

PUBLIC HEALTH CODE (EXCERPT)
Act 368 of 1978

333.21799a Nursing home; violation; complaint; investigation; disclosure; determination; listing violation and provisions violated; copies of documents; public inspection; report of violation; penalty; request for hearing; notice of hearing; “priority complaint” defined.

Sec. 21799a. (1) A person who believes that this part, a rule promulgated under this part, or a federal certification regulation applying to a nursing home may have been violated may request an investigation of a nursing home. The person may submit the request for investigation to the department as a written complaint, or the department shall assist a person in reducing an oral request made under subsection (2) to a written complaint as provided in subsection (2). A person filing a complaint under this subsection may file the complaint on a model standardized complaint form developed and distributed by the department under section 20194(3) or file the complaint as provided by the department on the Internet.

(2) The department shall provide a toll-free telephone consumer complaint line. The complaint line shall be accessible 24 hours per day and monitored at a level to ensure that each priority complaint is identified and that a response is initiated to each priority complaint within 24 hours after its receipt. The department shall establish a system for the complaint line that includes at least all of the following:

(a) An intake form that serves as a written complaint for purposes of subsections (1) and (5).

(b) The forwarding of an intake form to an investigator not later than the next business day after the complaint is identified as a priority complaint.

(c) Except for an anonymous complaint, the forwarding of a copy of the completed intake form to the complainant not later than 5 business days after it is completed.

(3) The substance of a complaint filed under subsection (1) or (2) shall be provided to the licensee no earlier than at the commencement of the on-site inspection of the nursing home that takes place in response to the complaint.

(4) A complaint filed under subsection (1) or (2), a copy of the complaint, or a record published, released, or otherwise disclosed to the nursing home shall not disclose the name of the complainant or a patient named in the complaint unless the complainant or patient consents in writing to the disclosure or the investigation results in an administrative hearing or a judicial proceeding, or unless disclosure is considered essential to the investigation by the department. If the department considers disclosure essential to the investigation, the department shall give the complainant the opportunity to withdraw the complaint before disclosure.

(5) Upon receipt of a complaint under subsection (1) or (2), the department shall determine, based on the allegations presented, whether this part, a rule promulgated under this part, or a federal certification regulation for nursing homes has been, is, or is in danger of being violated. Subject to subsection (2), the department shall investigate the complaint according to the urgency determined by the department. The initiation of a complaint investigation shall commence within the time frame consistent with federal guidelines for investigations of complaints against nursing homes.

(6) If, at any time, the department determines that this part, a rule promulgated under this part, or a federal certification regulation for nursing homes has been violated, the department shall list the violation and the provisions violated on the state and federal licensure and certification forms for nursing homes. The department shall consider the violations, as evidenced by a written explanation, when it makes a licensure and certification decision or recommendation.

(7) In all cases, the department shall inform the complainant of its findings unless otherwise indicated by the complainant. Subject to subsection (2), within 30 days after receipt of the complaint, the department shall provide the complainant a copy, if any, of the written determination, the correction notice, the warning notice, and the state licensure or federal certification form, or both, on which the violation is listed, or a status report indicating when these documents may be expected. The department shall include in the final report a copy of the original complaint. The complainant may request additional copies of the documents described in this subsection and upon receipt shall reimburse the department for the copies in accordance with established policies and procedures.

(8) The department shall make a written determination, correction notice, or warning notice concerning a complaint available for public inspection, but the department shall not disclose the name of the complainant or patient without the complainant's or patient's consent.

(9) The department shall report a violation discovered as a result of the complaint investigation procedure to persons administering sections 21799c to 21799e. The department shall assess a penalty for a violation, as prescribed by this article.

(10) A complainant who is dissatisfied with the determination or investigation by the department may request a hearing. A complainant shall submit a request for a hearing in writing to the director within 30 days

after the mailing of the department's findings as described in subsection (7). The department shall send notice of the time and place of the hearing to the complainant and the nursing home.

(11) As used in this section, "priority complaint" means a complaint alleging an existing situation that involves physical, mental, or emotional abuse, mistreatment, or harmful neglect of a resident that requires immediate corrective action to prevent serious injury, serious harm, serious impairment, or death of a resident while receiving care in a facility.

History: Add. 1978, Act 493, Eff. Mar. 30, 1979;—Am. 2003, Act 3, Imd. Eff. Apr. 22, 2003;—Am. 2004, Act 189, Imd. Eff. July 8, 2004;—Am. 2015, Act 155, Eff. Jan. 18, 2016.

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