

Quality Improvement Process (Complaints, Appeals, and Suggestions)

Purpose

The law states that every Ministry of Health funded agency must have a complaint and appeal process in place. Helping Hands must provide you with a written copy of their complaint process (“Quality Improvement”) if you are receiving services. This form is also available as an attachment in your enrollment package, when you come onto any services with Helping Hands. If you are not yet receiving services, and you want to make a complaint, appeal a decision and/or make a suggestion, you should ask for a copy of the Quality Improvement process or speak to the Quality Improvement Officer

The goal of Helping Hands is to provide you, our client, and/or your family member, with a consistently high level of quality service. Helping Hands considers this to be an evolving but uncompromising aspect of your care with us; services that evolve to meet your needs and to support your ‘Journey of Aging’ but never compromising your quality of care. To ensure your concerns are heard, Helping Hands has developed the Quality Improvement Program (QIP). Quality Improvement is a formal approach to the analysis of performance and systematic efforts to improve it, continuously. Quality Improvement covers all departments, to streamline our services to provide the most efficient and effective care possible. Quality Improvement is designed to address concerns, appeals, suggestions and compliments from clients and/or caregivers towards our services and/or employees.

Helping Hands has a Quality Improvement Officer and a designated back-up to ensure calls are being answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The QIP Officer’s role is defined as:

1. being the main point of contact for clients to make “safe” appeals, complaints/suggestions and for improvement;
2. investigate concerns/issues;
3. make recommendations for the system improvement;
4. report back to original source, where applicable; and
5. track QIP trends.

At Helping Hands, you can contact our QIP Officer at **705-325-7861 ext. 600**.

Quality Improvement Program Process:

Contact and provide the QIP Officer with your concern/appeal/complaint/suggestion. They will ask you a few questions and record your information. The QIP Officer will return your call within 5 business days. By law, Helping Hands must make a decision regarding your complaint within 60 days. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you can appeal to the Health Services and Appeal Review Board (HSARB). However, complaints about quality of service or violations of the Bill of Rights are not complaints that can be appealed to the HSARB. These types of complaints should be directed or escalated to Helping Hands’ senior management, through the Director of Operations.

If you wish to initiate an appeal/complaint with Helping Hands, please follow the steps below:

1. Contact the QIP officer
2. If no contact is established within 2-3 business days, contact Chief Executive Officer or Director of Operations with a formal, written, request to appeal with the following steps:
 1. Provide written details of your appeal request, i.e. What is your understanding on why service was withdrawn;
 2. If you do not agree with the decision made regarding your complaint, request a face-to-face meeting with either the Chief Executive Officer or Director of Operations;
 3. Request a written explanation of the reasons for the Organization’s decision. If Helping Hands refuses to give you a copy of the complaint process or written reason for their decision, you may contact the HSARB.

There are different types of complaints which you are **unable** to take before the HSARB. These are:

- Complaints about the quality of service you receive, and
- Complaints that your rights under the Bill of Rights have been violated.

In these situations, you can submit your concerns to Helping Hands' senior management; the Director of Operations or the Chief Executive Officer. As the person making the complaint, it is your decision to take your complaint from one step to the next. You may include individuals from your support network (family, friends, advocate, and/or lawyer) during this process.

If you have a legal right to appeal, you can pursue an appeal when you have followed Helping Hands' Quality Improvement process and:

- You are still not satisfied with the Helping Hands decision, or
- You have not received a written decision from Helping Hands, and it is more than 60 days since you made your complaint.

To appeal to the HSARB, you must write to the HSARB and ask for a hearing. The HSARB will provide you with directions on how to do this and will send you a copy of the Rules that apply to the appeal process. Even after you start an appeal, you might settle your case and not have to have a hearing.

Contact Information:

Health Services and Appeal Review Board

9th Floor, 151 Bloor Street West

Toronto, Ontario

M5S 2T5

General Inquiry (416) 327-8512 or (416) 327-8524

You will be granted a hearing within 30 days after you begin your appeal to the HSARB, unless you agree otherwise. The HSARB must make a decision within 3 days after the hearing. They must give you that decision in writing, as soon as possible.

In their decision, the HSARB might:

- Agree with Helping Hands,
- Order Helping Hands to make a new decision based on HSARB directions, or
- Replace Helping Hands with a different organization.