

How Do I Get Help With A HealthChoices Complaint?



Developed by Beacon Health Options (formerly Value Behavioral Health of PA) in partnership with the Counties of Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Crawford, Fayette, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Washington and Westmoreland.

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*If you should have a problem and you are unhappy with your mental health or substance abuse treatment or your provider, you may file a **complaint!***

REASONS YOU MAY WANT TO FILE A COMPLAINT

1. Beacon has decided you cannot get a service you want because it is not a covered service.
2. Beacon did not meet the timeframes for providing a service.
3. Beacon will not pay a provider for a service you received because it is not a covered service.
4. Beacon did not decide a first level complaint you filed earlier within 30 days of when you filed it.
5. Beacon will not pay for a service you received because the provider was not enrolled in the PA Medical Assistance program.
6. Beacon denies your requests to dispute a bill that you received for cost sharing, copayments, deductibles, coinsurance and/or other types of bills.
7. **You are unhappy with Beacon or a provider for any other reason.**



HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT?

You have 60 days from the date of the incident or date you receive written notice of a decision to file a complaint for any of the first six reasons listed on page 1. For any reason other than the first six, there is no time limit for filing a complaint.

Beacon staff persons are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There are two ways to file a complaint:

- You or your representative may telephone and talk with a Beacon staff member.
- You may write a letter.

!! IMPORTANT !!

TO CONTINUE GETTING SERVICES:

- If you disagree with a decision to discontinue, reduce, or change your services, you must file your complaint within **1 calendar day for inpatient or 10 calendar days for any other services** from the date of the letter.
- These services will/can continue until a decision is made about the complaint you filed.

FILING A FIRST LEVEL COMPLAINT

- To file a complaint over the telephone, call the **toll-free number for your county** listed on page eleven or your representative can call for you.
- If needed, interpreter services are available at no charge.
- You will be asked for some ideas on how you would like your complaint to be resolved.
- You will be asked to provide witnesses and documentation (i.e. texts, emails, etc.) if available.
- If you are **deaf, hard of hearing, or have difficulty speaking** you may call PA Relay Operator at 711.
- Or you can **write** to:

**Beacon Health Options
P.O. Box 1840
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
Attention: Complaints**

WHAT KIND OF HELP CAN I HAVE WITH THE COMPLAINT PROCESS?

- Beacon staff and/or your representative can both assist you in filing a complaint.
- In some counties, an **OMBUDSMAN*** can help you! An OMBUDSMAN is a person that works with the Mental Health Association and can assist you in getting help with your complaint.
- If you need help making the phone call or writing the letter to Beacon, OMBUDSMAN* services can help. ALL calls and services to the OMBUDSMAN are **FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL**.
- You may call the OMBUDSMAN at the following numbers for your county if you live in one of these counties below:

Butler (888) 329-0468

Beaver & Lawrence (724) 775-4165

Washington (724) 225-2061

**Armstrong, Indiana,
& Westmoreland** (800) 871-4445

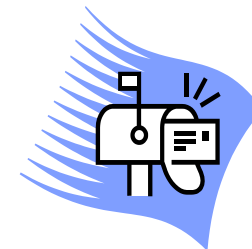
*Ombudsman services are not available in Crawford, Fayette, Mercer, or Venango counties.

HELP is also available in ALL counties by contacting:

- The local Legal Aid Office in your county
- The Pennsylvania Health Law Project
1-800-274-3258

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I FILE A FIRST LEVEL COMPLAINT?

- Beacon will call you once your complaint is filed.
- Next, Beacon will send you a letter to say they received your complaint.
- The letter will tell you about the **first level complaint** process.
- You can be part of the first level complaint process.
- You may also send Beacon any information that may help with your complaint.
- A Beacon Complaint Investigator and a Complaint Committee will work to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.
- A letter will be mailed to you within 30 days from the date Beacon receives your complaint.
- The letter from Beacon will explain the reason(s) for the decision.



WHAT IF I DO NOT LIKE BEACON'S DECISION?

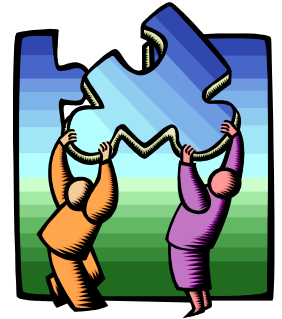
- If you are not happy with the first level complaint decision, you may file a **Second Level Complaint** if your complaint is that you are **unhappy with Beacon or your Provider**.
- The first level decision letter will tell you how to file a second level complaint.
- You can also file a request for a **Fair Hearing** (within 120 days) **or External Review** (within 15 days) or both if your complaint is one of the first six reasons listed on page two of this booklet.

FILING A SECOND LEVEL COMPLAINT

- When you receive the first level complaint decision letter, you have **45 days** to file your **second level complaint**.
- If you are unhappy with Beacon or your provider, you can file a second level complaint.
- Use the same address or phone number you used to file your first level complaint.
- After filing your **second level complaint**, Beacon will send you a letter to say they received your complaint.
- The letter will tell you about the **second level complaint** process.
- For some counties, a county staff person or their representative may also be involved in the **second level complaint** process.

REMEMBER...

- You may ask Beacon to see any information there is about your complaint.
- You may also send Beacon any information that may help with your complaint.



SECOND LEVEL COMPLAINT COMMITTEE

- You can come to the meeting of the **Second Level Complaint Committee** or be included by phone. This is your choice.
- If you don't attend, this will not affect the decision about your complaint.
- The Second Level Complaint Committee will have three or more people on it.
- At least one Beacon HealthChoices member will be on the committee. For some counties, the committee will also include county staff or a county representative.
- The people on the committee will be people who were not involved in the issue regarding the complaint you filed.



- The **second level committee** will make a decision and mail you a letter within 45 days from the date Beacon got your second level complaint.
- You will receive a letter about the committee's decision and the reason for the decision.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO IF I STILL DON'T LIKE THE DECISION?

- If you are not happy with the second level committee decision you may ask for an ***External Complaint Review***.
- External Complaint Reviews are handled by the ***Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)*** and/or the ***Pennsylvania Insurance Department***.
- The **DOH** handles complaints about the way a provider gives care or services.
- The **Insurance Department** handles complaints about Beacon policies and procedures.
- Fair Hearings are handled by the **PA Department of Human Services (DHS)**.
- You can file for a fair hearing **ONLY** if your complaint is one of the first six reasons listed on page one.
- Beacon can help you file for a Fair Hearing.

REQUESTING AN EXTERNAL REVIEW

- You must ask for an **external review** within 15 days after receiving the second level decision letter. If you ask, the DOH will help you put your complaint in writing.
- You must send your request in writing directly to the PA Department of Health or PA Insurance Department. Beacon will also assist you in filing if you ask.
- The DOH or Insurance Department will get your file from Beacon.
- You may also send them any information that may help with the **external review** of your complaint.
- If you wish, you may be represented by an attorney or another person during the **external review**.
- A decision letter will be sent to you after the decision is made.
- The letter will tell you the reason(s) for the decision and what you can do if you do not like the decision.



WHAT CAN I DO IF MY HEALTH IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK?

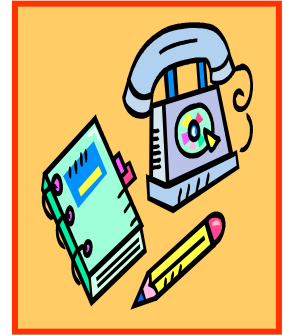
Expedited Complaints

- If you or your provider believes that the usual timeframes for deciding your complaint will harm your health, you or your provider can call Beacon at the county toll-free number and ask that your complaint be decided faster.
- Your provider is not required to provide Beacon with a written letter UNLESS Beacon cannot decide that waiting the usual timeframes will harm your health based on your initial request.
- You may need to have a letter from your provider faxed to Beacon to explain how the usual timeframe will harm your health.



If you would like more information on how to get help with a HealthChoices complaint:

Call the Beacon toll-free number for your county listed below. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Armstrong.....	(877) 688 – 5969
Beaver.....	(877) 688 – 5970
Butler.....	(877) 688 – 5971
Crawford.....	(866) 404 – 4561
Fayette.....	(877) 688 – 5972
Indiana.....	(877) 688 – 5969
Lawrence.....	(877) 688 – 5975
Mercer.....	(866) 404 – 4561
Venango.....	(866) 404 – 4561
Washington.....	(877) 688 – 5976
Westmoreland...	(877) 688 – 5977
PA TTY Relay Operator	711

NOTES

ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call your county toll-free number or 1-877-615-8503.

Beacon Health Options does not discriminate against members based on race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis prohibited by law.

More details on the Complaint processes, including Expedited Complaints and DHS Fair Hearings, can be found in your HealthChoices Member Handbook. If you need a member handbook, please contact Beacon Health Options. You can also visit Beacon’s website at pa.beaconhealthoptions.com for more information.

