Medical Program Director on a regular basis. The Associate Director Health Care Services (Corrections) may forward an inmate's complaint directly to the Medical Program Director if the complaint concerns a clinical issue. (This documentation and review process is essential to a comprehensive quality control effort.)

C. Abuse of the Complaint Process. "Abuse" is defined as:

1. The filing of repetitive complaints addressing the same issue where sufficient time for response has not elapsed or where a valid response has been provided;
2. The filing of an excessive number of complaints;
3. The appeal of a complaint settled in the inmate's favor at a lower level;
4. The filing of harassing complaints; or
5. The intentional filing of emergency complaints which are not emergencies.

Health Care Services administration consider incidents in which inmates appear to be abusing the complaint process on a case-by-case basis.