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## **PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING COMPLAINTS AGAINST PODIATRIC RESIDENCY PROGRAMS CHARGED WITH VIOLATING COTH POLICIES REGARDING RESIDENCY SELECTION PROCESS**

It is the policy of the Council of Teaching Hospitals of the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM) to ensure that all residency programs participating in the national application and matching service comply with all the rules, guidelines and standards related to residency selection and participation in the Association's centralized application service, CASPR, its regional interview program, CRIP, and that its members also comply with all rules, practices and guidelines of the Council. Individuals with interest in graduate podiatric medical education may file a complaint against any podiatric residency program participating in CASPR. Only COTH members may file a complaint against another COTH member for COTH compliance matters unrelated to CASPR. Appropriately filed complaints will be addressed in accordance with the procedures stated below.

### I. Committee Composition:

1. The COTH Complaint Committee shall be composed of the Chair of the COTH, the Chair-Elect and the Executive Director of the AACPM. If the Chair so desires, the Regional Representative in which the institution involved is assigned may be asked to take part in the investigation and serve as an additional Committee member.
2. Members of the Administrative Board of the COTH and/or staff may be assigned by the Chair to conduct additional investigation as necessary, including without limitation visiting the institution to obtain additional information, interviewing relevant parties and the like.
3. All persons investigating the complaint understand and agree that the complaint and all information related to the complaint is confidential and shall be made available only to persons with a specific need to know the information and who are involved in investigating or acting on the complaint.
4. Should the complaint be from or against the residency program represented by the Chairman, the Chair-Elect of the COTH shall receive the complaint and shall assume the role as Chair of the Complaint Committee and take all responsibility in these Procedures otherwise assigned to the Chairman.
5. No individual representing the program from which the complaint was received or against which the complaint is made, or any other person with a conflict of interest, shall be assigned to investigate the complaint. The complainant may also be given an opportunity to discuss the complaint and/or meet with the Chairman or his representatives within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the complaint by the complainant.

### II. Complaint Requirements

1. In order to be considered, the complaint must be received by the Chair in written form, such as letter, facsimile or email.
2. The complaint must be signed and include the following:

- a. Name of the Podiatric Residency Program against which the complaint is made and its Director
  - b. The nature of the complaint
  - c. How the complainant has been affected by this alleged violation
  - d. Statement of the policy, standard or guideline that has been considered violated
3. If available, the complaint should also include dates and written documents that would support the allegation such as invitations, agendas, schedules or any other such materials.
  4. If the complainant desires to have his/her name withheld from the parties involved, it should be so stated in the complaint.

### III. Procedure:

1. The Chair shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint, request additional information from the complainant as necessary and provide the complainant an opportunity to discuss the complaint with the Chair within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the complaint by the Chair.
2. During this same initial 10 day time period, the Chair notifies in writing the Director of the Residency Program against which the complaint is made, with a copy to the hospital administrator, and requests the institution respond within ten (10) working days. All correspondence is to be sent by certified mail.
3. The Chair reviews any additional information received from the complainant and the response of the residency program within ten (10) days of receiving all the information and responses. If the complaint appears valid, the complaint and all additional information and responses are distributed to the Committee to discuss and make a preliminary finding. Within ten (10) working days, the Committee should make its initial determination and notify in writing the Residency Program Director and hospital administrator of its findings.
4. The Residency Program Director and hospital administrator have ten (10) days from receipt of the initial findings to review the findings and respond in writing.
5. The committee reviews any response received from the Residency Program Director and hospital administrator within ten (10) days of the receipt of the response.
  - a. If the residency program director is not in substantial agreement with the proposed findings, an effort is made to identify and reconcile the possible differences.
  - b. The Committee will make recommendations to the COTH Administrative Board.
  - c. Any sanctions imposed upon an institution must receive a majority vote of the COTH Administrative Board.
6. The final disposition of the complaint ordinarily includes one or more of the following actions within a timely manner.

- a. Response to the complainant that provides clarification of the complaint and adequate information for resolution or reports the action of the COTH Administrative Board
  - b. Recommendations to the residency program director for changes in procedures for adherence to Association policies governing residency selection and participation in the programs administered by the COTH Administrative Board.
  - c. Imposition of Sanctions that may include any or all of the following:
    - 1) Programs found in violation that are COTH members shall be put on probationary status in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Council of Teaching Hospitals;
    - 2) Programs found in violation shall be listed on the CASPR/CRIP web site as well as on the public site of the COTH web site;
    - 3) These programs shall be identified during the CASPR/CRIP Orientation Presentations at the colleges of podiatric medicine;
    - 4) Letters shall be sent to the Deans of the colleges of podiatric medicine and the Graduate Placement Directors with the strong suggestion that this list be posted for students to see;
    - 5) COTH Regional Representatives shall notify the residency programs in their region of these sanctioned programs;
  - d. A letter shall be sent to CPME noting the action of the COTH Administrative Board against the sanctioned program with a certified copy mailed to the sanctioned program.
  - e. Other recommendations or actions that the COTH Administrative Board deems appropriate given the nature of the complaint and its disposition before the Board.
7. In the event that the residency program director and/or hospital administrator is not in agreement with the final determination of the COTH Administrative Board the matter will be turned over to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine for adjudication at the written request of the institution.

Adopted by COTH Administrative Board July 1992

Approved by the AACPM Board of Directors February 1993

Amended October 1999, November 2004, January 24, 2005, May 12, 2005

Approved by the AACPM Board of Directors, March 9, 2005