

## Surgery Center of Santa Fe Patient Complaints/Grievance Process

### PURPOSE:

The Surgery Center of Santa Fe (SFASC) regards the physician-patient relationship to be held in the highest esteem requiring trust, mutual respect and confidentiality. In an attempt to offer quality care on both a personal and professional level, patients will be encouraged to make comments on the care they receive.

### POLICY:

If a patient and/or family member offer a complaint, the SFASC will try to resolve the issue to the best of its ability, at the time of the complaint. Complaints may be obtained from the surgical call-backs, post-op questionnaires, feedback from the post-op or attending physician. If there are frequent complaints about the same issue, a quality assessment or process improvement may be initiated.

### What is a grievance?

A grievance is a formal or informal written or verbal complaint that is made to the Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) by the patient or patient's representative, regarding a patient's care or ASC compliance issue.

If the complaint requires additional actions for resolution (not resolved by the coordinator/charge nurse) or if the person reporting the complaint would like a response in writing then the complaint is now considered a grievance.

The Medical Director, Surgical Services Director or Chief Nursing Officer are the contacts for the SFASC Grievance Process.

All grievances alleging mistreatment, neglect or abuse that are submitted to any ASC staff members, whether verbally or in writing, must be immediately reported to the Surgical Services Director/CNO or the Medical Director. Grievances alleging mistreatment, neglect, abuse, or other behavior that endangers a patient will be investigated as soon as possible, given the seriousness of the allegations and the potential harm to patients. If there is confirmation that the alleged mistreatment, neglect, abuse or other harm took place, then the ASC will report the event to the appropriate local and state authority (see Section 1: General Information, policy 6, 7 and 8).

When an employee receives a grievance (written or verbal) the employee will begin the grievance process by initiating the *Grievance Report* form then forwarding it to the SFASC Coordinator/Manager. The Director/CNO shall call or write to the patient acknowledging receipt of the complaint within five (5) working days of receiving the grievance. The Director/CNO shall also address the subject of the grievance in depth and document appropriately, investigate the grievance and take appropriate action, as indicated. The grievance process will take no more than 30 days from the time the grievance was filed. If there are unusual circumstances that cause the grievance process to exceed 30 days the patient or patient's representative will be notified. The patient will be given written notice of its decision.

If the Director/CNO cannot resolve the matter, it will be referred to the attention of the Medical Director. If the matter is not resolved to the patient's satisfaction, the patient may take the grievance to a representative of their choice. The SFASC will not discriminate or use any coercion or reprisal against a patient or patient's representative for taking action to solve the problem. All complaints/problems and documentation regarding such shall be secured in a file by the Administrator and reviewed quarterly. The process on how to issue a complaint can be found in the **Patient Rights and Responsibilities** form. A copy of the form is posted in the SFASC.