A Citizen's Guide to Filing a Complaint Against a Health Care Professional

The mission of the Bureau of Professional Licensing (BPL) is to protect, preserve, and improve the health, safety, and welfare of Michigan's citizens through the licensing and regulation of occupational and health professionals. The Bureau strives to make the regulatory system simple, fair, and efficient.

BPL relies on complaints from patients, citizens, and mandated reporters to begin investigations into licensed health professionals who are potentially violating the Public Health Code. We encourage all concerned citizens, patients, and licensed health professionals to file a complaint with BPL if they are aware of behavior that may potentially violate the Public Health Code. Below are instructions on how to file a complaint and the steps that BPL takes to protect consumers after a complaint is received.

How to File a Complaint?

To file a complaint related to a health professional, click on the link below and select the appropriate health profession. You will be taken to the appropriate on-line link or form to file your complaint:https://www.michigan.gov/en/lara/bureau-list/bpl/complaint

Information required to file a complaint includes:

- Your name and contact Information.
- Name and profession of the licensee or registrant.
- Detailed description of the alleged problem or incident, including dates and locations. Names, addresses, or contact information of anyone who can provide supporting information.
- Anonymous complaints are discouraged and may result in your complaint being closed, as the investigator would be unable to ask for information, records, etc.

The identity of the person filing a complaint is confidential and may only be disclosed if the person provides a written release of his/her name and information to be shared. If the matter proceeds to an administrative hearing, disclosure may be requested from the complainant.

What happens after a complaint is filed against a licensed health professional?

The complaint is reviewed to determine if a possible violation of the Public Health Code has occurred.

Based on this review, BPL will do one of the following:

- The Bureau will request authorization to investigate the complaint from the appropriate health professional board.

- Close the complaint with no further action due to the complaint not being associated with a possible violation of the Public Health Code.

- Close and refer the matter to another state agency or entity if the complaint is not within the jurisdiction of BPL/LARA.

NOTE: LARA may work with law enforcement, the Attorney General's Office, MDHHS and other agencies depending on the nature of the complaint.

What happens during a complaint investigation?

During an investigation based on a complaint, BPL investigators will interview relevant parties and collect evidence related to the complaint. BPL's investigations are independent of any other investigation of a licensee, such as, by their employer, law enforcement, etc.

What happens after a complaint investigation is completed?

If it is determined from the investigation that a violation of the Public Health Code cannot be substantiated, BPL will close the complaint file and notify the complainant.

If it is determined from the investigation that a violation of the Public Health Code has occurred, BPL will file an administrative complaint against the licensee. Depending on the nature of the case, BPL has the authority to summarily suspend the license if the public health, safety, or welfare requires emergency action.

What options does the licensee have after an administrative complaint is filed?

Once an administrative complaint is issued to a licensee, the licensee may do any of the following:

- Respond and admit to the facts of the administrative complaint and agree to a Consent Order. The matter will proceed to the appropriate board for sanctions.

- Seek a compliance conference with BPL to discuss and possibly settle the matter. This is an opportunity for the licensee to reach a settlement without having to address the issue at an administrative hearing. This may result in a licensee being sanctioned, which could include being fined, placed on probation, or suspended from practice. If an agreement is reached, the proposed settlement must be approved by the disciplinary subcommittee (DSC) of the appropriate licensing board before it becomes final. If a settlement is not reached or if the DSC rejects the proposed settlement, the case proceeds to an administrative hearing.

- Request a hearing with the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings & rules (MOAHR) for an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to determine the facts of the case and prepare a Proposal for Decision (PFD). The case would then go to the DSC for approval or rejection of the ALJ's decision and for sanctions. An administrative hearing is held to determine the facts of the case, what laws or rules apply, and whether the health care professional violated the Public Health Code. After the hearing, the administrative law judge submits a PFD regarding the hearing for review and determination by the appropriate DSC.

- Not respond, at which point the licensee is in default and the case moves through the process and is sent to the appropriate board for action.

Who determines the final action(s) against the license of a health professional?

The ultimate determination of whether a health professional licensee violated the Public Health Code is made by the Disciplinary Subcommittee (DSC) of the health profession board. The DSC has the option of dismissing the Administrative Complaint or finding a violation of the Public Health Code and taking the disciplinary action against the license of the health care professional as provided under the Public Health Code.

Is the decision of the DSC final?

The licensee may appeal the decision of the DSC with the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Additional Resources:

Contact the BPL Complaint Intake Section at 517-241-0205 or BPL-Complaints@michigan.gov

Verify an occupational professional's license

Public Health Code, Article 15, Occupations

Review "Disciplinary Action Reports" outlining actions taken against licensed health professionals.

Glossary of Terms:

DSC – Disciplinary Subcommittee. Each health profession has a Governor-appointed board made up of public members and professionals in the field. The DSC is a subcommittee of each board that approves investigations and takes disciplinary actions against licensees. All professional board and DSC meetings are open to the public.

Administrative Complaint – A document that outlines the allegations made against the health professional licensee. Available publicly using the online licensee search.

Summary Suspension – An emergency order that temporarily suspends the license of a health professional and is issued when the public health, safety, or welfare requires emergency action. Available publicly using the online licensee search.