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Current grievance procedures for Alaskan patients, many of which have a disability; dementia, psychiatric disorder, developmental disabilities.

1. Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospital Organizations (JCAHO)

Once a grievance is filed, facilities have 5 days to inform the patient that the facility received it and have begun the investigation. Facilities then have 14 days to notify a patient and/or guardian of the hospital's decision. Total time- 14 to 21 days.

Once the hospital notifies a patient of the decision, there is no internal appeal process mandated.

There are no specific requirements as to who makes the hospital's decision concerning patient's grievances. As an example, Providence's attorney said "Doctors and nurses not directly involved in the case provide the hospital's decision."

JCAHO does not require facilities to have a person with some training as an advocate who would assist the patient in the grievance process (As outlined and required in AS47.30.847). Mandating that assistance be provided to those with dementia or psychiatric disorders is not uncommon in states with best practices.

2. Federal Regulations

Hospitals must establish a process for prompt resolution of a grievance. There is no time in which a grievance must be resolved, there is no appeal process mandated.

3. Behavioral Health requirements for grantee grievance procedures.

Facilities (approx. 82) are asked to notify patients within 5 days that the investigation into the grievance has begun. Facilities can ask for an open-ended extension. After 35+ days, facilities are required to send all grievances unresolved to the satisfaction of the patient to Behavioral Health for technical assistance. There is no specific Behavioral Health requirements that facilities must have a employee with some training in advocacy as outlined in AS47.30.847 to assist a patient in filing a grievance or other redress.

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