



Complaint Policy and Procedure

POLICY

All individuals who receive services from Equinox have the right to seek help for resolving problems or concerns. Equinox will look into and resolve complaints in a safe and timely way. All complaints are kept confidential unless the subject falls under a mandated reporting category. Complaint forms are available in all programs and the administrative office at 500 Central Avenue Albany, NY 12206. No one filing a complaint will be discriminated against for choosing to do so.

PROCEDURE

For Staff:

1. On admission to any Equinox program, staff will provide clients with information on the complaint policy (See Page 2-3). This information shall be reviewed with clients at least one time per year. This review will be documented in the client chart with a signed Acknowledgement of Receipt.
2. Clients who identify a problem or concern will be encouraged to speak with the program staff about the problem as a first step. This is intended to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible.
3. Clients who identify a problem or concern about services will also be advised by staff that they have the right to file a complaint and will be provided with assistance from staff in proceeding with this process. Complaints are customarily submitted in writing, and staff or another clients may assist in writing the complaint.
4. The original complaint will be kept in a file along with the record of actions taken to investigate and resolve the complaint, the client's response, and any additional follow-up. If a written response is provided, a copy of this will also be kept.
5. Complaints that are phoned in will be logged by the responsible staff (typically, but not limited to, the Director of Compliance) and this record will be placed in the same file.

For The Client:

A. How to File a Complaint:

- In order to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible, Equinox encourages you to address your complaint in the program where your concern began. Whenever possible, address your complaints with the program staff involved in the problem or concern.
- If a solution is not reached by meeting with program staff involved, or if you are not able to discuss the problem with program staff, you should try asking other staff, the assistant manager or manager for help. Often these persons will be able to help you find a satisfactory solution to your problem.

If not, then you may:

Put the problem in writing (or ask someone you trust to put it in writing). Writing the problem down helps you and Equinox to assure it is being recorded and responded to in an open and timely fashion. Then give it to the director or assistant manager of the program or:

Have your written complaint forwarded to the Client Complaint Liaison at Equinox, 500 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Remember to include a contact phone number and/or return address!

- The complaint will be read and you will be contacted within 5 business days of its receipt, and a representative of ClearView Center will work with you towards reaching a satisfactory conclusion of the complaint.
- If desired, a written response will be provided to you within ten working days on resolution of your complaint.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may then:

Write to the Executive Director about the problem. You should include a description of what you have done to solve the problem to date, what staff you have contacted, and what you would like changed. Submit this to the Executive Director, Equinox, 500 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206.

The Executive Director will review your complaint and respond within 10 business days.

- The decision of the Executive Director will be the final level of review at Equinox (See Section B).

B. Appeal

Complaints that are not resolved within Equinox may be appealed to:

Albany County Mental Health
175 Green Street
Albany, NY 12202
(518) 447-4555

Commission on Quality of Care
401 State Street
Schenectady, NY 12305
1-800-624-4143

New York State Office of Mental Health
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12229
1-800-597-8481

Mental Hygiene Legal Services
75 New Scotland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208-3474
1-800-922-6457

C. Advocates

Equinox encourages you to ask program staff for help filing a complaint when possible. However, if you do not feel comfortable asking program staff, you can call the numbers listed below for help:

Community Living Associates Program	427-5056
Albany County Consumer Advisory Board	434-1203
Alliance for the Mentally Ill	462-2000