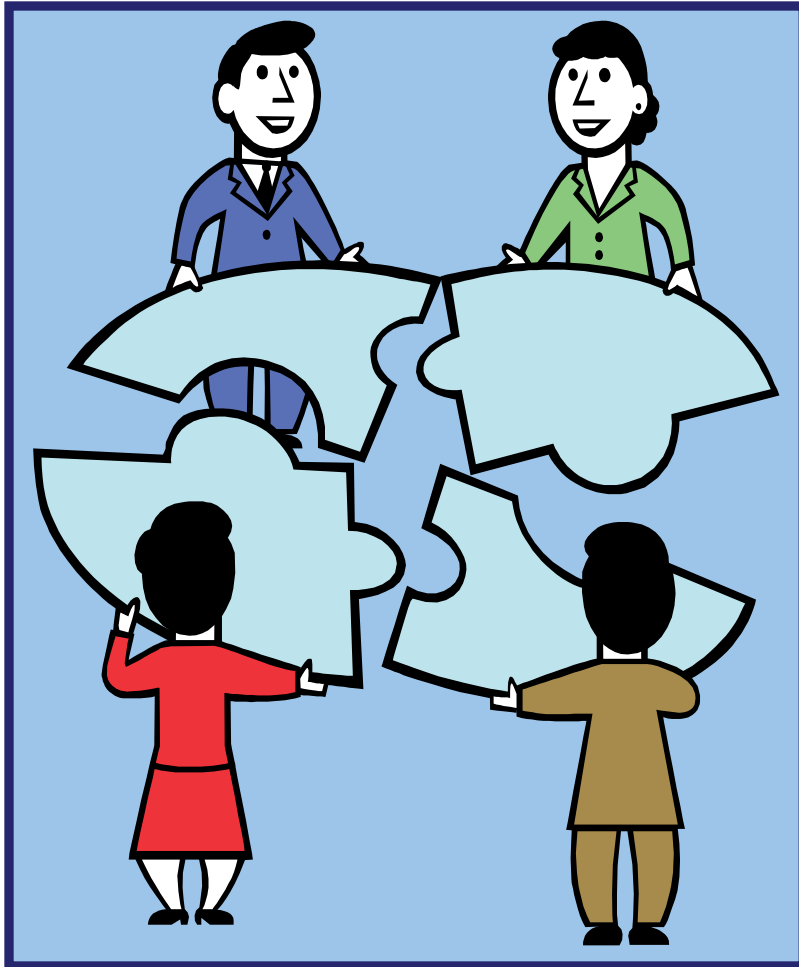


How Do I Get Help With A HealthChoices Grievance



Developed by HealthChoices Consumers in partnership with Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania for Cambria County

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A ***grievance*** is a process to follow if you do not agree with a VBH-PA decision that a service you (or your provider) asked for is ***not medically necessary***.

That means the service that was asked for was ***not approved***

OR

a ***different amount or type*** of service was recommended by VBH-PA.



WHEN SHOULD YOU FILE A GRIEVANCE?

You can file a grievance if VBH-PA does any one of these things:

- **DENIES** a service;
- Approves less than **(DECREASES)** what was requested;
- Approves a **DIFFERENT** service from the one that was requested.

Denies - Decreases - Different

THESE ARE THE 3 GRIEVANCE “D’s” TO REMEMBER

You should know....that HealthChoices consumers have the right to file a grievance. Neither VBH-PA nor your provider is permitted to take any action against you for exercising your right to file a grievance.

HOW DO I FILE A GRIEVANCE?

If VBH-PA does not completely approve a service, they will send you a letter. The letter will tell you how to file a grievance.



IMPORTANT!!

TO CONTINUE GETTING SERVICES:

- If you need to continue receiving services, you must file your grievance within **10 calendar days** from the date of the letter saying your services were **denied, decreased, or different**.
- If you need to continue receiving services, these can continue until a decision is made about the grievance you filed.
- The letters you receive from VBH-PA will tell you more about how to continue receiving services.

FIRST LEVEL GRIEVANCE

You have a total of **45 calendar days** from the date you receive the VBH-PA letter to file a grievance.

There are **3 ways** to file a grievance:

- You may **telephone** and talk with a VBH-PA staff member.



- You may **write** a letter to VBH-PA.

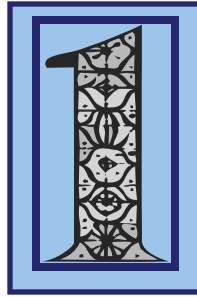


- Your **provider** can file for you **ONLY** if you give them permission in writing to do so. If your provider files for you, you cannot file a separate grievance on your own.

- To file a grievance over the telephone, call the **toll-free number** on your VBH-PA membership card, or have someone call for you (phone numbers are also listed on the back cover of this brochure).
- VBH-PA staff persons are available to take your grievance **24 hours a day**, 7 days a week.
- If you are **hearing impaired**, the TTY telephone number is 1-877-615-8502. All calls are free of charge.
- Or you can **write to:**
VBH-PA
520 Pleasant Valley Road
Trafford, PA. 15085
Attention: Complaints and Grievances

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I FILE A FIRST LEVEL GRIEVANCE?

- VBH-PA will send you a letter to let you know your grievance was received.



- The letter will tell you about the **first level grievance** process.
- You may ask VBH-PA to see any information they have about your grievance.



- You may also send VBH-PA any information that may help with your grievance.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT A FIRST LEVEL GRIEVANCE?

You can be a part of the **first level grievance** review process.



The letter you receive from VBH-PA will explain how you can be a part of the first level review.

IF YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF THE FIRST LEVEL REVIEW

- You have **10 calendar days** from the date on the letter to call VBH-PA to let them know you want to be included.
- You can come in person, or call in by phone, to be a part of the review.
- This is your choice - you do not have to attend if you don't want to attend.
- If you don't attend – this will not affect the decision about your grievance.

HOW IS A DECISION MADE ABOUT MY FIRST LEVEL GRIEVANCE?

- A committee including one or more VBH-PA staff (those not involved in the issue you filed your grievance about) will review your grievance.
- The committee includes a doctor or licensed psychologist.
- The committee will make a decision about your grievance within **30 calendar days**.
- A letter will be sent to you within **5 business days** after the decision is made.
- This letter will explain the reason(s) for the decision.

WHAT IF I DO NOT LIKE THE COMMITTEE'S DECISION?

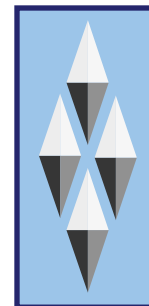


- If you are not happy with the first level grievance decision, you may file a **Second Level Grievance**.
- The first level decision letter will tell you how to file a second level grievance.

WHEN SHOULD I FILE A SECOND LEVEL GRIEVANCE?

- When you receive the first level grievance decision letter you have **45 calendar days** to file your **second level grievance**.
- Use the same address or phone number you used to file your first level grievance.
- After filing your **second level grievance**, VBH-PA will send you a letter to let you know your grievance was received. The letter will tell you about the **second level grievance** process.

REMEMBER....



- To file your grievance **within 10 days** to continue receiving services.
- You may ask VBH-PA to see any information they have about your grievance.
- You may also send VBH-PA any information that may help with your grievance.

SECOND LEVEL GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

- You can come to the meeting of the **Second Level Grievance Committee** or be included by phone.
- VBH- PA (and/or a county representative) will contact you to ask if you want to come to the meeting.
- This is your choice - If you don't attend, this will not affect the decision about your grievance.



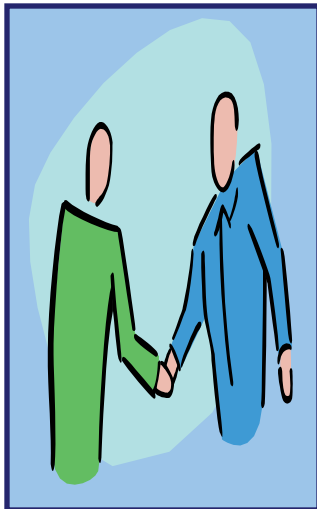
- The Second Level Grievance Committee will have three or more people on it.
- At least one VBH-PA consumer/family member, and a doctor or licensed psychologist, will be on the committee.
- Consumer/family members on the committee are volunteers who receive special training on the grievance process.
- The committee will also include a county mental health or drug and alcohol staff person, or representative.

- The people on the committee will be people who were not involved in the issue regarding the grievance you filed.
- The **second level grievance committee** will make a decision about your grievance within 30 calendar days from the date VBH-PA got your grievance.
- You will receive a letter about the committee's decision and the reason for the decision.
- This letter will be sent to you within **5 business days** after the decision is made.

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

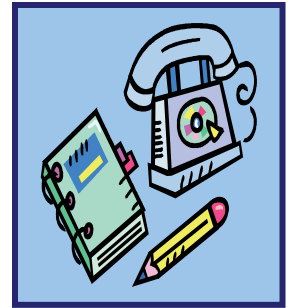
- If you are not happy with the second level grievance committee's decision you may ask for an **External Grievance Review**.
- These reviews are handled by the **Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)**.
- You must call or send a letter to VBH-PA to ask for an external grievance review (use the same number or address you used for the first level grievance).
- You have **15 calendar days** (10 days to continue receiving services) from the date on your second level grievance decision letter to request an external review.

- VBH-PA will send your request to the **Department of Health**.
- The **DOH** will let you know the external grievance reviewer's name, address, and phone number.
- VBH-PA will send your grievance file to the reviewer.
- You may also provide the reviewer any information that may help with the **external grievance review**.
- This information must be provided within **15 calendar days** from the date you made the request for an external grievance review.



- A decision letter will be sent to you within 60 calendar days from the date you asked for an external grievance review.
- This letter will tell you the reason(s) for the decision and what you can do if you do not like the decision.

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



Call the VBH-PA toll-free number listed below for Cambria County

VBH-PA (866) 404-4562

Help is also available by contacting the local Legal Aid Society in your county

Laurel Legal Services 814-536-8917

OR

The Pennsylvania Health Law Project:

1-800-274-3258

More details on the Grievance processes (including Expedited Grievances and DPW Fair Hearings) can also be found in your HealthChoices Member Handbook.

If you need a member handbook, please contact Value Behavioral Health of PA.