



Hay River Health & Social Services Authority | Administration des services de  
santé et des services sociaux de Hay River  
37911 MacKenzie Highway | 37911 route Mackenzie  
Hay River, NT X0E 0R6 | ☎ (867) 874-8000 📠 (867) 874-8141

To: Employees of HRHSSA  
Re: HRHSSA handling of complaint

Date: April 10, 2018

I am writing to advise you that I have been in contact with our CEO and Senior Management team regarding public questions being raised about the handling of a complaint made against a former employee of the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority. I am aware that this has generated discussion both within the community of Hay River and our organization. I am writing to provide you with some information on this issue.

As you are aware complaints of this nature are challenging to address within the public domain. This because it is both inappropriate and against the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to disclose or speak to the kind of specific detail that people have an interest in or may expect to hear. The protection of privacy regarding these kinds of processes and their outcomes protects both complainants and staff, and supports due process for all parties. As you know, with respect to patient and client concerns, we take these very seriously. Ensuring the safety, security and quality of care for our patient and clients are our highest priorities. Even though we can't discuss the specific details of any case, I can assure you that we always follow the proper process to ensure complaints are investigated and appropriate action taken.

As an employer, the HRHSSA is obligated to investigate thoroughly any complaint that we receive and to ensure clients who complain are aware of the process of lodging a complaint with a regulatory body. We often will use an independent investigator to ensure impartiality and objectivity. If an investigation reveals unprofessional conduct concerns regarding a regulated health professional, the HRHSSA will file a complaint or report to the appropriate regulatory body. In this circumstance I can confirm that a complaint was received about a former staff member, an external third-party firm was hired to conduct an investigation into the allegations, and the investigation report was received and diligently acted upon.

Given the increased public dialogue about this issue at this time you may be asked by your patients or clients how the complaint process works. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- We encourage anyone who has a complaint to first speak to the health professionals who provided their care.
- If they are uncomfortable doing that, they can contact the patient representative here at the HRHSSA.
- They can also contact the System Navigator at the Department of Health and Social Services.
- Complaints of unprofessional conduct can also be sent to the Complaints Officer of the specific body that regulates the health and social services provider.

If you are interested in reading more on the process to handle complaints about a physician's conduct, this can be found in the Medical Profession Act. A summary of the process is also available here. There is also information on the Department of Health and Social Services website on how patients or clients can express a concern or complaint about the care they have received from any health professional.

I hope this information is helpful and would encourage you to speak with your supervisor or our CEO if you have additional questions on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Maher".

Michael Maher, Public Administrator