

# **A Guide to Resolving Your Health Care Concerns**

# Who is TMF Health



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TMF Health Quality Institute is the Medicare quality improvement organization for Texas. We look at the quality of medical care that Medicare patients receive. If you have a complaint regarding care that you received while on Medicare, contact us to talk about your concerns and what can be done to address them.

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# Quality Institute?

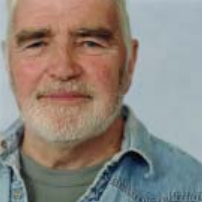


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We will help you complete paperwork about your concerns so that your complaint can be considered. Our goal is to address your concerns while working with physicians and health care providers (hospitals, nursing homes, surgery centers, etc.) to help them provide better care in the future.

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## **What do I do if I am concerned about the quality of Medicare services I received?**

If you have a concern about the quality of Medicare services that you or a loved one received, contact:

TMF Health Quality Institute  
Bridgepoint I, Suite 300  
5918 West Courtyard Drive  
Austin, TX 78730-5036

1-800-725-9216

### **Examples of quality concerns that TMF Health Quality Institute can address are:**

- Medication errors
- Unnecessary or inappropriate surgery
- Unnecessary or inappropriate treatment
- Change in condition not treated
- Discharged from the hospital too soon
- Incomplete discharge instructions and/or arrangements



If you make a quality of care complaint to TMF Health Quality Institute, we will request your medical records and forward them to a practicing physician who works with us. This physician will look at all aspects of the care surrounding the complaint. A decision will then be made about whether to address your complaint through dispute resolution or medical record review.

## **Dispute resolution (including mediation)**

- Dispute resolution, if appropriate for your situation, allows you to work with TMF Health Quality Institute to report the circumstances of your complaint to the appropriate physician or health care provider so that improvements can be made.
- One form of dispute resolution that may be an option for you is mediation. Mediation is a face-to-face, confidential meeting between the two sides (parties) of a conflict. A mediator—an impartial third party who has no interest in the specific outcome of the problem—helps guide the two parties to a resolution.
- Other forms of dispute resolution might be less formal than mediation. A mediator may talk to each party separately to resolve the conflict.

## **Medical record review**

- Our review is based on what is written in your medical record. We must have your doctor or health care provider mail us a copy. For concerns that are not documented in the medical record, we can't



make a decision one way or the other. This does not mean that we believe the things that you are concerned about did not happen. It just means that there is nothing in the record about them that would allow us to make a determination. A delay in bringing your pain medication, for example, might not be documented in the medical record.

- Based on your medical record, we will tell you if the care you received met professionally recognized standards of health care. We are limited by federal law as to what we can tell you beyond this. If your care did not meet these standards, we work closely with the doctor or health care provider so that future care will be improved.
- The purpose of our review is to help doctors and health care providers improve the future care they give to Medicare beneficiaries. The purpose is not to punish the doctor or provider. When a concern is found, TMF Health Quality Institute takes steps to find out what caused the concern so that it can be prevented from happening again. We may:
  - Educate the doctor or provider on ways they can improve.
  - Help the doctor or provider to develop a plan to improve future care.
  - Take steps such as sending our concerns to the proper licensing body or state agency.
  - Examine more medical records to see if there are other concerns.



## Where can I get help with other health care concerns?

The agency that can help you depends on the nature of your concern. Some concerns can be addressed by more than one agency.

- **If you have a concern about a physician,** such as unprofessional conduct, incompetent practice or licensing questions, you may also contact:

Texas Medical Board  
Investigations Department, MC-263  
P.O. Box 2018  
Austin, TX 78768-2018  
1-800-201-9353

- **If you have a concern about conditions at a hospital,** such as rooms too hot or cold, cold food or poor housekeeping, you may also contact:

Texas Department of  
State Health Services,  
Health Facility Licensing  
and Compliance Division  
1100 W. 49th Street  
Austin, TX 78756  
1-888-973-0022

- **If you have a concern about the quality of care for services not covered by Medicare,** such as services in a nursing home, assisted living facility or adult day care, or you have a concern about a hospice agency not related to quality of care, contact:

Texas Department of Aging  
and Disability Services  
701 W. 51st Street  
Austin, TX 78751  
1-800-458-9858

- **If you have a concern about Medicare fraud,** contact:

Better Business Bureau  
Education Foundation  
1333 West Loop South, Suite 1200  
Houston, TX 77027  
1-877-468-9222

- **If you have a concern about billing,** such as questions about charges and what Medicare does or does not cover, contact:

1-800-MEDICARE

## Other important resources

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- Medicaid  
1-800-252-8263
- Community Mental Health Services/Mental Retardation Services  
1-800-252-8154
- Area Agency on Aging (assistance for the elderly)  
1-800-252-9240
- Social Security Administration  
1-800-772-1213

## Important Web sites

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- Official U.S. Government Site for People with Medicare  
(includes information for comparing hospitals, nursing homes  
and home health agencies in your area)  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)
- TMF Health Quality Institute  
[www.tmf.org](http://www.tmf.org)



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