**Internal Complaint Policy Critique**

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Centra PACE has many policies with positive and negative qualities. Centra PACE is a nonprofit assistance program that reaches out to older adults. One of PACE’s policies is their internal complaint policy; this allows clients and their constituents to make written complaints. These complaints lead to internal investigations to ensure clients are being treated properly. This policy has many positive and negative implications, such as representation and misuse of resources. The internal complaint policy allows clients and workers to discuss potential problems within PACE.

Centra PACE is a non-profit agency dedicated to improving the lives of older adults from age 55 and older. PACE provides a variety of services, each one serving the same purpose of increasing the quality of life for older adults. Example of these services include adult daycare, physical therapy, grief counseling, and end-of-life services. Centra PACE is comprised of multiple disciplines, including social work, social services, physical therapy, nursing, and transportation services. Oftentimes these various disciplines work together to provide the most appropriate services to clients, or participants as Centra refers to them. This cohesion between disciplines is exemplified by PACE’s bi-weekly interdisciplinary meetings. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, members of each discipline meet to discuss current issues participants are experiencing. These issues are usually either the product of difficulties with a participant or a lack of resources. Centra PACE, while still a young program, shows much promise as an intervention for older adults (Medicare, 2023).

In addition to internal services, Centra PACE also acts as a liaison to external services. The Farmville division of PACE is partnered with five housing programs; each of these housing programs provides older adults with affordable housing. Centra PACE also works to ensure participants can meet with their physicians. For example, a PACE-based social worker may help a participant schedule an appointment with an optometrist. PACE acts as a provision of services in addition to a liaison to external services. Both actions serve the purpose of providing efficient and appropriate services to older adults.

Centra PACE has policies in place to ensure that their services are of high quality and meet participants where they are. One of these policies is the internal complaint review policy. This policy allows participants, family members, or other representatives to file a grievance with PACE’s medical and/or nonmedical services (Training, 2023). After a complaint has been filed, the department involved in the complaint will receive a thorough investigation. These complaints also apply to services outside of PACE. A complaint can be filed by any member of PACE, allowing for maximum accessibility for a complaint to be made. For example, suppose a participant had an appointment with their eye doctor. Despite making it to the doctor’s office early, the participants had to wait two hours before the doctor called them back. The doctor only spoke with them for fifteen minutes before scheduling another appointment next week. The participants felt frustrated that they spent so much time waiting for little results. The participant went on to make a complaint to their social worker. In this example, the participant had an issue with an external service and made a complaint with someone from another department. These scenarios are not uncommon at PACE as far as complaints are concerned (Edmonds, 2023).

Social and public policies share similar, yet distinguished meanings. A social policy is any type of legislation that addresses issues pertaining to social inequality. For example, a policy that addresses a racially biased attendance policy would be a social policy. A public policy is any type of legislation based in the government or benefits the general population. For example, loan forgiveness policy would be considered a public policy as it benefits the general population. While similar, the causes and purposes of public and social policies are different.

Another important difference is the relationship between problems and policy. Social policies are often proposed and put in place as a means of decreasing said problem. For example, the internal complaint review policy addresses an important issue older adults experience: a lack of power. Often, older adults voice feelings of a lack of control over their lives, and this is not untrue. Typically, older adults’ deteriorating health forces them to relinquish some control to family members and other caretakers. This issue is what makes the internal complaint review such an important policy. It gives older adults the opportunity to voice their concerns and work to make a difference within their organization.

The greatest benefit of the internal complaint review policy is the representation it gives to older adults. This policy provides a platform for older adults to discuss issues they are experiencing. In doing so, it provides members of Centra PACE to reflect on potential problems within the agency and work to improve them. This policy provides older adults with a sense of agency, as they can fight back against potential injustices. The internal complaint review policy provides older adults with a voice and the opportunity for employees to learn from their mistakes.

One potential issue with the internal complaint review policy is that it could be misused in some cases. For example, a participant may file a grievance due to a concern about completing a form on time. While this is a valid concern, this is not something that would require an internal investigation. This is because this is a simple concern that could be resolved between the participant and an appropriate staff member. If the participant had been denied the chance to work on this form, an internal investigation would be warranted. It is important for an employee to consider the necesity of an internal investigation while working with participants. Sometimes, it can be reoslved without a formal complaint. Currently, the internal complaint review policy functions as it is with efficiency and good intentions.

Centra PACE benefits greatly from its internal complaint review policy. It allows participants to discuss problems and find autonomy in their older years. Additionally, it provides caretakers the opportunity to reflect on any major issues within PACE. This policy is beneficial for all parties involved. This policy is a social policy as it intends to resolve inequalities between participants within PACE and the greater community. There are issues of misuse of resources, but these issues are more tolerable than inequality toward older adults.

References

Edmonds, A. (2023). *Internal Complaint Review.* Centra PACE. <file:///C:/Users/kingc/Downloads/Internal%20Complaint%20Review%20%20July%202023.pdf>

Medicare. (2023). *PACE.* Medicare. <https://www.medicare.gov/health-drug-plans/health-plans/your-coverage-options/other-medicare-health-plans/PACE>