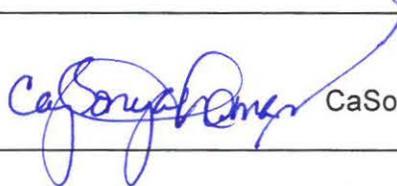


**San Bernardino County
Department of Behavioral Health**

Patients' Rights Outpatient Grievance Process

Effective Date 02/11/1992
Revision Date 05/13/2016


CaSonya Thomas, Director

Purpose To provide a process by which outpatient clients of Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) may initiate a grievance if they believe their patient's rights (see [Patient's Right Policy](#)) have been violated.

The Patients' Rights Office, upon receipt of a grievance, investigates alleged patient's rights violations from or concerning recipients of outpatient mental health services rendered by providers of the San Bernardino County Mental Health Plan.

Filing a Grievance A grievance may be made by a client via face-to-face report, mail or phone. Clients may complete [Patients' Rights Grievance Form – \(Spanish\)](#) and [Authorization to Release Protected Health Information – \(Spanish\)](#). These forms are available in both English and Spanish. Once a grievance has been received and screened, Patients' Rights will:

- Contact the client via phone and/or
 - Mail acknowledgement letter and Releases of Protected Health Information (PHI) to be completed and returned by the client to the Patients' Rights Office.
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Customer Service If the grievance does not identify a patient's' rights issue but does express dissatisfaction with outpatient services, it will be referred to the Access Unit for processing and client(s) will be advised accordingly.

Authorized Representative In most cases, Patients' Rights will not open a grievance based on third party reports. Upon initiation of a grievance, the client may assign an Authorized Representative for the remainder of the grievance process.

Grievance Investigation Patients' Rights will investigate the grievance and make every effort to keep the client informed of progress during the course of the investigation.

Grievance Resolution Patients' Rights will inform clients at the conclusion of the investigation verbally and/or in writing.

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San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health

Patients' Rights Outpatient Grievance Process, Continued

Timeframe Patients' Rights attempts to resolve grievances within 60 days.

Unsatisfactory Resolution If a client is unsatisfied with the resolution of the grievance, he/she has the right to appeal to the next level, in ascending order:

- Chief Patients' Rights Advocate
- DBH Director
- California Office of Patients' Rights

References California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Sections 863.2 and 864
California Welfare & Institutions Code, Sections 5520, 5522, 5325 and 5325.1

Related Documents DBH Standard Practice Manual:

- COM0946: [Client Grievance Policy](#)
- COM0935: [Patient's Right Policy](#)
- COM0935-1: [Patients' Rights Inpatient Grievance Process](#)
- QM6007: [NOAs Issued by the MHP Policy](#)
- QM6029: [Beneficiary Grievance and Appeal Policy](#)
- QM6029-1: [Beneficiary Grievance and Appeal Procedure](#)
