



News Release

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State health officials ask for public's assistance preventing substandard care

OLYMPIA — The Department of Health is looking to stamp out substandard health care by health professionals and facilities in our state, and needs help from the public to do so.

Most of the 380,000 health care providers working in 83 health professions in our state provide safe, quality care and don't have any difficulties. That's also true for the [7,000 facilities](#), which includes hospitals, animal control facilities, correctional facilities, nursing homes, pharmacies, and many others overseen by the state.

But when something goes wrong, state health officials want to know so they can do what's necessary to ensure patient safety. The agency's mission is to protect and improve the health of people in Washington, and state health officials want to be sure that if anyone has a complaint about a provider or facility, they know what to do.

"Patient safety is our highest priority," says Secretary of Health John Wiesman. "When someone makes a complaint about possible substandard care by a health care provider or facility they're helping protect other patients in our state."

[Reports can be filed online](#) or by phone 1-360-236-4700. As with most states, disciplinary action against health professionals in Washington is complaint-driven; the state health department reviews nearly 9,000 complaints and inspects thousands of facilities yearly. Staff that work in the call center at the Department of Health respond to thousands of complaint-related phone calls and emails annually.

Complaint process for health care professions

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“We want and need to hear from the public if a provider or facility isn’t meeting standards,” noted Wiesman. “Our focus is ensuring safe, competent care for all patients. If there’s an issue, we want to know about it so we can prevent more problems from happening.”

It’s important to report problems as soon as possible after an incident to keep details fresh and accurate and to provide the information needed to help resolve the complaint or concern.

If a person is unsure of whether or not to file a complaint, they can call 1-360-236-4700 and speak to a customer care specialist.

Anyone who knows about an incident or event that involves substandard care or unprofessional conduct at a health care facility or with a health care professional may file a complaint.

The Department of Health encourages people to be check out their health care provider in advance by using license [Provider Credential Search](#) on the agency website to see if disciplinary action has been taken.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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