

214.103 HEALTH-RELATED LICENSING BOARDS; COMPLAINT, INVESTIGATION, AND HEARING.

Subdivision 1. **Application.** For purposes of this section, "board" means "health-related licensing board" and does not include the non-health-related licensing boards. Nothing in this section supersedes section 214.10, subdivisions 2a, 3, 8, and 9, as they apply to the health-related licensing boards.

Subd. 2. **Receipt of complaint.** The boards shall receive and resolve complaints or other communications, whether oral or written, against regulated persons. Before resolving an oral complaint, the executive director or a board member designated by the board to review complaints may require the complainant to state the complaint in writing. The executive director or the designated board member shall determine whether the complaint alleges or implies a violation of a statute or rule which the board is empowered to enforce. The executive director or the designated board member may consult with the designee of the attorney general as to a board's jurisdiction over a complaint. If the executive director or the designated board member determines that it is necessary, the executive director may seek additional information to determine whether the complaint is jurisdictional or to clarify the nature of the allegations by obtaining records or other written material, obtaining a handwriting sample from the regulated person, clarifying the alleged facts with the complainant, and requesting a written response from the subject of the complaint.

Subd. 3. **Referral to other agencies.** The executive director shall forward to another governmental agency any complaints received by the board which do not relate to the board's jurisdiction but which relate to matters within the jurisdiction of another governmental agency. The agency shall advise the executive director of the disposition of the complaint. A complaint or other information received by another governmental agency relating to a statute or rule which a board is empowered to enforce must be forwarded to the executive director of the board to be processed in accordance with this section.

Subd. 4. **Role of the attorney general.** The executive director or the designated board member shall forward a complaint and any additional information to the designee of the attorney general when the executive director or the designated board member determines that a complaint is jurisdictional and:

- (1) requires investigation before the executive director or the designated board member may resolve the complaint;
- (2) that attempts at resolution for disciplinary action or the initiation of a contested case hearing is appropriate;
- (3) that an agreement for corrective action is warranted; or

(4) that the complaint should be dismissed, consistent with subdivision 8.

Subd. 5. Investigation by attorney general. If the executive director or the designated board member determines that investigation is necessary before resolving the complaint, the executive director shall forward the complaint and any additional information to the designee of the attorney general. The designee of the attorney general shall evaluate the communications forwarded and investigate as appropriate. The designee of the attorney general may also investigate any other complaint forwarded under subdivision 3 when the designee of the attorney general determines that investigation is necessary. In the process of evaluation and investigation, the designee shall consult with or seek the assistance of the executive director or the designated board member. The designee may also consult with or seek the assistance of other qualified persons who are not members of the board who the designee believes will materially aid in the process of evaluation or investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the designee shall forward the investigative report to the executive director.

Subd. 6. Attempts at resolution. (a) At any time after receipt of a complaint, the executive director or the designated board member may attempt to resolve the complaint with the regulated person. The available means for resolution include a conference or any other written or oral communication with the regulated person. A conference may be held for the purposes of investigation, negotiation, education, or conciliation. The results of attempts at resolution with the regulated person may include a recommendation to the board for disciplinary action, an agreement between the executive director or the designated board member and the regulated person for corrective action, or the dismissal of a complaint. If attempts at resolution are not in the public interest or are not satisfactory to the executive director or the designated board member, then the executive director or the designated board member may initiate a contested case hearing.

(1) The designee of the attorney general shall represent the board in all attempts at resolution which the executive director or the designated board member anticipate may result in disciplinary action. A stipulation between the executive director or the designated board member and the regulated person shall be presented to the board for the board's consideration. An approved stipulation and resulting order shall become public data.

(2) The designee of the attorney general shall represent the board upon the request of the executive director or the designated board member in all attempts at resolution which the executive director or the designated board member anticipate may result in corrective action. Any agreement between the executive director or the designated board member and the regulated person for corrective action shall be in writing and shall be reviewed by the designee of the attorney general prior to its execution. The agreement for corrective action shall provide for dismissal of the complaint upon successful completion by the regulated person of the corrective action.

(b) Upon receipt of a complaint alleging sexual contact or sexual conduct with a client, the board must forward the complaint to the designee of the attorney general for an investigation. If, after it is investigated, the complaint appears to provide a basis for disciplinary action, the board shall resolve the complaint by disciplinary action or initiate a contested case hearing. Notwithstanding paragraph (a), clause (2), a board may not take corrective action or dismiss a complaint alleging sexual contact or sexual conduct with a client unless, in the opinion of the executive director, the designated board member, and the designee of the attorney general, there is insufficient evidence to justify disciplinary action.

Subd. 7. Contested case hearing. If the executive director or the designated board member determines that attempts at resolution of a complaint are not in the public interest or are not satisfactory to the executive director or the designated board member, the executive director or the designated board member, after consultation with the designee of the attorney general, may initiate a contested case hearing under chapter 14. The designated board member or any board member who was consulted during the course of an investigation may participate at the contested case hearing. A designated or consulted board member may not deliberate or vote in any proceeding before the board pertaining to the case.

Subd. 8. Dismissal of a complaint. A complaint may not be dismissed without the concurrence of at least two board members and, upon the request of the complainant, a review by a representative of the attorney general's office. The designee of the attorney general must review before dismissal any complaints which allege any violation of chapter 609, any conduct which would be required to be reported under section 626.556 or 626.557, any sexual contact or sexual conduct with a client, any violation of a federal law, any actual or potential inability to practice the regulated profession or occupation by reason of illness, use of alcohol, drugs, chemicals, or any other materials, or as a result of any mental or physical condition, any violation of state medical assistance laws, or any disciplinary action related to credentialing in another jurisdiction or country which was based on the same or related conduct specified in this subdivision.

Subd. 9. Information to complainant. A board shall furnish to a person who made a complaint a written description of the board's complaint process, and actions of the board relating to the complaint. The written notice from the board must advise the complainant of the right to appeal the board's decision to the attorney general within 30 days of receipt of the notice.

Subd. 10. Prohibited participation by board member. A board member who has actual bias or a current or former direct financial or professional connection with a regulated person may not vote in board actions relating to the regulated person.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 70; 1994 c 465 art 1 s 26; 1995 c 164 s 34; 2005 c 147 art 5 s 24; 2007 c 123 s 129,130*

NOTE: The amendments to subdivisions 8 and 9 by Laws 2007, chapter 123, sections 129 and 130 respectively, are effective August 1, 2009. Laws 2007, chapter 123, sections 129 and 130, the effective dates.