

What if I have a complaint?

Before becoming accredited, a provider must show that it focuses on quality improvement, the best possible outcomes of its services, and customer satisfaction.

However, even the best providers will receive a complaint from time to time. If you have a concern about the services you are receiving, you can take several steps.

First, tell a staff member about your concern and ask who can help you resolve it. This provider pledges to work hard to resolve concerns about its services.

Then, if you are unable to quickly resolve the concern, ask a staff member to tell you how to use the grievance process. Accredited providers must have a grievance procedure available to the people it serves and its staff members.

Finally, if you feel your concern is not resolved through the grievance process, you may want to contact the Protection and Advocacy agency in your state, province, or territory. You might also contact the governmental agency that is responsible for licensing the provider to operate.

CARF is not connected with or responsible for the administration, acts, personnel, property, or practices of providers with accredited services.

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■ What is accreditation?

- Accreditation is a process that demonstrates
- a provider has met standards for the quality of its services. CARF International* establishes
- these standards to guide providers in offering their
- services and also uses the standards to evaluate
- how well a provider is serving people and how it
- can improve.

What is a survey?

As a step toward accreditation, a provider invites CARF International to send a team of professionals, called surveyors, to visit its site and evaluate its services for quality. The surveyors consult with staff members and interview people who use the provider's services. Based on the surveyors' review, the provider may be awarded accreditation for a term of one or three years for CARF accreditation and five years for CARF-CCAC accreditation. In some cases, the provider may need to improve its services before it can become accredited.

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**The CARF International family of organizations, including CARF, CARF Canada, and CARF-CCAC, is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. Founded in 1966 as the Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities, the accrediting body is known as CARF.*