



CLIENT GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

It is the policy of Juneau Alliance for Mental Health, Inc. to have an open, prompt and responsive way for you to enter a complaint, free from intimidation or retaliation. If you have a concern or complaint about services provided by us, JAMHI will make reasonable efforts to understand your situation and come to a conclusion or solution that is agreeable to all parties involved. The manner by which you express your concerns and/or complaints that will be officially recognized by JAMHI is outlined in the procedures below. Grievances may be filed verbally (in person or by telephone), in writing, or via email. Each client has the right to designate a representative or advocate to assist them with all of the stages of the grievance process and/or request the agency to assist them in filing a grievance. This may include identification of a specific staff to provide assistance, or a written referral to other client advocacy resources such as the Disability Law Center and NAMI-Alaska. It is the policy of JAMHI to maintain client confidentiality throughout the grievance process unless so waived by the client.

Definition of a Grievance:

- Matters pertaining to physical or mental well being.
- Matters involving the violation of any stated client rights.
- Matters involving the right of any client to humane care and treatment.

I have a grievance; now what do I do?

INFORMAL STAGE

If you choose to express your concerns verbally, talk first to your primary provider about the matter. Allow a reasonable response time for the two of you to discuss the situation. Initiation of resolution of your grievance will occur within five days of receipt. ***If JAMHI is unable to adequately initiate resolution within 5 days from the receipt of your grievance, you will receive written notification explaining the reason and when the grievance process will be initiated.*** You will be notified that the agency has begun the process to resolve the grievance. Present your viewpoint clearly. Be calm and reasonable in your presentation to your primary provider. It may help if you write it out. If you still do not agree with the outcome, you may follow the second recommendation.

I'm uncomfortable talking to staff about this grievance, now what?

Complete a Grievance form or write a letter describing your grievance and what you've done to try to resolve the problem. Address the form (or letter) to the JAMHI Executive Director. Every attempt will be made to resolve each grievance at the program level.

FORMAL STAGE

If your grievance is not resolved, you may request a meeting with the Executive Director. If you are satisfied and accept the Executive Director's recommendation, the grievance is resolved. A written summary of the resolution will be provided to you. If you are not satisfied, you will be instructed on how to proceed. A written summary of the meeting will be provided in either instance.

I have submitted my grievance, but I'm unhappy with the way things have turned out. Who can I turn to?

You can make an appointment, if you have not already done so, to talk with the Executive Director of JAMHI, who takes each grievance very seriously. You may ask the Receptionist to see if the Executive Director is available. Review the situation with the Executive Director. Include the solution you wish to see. You will be asked if you covered the information with your primary provider before you contacted the Executive Director. If you did not, you will be referred back to that person, unless you can clearly identify why you should not talk to your primary provider about the matter. You will be advised of the actions available to you that involve the primary provider's supervisor, or JAMHI's administrative staff. The Executive Director will make every attempt to resolve the matter. It is possible that the Executive Director may take some time to weigh all viewpoints before making a decision, so don't expect an immediate answer.

I am still unhappy with the results of my grievance, what can I do now?

APPEAL BOARD

If you still do not believe that your grievance has been resolved, you may make a request in writing to the Appeal Board. This consists of the president of the JAMHI board and/or his/her designee; one board member chosen by the Executive Director, and one board member chosen by the client. They will render a decision within five working days of hearing the grievance and provide the client with a written summary. The decision of the board is final.

All grievances must be resolved within 30 calendar days of agency receipt of the grievance. Attempts to resolve disputes informally do not extend the 30 calendar day time frame. The 30 calendar day time frame can only be extended if JAMHI and the client agree to waive this requirement or if both parties agree to mediate the complaint. Any grievances that remain unresolved after 30 days will be referred to the Division of Behavioral Health within 5 business days, for technical assistance.

Grievances that involve alleged abuse, neglect or unnecessary seclusion or restraint will immediately be elevated to the JAMHI Appeal Board. Documentation related to grievances, including all related records, actions and communications will be stored and maintained in separate files for each individual grievance. These records will be stored in a secure special location; not included with the client's individual clinical file. Client confidentiality will be maintained throughout the grievance process.

