

NORS Training: Part II

Coding Complaints

Beyond the Basics Answer Sheet

DIRECTIONS: For each problem below, give the number of cases, number of complaints and the primary complaint code for each complaint. **NOTE:** Use only one complaint code for each complaint.

When reviewing each scenario below, remember:

- a. A case must have one or more complaints brought to or initiated by the ombudsman.
- b. The complaints must be made by or on behalf of one or more residents and the complaint(s) must be related to the health, safety, welfare or rights of the residents.
- c. The ombudsman must be actively involved in working on the complaint, and includes ombudsman investigation, strategy to resolve, and follow-up.

1. A nursing home staff person tells you that Mrs. Smith's son, who has power of attorney for his mother is using her income for his own purposes and has not paid her bill for three months. The staff person requests your involvement in resolving the nonpayment issue. Mrs. Smith tells you that she is worried that her bill is not getting paid and she hopes you can do something about it.

Number of cases: 1
Number of complaints in each case: case #1 1
Primary Complaint code for each complaint: case #1 P121 = Financial exploitation or neglect by family or other not affiliated with facility

This is one case with one complaint. Discuss potential financial exploitation and remind ombudsmen that it's not against facility in either Part A (Abuse/neglect/Exploitation) or E Financial Property. LTCO's are not bill collectors but the resident is concerned and wants assistance and therefore there is a complaint to take action on.

2. You go to the facility in the middle of the afternoon. Mrs. Jones tells you that she used her call light twice that morning and each time she had to wait 20 minutes before someone came to help her.

Number of cases: 1
Number of complaints in each case: case #1 1 case #2 _____
Primary Complaint code for each complaint: case #1 F41 = **Failure to respond to requests for assistance**

This is just one case and one call light complaint. There is no indication that this is a staffing problem. Perhaps a new aide has not been trained appropriately about responding to call lights or maybe the call light is broken.

3. You visit Mrs. Brown in the morning. She tells you that she needed help getting to the toilet during the night and she kept pressing her call light button for over an hour but no one came to help her. When an aide finally came, she told Mrs. Brown that she was sorry it took so long, but three aides had called in sick so it was taking her longer to get to everyone who needed help.

Number of cases: 1
Number of complaints in each case: case #1 1 case #2 _____
Primary Complaint code for each complaint: case #1 M97 = **Shortage of staff**

This would be coded as a staffing problem. Unlike the previous problem, the resident gave you enough information about the problem to determine that lack of staff is the correct code.

4. You are in Sunrise Nursing Home for the second time in a week. You are on your way to visit Ms. Smith. During both visits to Sunrise, you've noticed that many call lights are going unanswered. Today, you overhear an aide say that they don't have enough staff on duty. She complains that she has five additional residents to care for and she just can't answer all the call bells. When you meet with Ms. Smith, she explains that she is not getting enough PT. She also tells you that no one has changed her bed today. It is wet and she is uncomfortable.

Number of cases: 2
Number of complaints in each case: case #1 2 case #2 1
Primary Complaint code for each complaint: case #1 G58 F45 case #2 M97
Case #1 = G. 58 Therapies, physical, occupational, speech & F. 45 Personal hygiene (includes nail care & oral hygiene) and adequacy of dressing & grooming
Case #2 = M97 Shortage of staff

This would be two separate cases. Ms. Smith is the complainant in one case. This case contains two complaints: A physical therapy complaint and a complaint about the soiled linen. The ombudsman may suspect that the problem with the soiled bedding is a result of understaffing, but Ms. Smith does not really give the ombudsman enough information to code it as a staffing complaint.

The second case is an ombudsman initiated case with one complaint: inadequate staffing based on the unanswered call lights and the comments of the aide. The ombudsman is the complainant. The ombudsman's own observations are the basis for the complaint.

5. Ms. Green's daughter, Ann, calls you because she wants Sunrise Nursing Home to return a radio that she had given to her mother. Sunrise told Ann that her mother had given the radio to her roommate's niece shortly before she died, because she thought she would enjoy it.

Number of cases: 0
Number of complaints in each case: case #1 ___ case #2 ___
Primary Complaint code for each complaint: case #1 ___ case #2 ___

This is not a case. Open a case for a resident who has died only if resolving the complaint or problem would help other residents in the facility. Resolving the problem of the radio would not benefit other residents. It might be a consultation.

6. Mr. Brown's daughter, Ellen, calls you a month after her father died. Sunrise Nursing Home just sent the funds that were in her father's personal needs account at the home. He had been on Medicaid. He had about \$500 less in the account than she thought he had. The facility told her they had charged him 50 cents per mile whenever he took the van to church and whenever he went with them on field trips. Ellen said the facility never told her or her father about the mileage fee. She's angry with the facility. She wants them to pay her back.

Number of cases: 1
Number of complaints in each case: case #1 1 case #2 ___
Primary Complaint code for each complaint: case #1 E36 = **Billing/charges**
- notice, approval, questionable, accounting wrong or denied

This would be a case because the facility's policy affects the other residents. The fact that Ellen might recover some money does not change the fact that resolving the problem will help other residents.

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