

**WAC 182-559-600 Grievance and appeals system.** (1) This section contains information about the third-party administrator (TPA) grievance and appeal system and the medicaid agency's administrative hearing process for clients under the foundational community supports program.

(a) The TPA must have a grievance and appeal system and access to an agency administrative hearing to allow clients to file grievances and seek review of a TPA adverse benefit determination as defined in WAC 182-559-150.

(b) The agency's administrative hearing rules in chapter 182-526 WAC apply to agency administrative hearings requested by a client to review the resolution of a client's appeal of a TPA adverse benefit determination.

(c) If a conflict exists between the requirements of this chapter and specific program rules, the requirements of this chapter prevail.

(d) The TPA's policies and procedures regarding the grievance system must be approved by the agency.

(e) The TPA must maintain records of grievances and appeals.

(2) TPA grievance and appeal system. The TPA grievance and appeal system includes:

(a) A grievance process for addressing complaints about any matter that is not an adverse benefit determination;

(b) A TPA appeals process to address a client's request for review of a TPA adverse benefit determination;

(c) Access to the agency's administrative hearing process for review of a TPA's resolution of an appeal; and

(d) Allowing clients and the client's authorized representatives to file grievances and appeals orally or in writing. The TPA cannot require clients to provide written follow up for a grievance or an appeal that the TPA received orally.

(3) Notice requirements. The TPA must follow notice and timeline requirements under chapter 182-518 WAC. The TPA sends written notice when they:

(a) Approve the client's foundational community supports eligibility and authorize the delivery of services;

(b) Deny the client's foundational community supports eligibility; and

(c) Approve the client's foundational community supports eligibility without authorization of services due to necessary funding being unavailable. Clients must be notified of placement on a waitlist until funding becomes available.

(4) The TPA grievance process.

(a) A client or client's authorized representative may file a grievance with the TPA. A provider may not file a grievance on behalf of a client without the client's written consent.

(b) Clients do not have a right to an agency administrative hearing regarding the resolution of a grievance.

(c) The TPA must acknowledge receipt of each grievance either orally or in writing within two business days.

(d) The TPA must notify clients of the resolution of grievances within five business days of determination.

(5) The TPA appeals process.

(a) A client, the client's authorized representative, or a provider acting on behalf of the client with the client's written consent may appeal a TPA adverse benefit determination.

(b) The TPA treats oral inquiries about appealing an adverse benefit determination as an appeal to establish the earliest possible

filing date for the appeal. The TPA confirms the oral appeal in writing.

(c) The TPA must acknowledge in writing the receipt of each appeal to both the client and the requesting provider within five calendar days of receiving the appeal request. The appeal acknowledgment letter sent by the TPA serves as written confirmation of an appeal filed orally by a client.

(d) The client must file an appeal of a TPA action within sixty calendar days of the date on the TPA's notice of adverse benefit determination.

(e) The TPA must continue services pending the results of an appeal or subsequent agency administrative hearing.

(f) The TPA internal appeal process:

(i) Provides the client a reasonable opportunity to present evidence and allegations of fact or law, both in person and in writing;

(ii) Provides the client and the client's representative the client's case file, other documents and records, and any new or additional evidence considered, relied upon, or generated by the TPA (or at the direction of the TPA) in connection with the action. This information must be provided free of charge in advance of the resolution time frame for appeals as specified in this section; and

(iii) Includes as parties to the appeal:

(A) The client and the client's authorized representative; and

(B) The legal representative of the deceased client's estate.

(g) The TPA ensures that the people making decisions on appeals were not involved in any previous level of review or decision making.

(h) Time frames for resolution of appeals.

(i) The TPA resolves each appeal and provides notice as expeditiously as the client's health condition requires and no longer than three calendar days after the day the TPA receives the appeal.

(ii) The TPA may extend the time frame by an additional fourteen calendar days if it is necessary in order to complete the appeal.

(i) Notice of resolution of appeal. The notice of the resolution of the appeal must:

(i) Be in writing and be sent to the client and the requesting provider;

(ii) Include the results of the resolution of the appeal process and the date it was completed; and

(iii) Include information on the client's right to request an agency administrative hearing and how to do so as provided in the agency hearing rules under WAC 182-526-0095, if the appeal is not resolved wholly in favor of the client.

(j) Deemed completion of the TPA appeal process. If the TPA fails to adhere to the notice and timing requirements for appeals, the client is deemed to have completed the TPA's appeals process and may request an agency administrative hearing under WAC 182-526-0095.

(6) Agency administrative hearing.

(a) Only a client or the client's authorized representative may request an agency administrative hearing. A provider may not request a hearing on behalf of a client.

(b) If the client does not agree with the TPA's resolution of an appeal at the completion of the TPA appeal process, the client may file a request for an agency administrative hearing based on the rules in this section and the agency hearing rules in chapter 182-526 WAC. The client must request an agency administrative hearing within ninety calendar days of the notice of resolution of appeal.

(c) The TPA is an independent party and responsible for its own representation in any administrative hearing, appeal to the board of appeals, and any subsequent judicial proceedings.

(7) Effect of reversed resolutions of appeals. If the TPA or a final order as defined in chapter 182-526 WAC reverses a decision to deny or limit services, the TPA must authorize or provide the disputed services promptly and as expeditiously as the client's health condition requires.

(8) Funding unavailable. When a client receives approval for services and funding is unavailable, the client may appeal the determination that funding is unavailable.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.021 and 41.05.160. WSR 18-15-007, § 182-559-600, filed 7/6/18, effective 8/6/18.]