

**CHOICES, Inc.**  
**Clinical Policies and Procedures**

**Grievance Procedure for People  
Served by CHOICES, Inc.**

**Policy Number #620-002-1**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Effective Date:**

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**Choices, Inc. Board President**

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**Policy:**

It is the policy of CHOICES, to encourage and support the right of people receiving services from CHOICES, Inc. to file a grievance when dissatisfied with those services.

It is the policy of CHOICES, to treat all people we serve with dignity, respect, individuality, and with consideration for their privacy. CHOICES, will provide all of its clients a practical course of action for addressing grievances in a respectful, timely, and impartial manner without fear of retribution, threat, harassment, intimidation, discontinuation, or withholding of services by any employee of CHOICES,.

**Procedures:**

1. People receiving services provided by CHOICES, their interested family members, and/or supporters are requested to thoroughly review the policies entitled **Rights and Responsibilities of People Served by CHOICES, Inc.** and **Grievance Procedure for People Served by CHOICES, Inc.** A form will be presented for signature to people establishing services with CHOICES, at the time of their entry into care, acknowledging receipt, and understanding these policies and procedures. This form will provide a provision for the waiving of confidentiality by the person filing the grievance. This form will be maintained as part of the person's clinical record.
2. People receiving services provided by CHOICES, are encouraged to discuss any suggestions, concerns or grievances they have about their care and treatment at CHOICES, with their primary provider and/or that person's supervisor to seek resolution.
3. People receiving services at CHOICES, or family members may designate a representative/advocate to assist them and be present during any/all grievance proceedings.
4. If the problem cannot be resolved as described in Procedure #2, the client should fill out the Client Grievance Form, seal it in an envelope, and give it to the receptionist at CHOICES' office. A notice will be issued acknowledging delivery of the grievance and noting the start date of the resolution process.
5. People served by CHOICES wishing to file grievances by email may do so by accessing the Suggestions/Concerns/Grievances link on CHOICES website @ [www.CHOICES-AK.org](http://www.CHOICES-AK.org). A notice will be emailed, and sent by postal mail if a physical address is provided, acknowledging receipt of the grievance and noting start date of the resolution process.

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6. People served by CHOICES wishing to file a grievance over the phone may do so by dialing (907) 333-4343 and informing the receptionist they wish to file a grievance telephonically. A notice will be mailed acknowledging receipt of the grievance and noting start date of the resolution process.
7. If requested, CHOICES will provide confidential support to clients who need assistance in the filing of a grievance or make referral to a mental health advocacy group that provides such assistance. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, support for individuals with physical or other limitations that need aid in transcribing their oral grievance.
8. CHOICES, will inform clients interested in filing grievances of advocacy resources including the Disability Law Center, the Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web, NAMI Anchorage and NAMI Alaska, or any other known resource.
9. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to review all client grievances and report findings in writing to the Executive Director and to the CHOICES Board of Directors.
10. The Project Manager will send a letter of acknowledgment within five (5) days of receiving the grievance, informing the client that the grievance has been received and that the prescribed internal review procedure is in process.
11. If CHOICES is unable to adequately initiate resolution of the grievance within five (5) days of receipt of the grievance a written notification shall be sent to the person filing the grievance explaining why and outlining the steps being taken to do so.
12. If CHOICES is unable to adequately initiate satisfactory resolution of the grievance within five (5) days of the receipt of the initial grievance the grievance shall be forwarded to the Executive Director for further investigation and mediation
13. If CHOICES is unable to initiate satisfactory resolution of the grievance, through investigation and mediation by the Executive Director, within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the grievance, the grievance shall be forwarded to the CHOICES Board of Directors for investigation and mediation.
14. All grievances received by CHOICES will be resolved to the satisfaction of the person filing the grievance within thirty (30) days after the receipt of the grievance. All grievances remaining unresolved at the end of thirty (30) days will be referred to the Division of Behavioral Health (1-800-465-4828 or 907-465-3370) for technical assistance within five (5) business days after the end of the initial thirty (30) day resolution period.
15. All grievances received by CHOICES involving allegations of physical or emotional

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abuse, neglect or physical restraint shall bypass the above process and be immediately referred to the CHOICES Board of Directors for investigation and resolution.

16. Individuals may file a complaint with CHOICES and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services if they believe their privacy rights have been violated.
17. CHOICES has a “no tolerance” policy regarding abuse or neglect, as well as, retribution, threat, harassment, intimidation, discontinuation, or withholding of services by any employee of CHOICES designed to prevent the filing of a grievance. Any report of the above will be immediately investigated and reported to the Executive Director and the CHOICES Board of Directors upon the receipt of the complaint. Allegations of shall result in the immediate suspension of the involved employee(s). Substantiated allegations shall result in the immediate termination of the involved employee(s). For clients receiving publicly funded services, the same will be reported to the Division of Behavioral Health Investigations Unit.
18. The **Rights and Responsibilities of People Served by CHOICES, Inc.** and **Grievance Procedure for People Served by CHOICES, Inc** will:
  - a. be available to all clients, legal guardians and to those denied services;
  - b. be signed and copied to client or legal guardian and client’s file; and
  - c. be prominently displayed at CHOICES facilities.
19. The Project Manager will maintain information necessary to track grievances in a manner consistent with existing HIPPA standards and policies regarding the storage and maintenance of clinical records. The clinical supervisor will utilize this information in updating the Quality Management Plan (QMP).