
TITLE: EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

CATEGORY: HUMAN RESOURCES

EFFECTIVE DATE: DECEMBER, 2025

I. POLICY:

Carolina Health Centers, Inc. has adopted the core principles of honesty, integrity, openness, the pursuit of both individual and collective excellence, and unwavering mutual respect and appreciation. CHC is committed to operating the organization in a manner that is consistent with these values and expects its employees to adhere to them in the performance of their job duties and in their treatment of others in the workplace; however, work related problems can arise in any place of employment. While it is hoped that most concerns and conflicts will be resolved as close to the source as possible, it is the policy of CHC to provide a fair, reasonable, and clearly defined mechanism for those cases requiring management intervention.

II. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all temporary, permanent and contractual employees of Carolina Health Centers, Inc. unless otherwise specified in contractual terms.

III. DEFINITIONS:

Issues that may cause grievances and conflicts include:

- terms and conditions of employment
- health and safety
- work relations
- bullying and harassment
- new working practices
- working environment
- organizational change
- equal opportunities.

For the purpose of administering this policy, the definition of grievance or conflict may include (but is not limited to):

- A claim that the organization or a duly authorized representative thereof has violated a published policy in the manner in which an employee was treated
- Disputes over salary/rate of pay, or disputes over a supervisor's evaluation regarding job performance

- Perceived inequity in treatment
- Objection to, dispute with, or appeal of a disciplinary action
- Conflicts with co-workers that impede the employee's ability to effectively fulfill the responsibilities of their job.

Grievances involving possible discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender (including sexual harassment or sexual orientation), religion, creed, age, handicap, national origin, or status as a veteran are not covered under this policy.

Employees wishing to pursue claims of such discrimination should contact the organization's Chief Human Resources Officer who will initiate a confidential investigation.

IV. PROCEDURES:

- A. Time Limits: If an employee waits an unreasonable length of time before submitting his or her grievance or proceeding to the next step, the fact-finding process could be difficult; therefore, employees are strongly encouraged to present and pursue their concerns in a timely manner. Employees will receive acknowledgement of receipt of a grievance within one business day at each step in the process; however, the nature of the grievance or conflict will dictate the course of the investigation and length of time necessary for follow-up and final resolution.
- B. Procedures: CHC's grievance and conflict resolution procedure consists of three steps: (1) Step 1 – Informal, (2) Step II–Formal, and (3) Step III–Appeal.
- a. Step 1 – Informal: In many cases, disputes can be resolved through communications within a particular department or work area. As such, the first step in the grievance process is a discussion between the employee and the supervisor or the Human Resources Department. The employee can initiate this step in one of two ways:
- i. Talk with his or her supervisor. The employee should promptly bring the matter to the attention of the immediate supervisor, explaining the nature of the problem and the relief being sought. The supervisor should respond within three business days, if possible. If the supervisor provides an oral response to the employee, the supervisor should prepare a written record of the response.
 - ii. Talk with someone in the Human Resources Department. If an employee cannot decide whether or not to initiate a grievance or is reluctant to discuss the matter with the supervisor, he/she may seek advice from the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department or the supervisor should provide a written response to the

employee at the completion of this process.

If the informal procedure fails to resolve the grievance, and the employee wishes to continue the matter, the employee should begin the steps of the formal procedure no later than 14 calendar days after the receipt of the supervisor's or Human Resources Department's response.

- b. Step 2 – Formal Grievance: If the matter is not resolved at Step I, the employee may proceed to Step II by submitting a completed Employee Complaint Form to the Human Resources Department. This statement should outline the relevant facts that form the basis of the employee's grievance, indicating any CHC policy that has allegedly been violated, and stating the resolution sought. The statement should also identify the supervisor who was involved at Step I. Upon receipt of the employee's written statement, the Human Resources Department will:
 - i. Advise the appropriate member(s) of the management Team of the grievance and determine if the Step I procedure was complied with.
 - ii. Coordinate, facilitate, and document the steps taken to investigate the grievance.
 - iii. Facilitate meetings of the parties.
 - iv. Serve as the primary liaison with the employee(s) involved and keep them informed of progress toward a resolution.
 - v. Provide a written response back to the employee once a decision has been rendered.
 - c. Step 3 – Appeal: If the employee is unsatisfied with the response from the Human Resources Department at Step II, the employee can proceed to the final step in the Grievance and Conflict Resolution process by submitting a written statement to the President and CEO detailing the grievance and providing justification for the employee's disagreement with the decision rendered at Step 2. The President and CEO will review all the relevant documentation, meet with the parties involved to hear their case, and take other investigative steps as necessary and appropriate. Once the President and CEO has reached a decision on the appeal he/she will meet with the parties involved (either individually or jointly) to convey the decision. The Human Resources Department will also submit a written summary of the decision to all parties involved.
- C. Remediation: The organization reserves the right to require participation in remedial action, including but not limited to professional mediation and employee counseling. If remedial action is included in the final

decision rendered in an appeal (Step 3), refusal or failure to participate in such remedial action by any employee involved in the grievance will be considered insubordination and grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination or termination of contract.

- D. Legal Counsel: The goal of the Grievance and Conflict Resolution Policy is resolution and reconciliation; therefore, it is not to be regarded as an adversarial proceeding and is not subject to the legal procedures of a court. The presence of legal counsel at meetings convened under this policy is not permitted. If legal action is initiated all communication will take place between attorneys representing the parties and this policy is no longer governing the process.
- E. Administrative Leave: CHC reserves the right, at the discretion of the Management Team, to place any employee involved in a grievance or conflict on Administrative Leave with pay for the duration of the investigation.
- F. Non-Retaliation: CHC will not permit or tolerate any form of retaliation against an employee who exercises their right to file a grievance or seek resolution to a workplace conflict. This does not prevent CHC from taking disciplinary action, up to and including termination or termination of contract, against any employee who willfully, intentionally, and maliciously makes false claims against the organization and/or another employee.
- G. Final Authority: The President/CEO has full and final authority to render decisions on employee grievances and conflicts, except in the case of a grievance or conflict that originated as a complaint about the performance or conduct of the President/CEO.
- H. Complaints Regarding the President/CEO: If an employee has a grievance about the performance or conduct of the President/CEO they are encouraged to speak openly with the CEO about the issue. However, if they are uncomfortable taking their concern directly to the President/CEO, the CEO fails to respond, or the nature and/or seriousness of the complaint warrants direct intervention, the employee may file a formal complaint with the Board of Directors. The complaint may be filed by submitting a written statement to the Chairman of the Board outlining the nature of the complaint and the remedial action desired. The statement may be submitted in a sealed envelope to the Executive Assistant in Administration, who serves as administrative support to the Board of Directors. The Chair of the Board will provide the employee with written

acknowledgement of the complaint within five business days and will convene the Personnel Committee of the Board within ten business days. The Personnel Committee will conduct the investigation and provide the employee with a written response once a decision has been rendered. This provision for filing a complaint about the President/CEO with the Board of Directors applies only to complaints which originate about the performance or conduct of the President/CEO and does not extend to situations in which an employee is dissatisfied with the final decision rendered by the President/CEO in accordance with Step 3 of this Grievance and Conflict Resolution Policy.

- I. Confidentiality: All action taken during the investigation of a grievance or remediation of a conflict is considered to be privileged and confidential. Failure to maintain strict confidentiality regarding a grievance or employee conflict may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or termination of contract.

Board Approval:
Reviewed: December, 2025
Revised: December, 2025