

**NON-MANAGEMENT JOB DESCRIPTION
POINT RATING EVALUATION PLAN**

Working Title Advocate Representative		Name	
Position Number	Reports to Position No., Class & Level	Division, Branch/Unit Office of the Alberta Health Advocates	Ministry
Present Class		Requested Class	
Dept ID	Program Code	Project Code (if applicable)	

PURPOSE: Give a brief summary of the job, covering the main responsibilities, the framework within which the job has to operate and the main contribution to the organization (see Non-Management Job Description Writing Guide [Pages 7-8](#)).

The Office of the Alberta Health Advocates (OAHA) is comprised of the Alberta Health Advocate and the Mental Health Patient Advocate. The OAHA is responsible to carry out the legislated mandate of the Health Advocate in accordance with the *Alberta Health Act* and the Mental Health Patient Advocate in accordance with the *Mental Health Act*. The OAHA assists Albertans in dealing with concerns about services impacting their health, and in becoming empowered and effective advocates. The OAHA represents the voices of Albertans in the ongoing development of the health system.

The Advocate Representative is the initial and main point of contact for Albertans who are seeking help to navigate the health system or are making a complaint about their health care experience. The Advocate Representative is highly skilled in assisting Albertans to address complex health concerns, which are often emotionally charged and sometimes volatile situations. The Advocate Representative is well versed and knowledgeable in assisting Albertans to navigate the health system in all areas of the province.

The Advocate Representative identifies the issue(s) or concern(s), provides responses to queries or referrals to sources that can provide a response, and recommends the need for an investigation/review or assists in early resolution in response to complaints. Investigations/reviews under the jurisdiction of the Health Advocate and Mental Health Patient Advocate are led and completed by the Advocate Representative; this involves developing the investigation plan, completing interviews and researching multiple pieces of data, developing responses and recommendations, and informing the complainant of the disposition of the investigation. This position has a strong emphasis on analysis and investigation of issues, liaison with clients and stakeholders throughout these processes, and the development of evidence-based recommendations.

The Advocate Representative helps design, deliver and evaluate a variety of public education materials and training to a diverse range of stakeholders. Education/training informs Albertans of expectations and responsibilities related to the health care system under the Health Charter and informs Albertans about patient rights under the *Mental Health Act*. The Advocate Representative acts as a resource for service providers and helps patients and others in non-jurisdictional issues to navigate the system by making referrals to other organizations.

This work helps Albertans understand the Health Charter, patient rights, related legislation, and assists Albertans in navigating the health system, the mental health system, the social support system, and the concerns resolution system.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES: The purpose of the job can be broken down in different responsibilities and end results. Each end result shows what the job is accountable for, within what framework and what the added value is. Normally a job has 4-8 core end results. For each end result, approximately 3-6 activities should be described (see Writing Guide [Pages 9-10](#)).

Receive and analyze calls and correspondence to determine the most appropriate response and/or referral.

- Analyze oral and written inquiries to determine if they are under the Health Advocate and Mental Health Patient Advocate jurisdiction; some issues will have multiple jurisdictions.
- Provide information and referrals to queries, concerns, and complaints received by either Advocate to assist Albertans in navigating the health system, mental health system, social support system, and concerns resolution system.
- Refer complaints that are not within the jurisdiction of either Advocate to the appropriate jurisdictional process; if no viable referral source exists, then assist the person with developing options.
- Attempt to resolve the complaint if the nature of the complaint appears suited to early resolution without the need for a more in-depth investigation/review process.
- Recommend an in-depth investigation/review process be completed when issues are within either Advocate jurisdiction.

Lead the completion of the investigation/review process within the jurisdiction of the Health Advocate or the Mental Health Patient Advocate.

- Identify the nature of the complaint and articulate the scope of the investigation/review by applying the legislated mandate.
- Develop a plan for each investigation and manage the scope throughout the investigation/review.
- Interview relevant parties, including complainants, government officials, members of boards or agencies (at any level from executive to junior), the public and others without restriction.
- Research the policies, practices and legislative framework of the authority involved; review operational practices; review file information relating to a complaint, and data banks for previous similar incidents.
- Compile, synthesize and analyze collected information.
- Prepare written reports which outline complaint, process findings and recommendations for review by the Advocate.
- Prepare correspondence of varying complexity to the complainant and the investigated authority outlining the conclusions and recommendations of the investigation/review.
- Manage stakeholder expectations throughout, and sometimes after the investigative/review process, including regular verbal/written contact with complainant.
- Adhere to legislative, regulatory requirements as processes, and as well as OAHA policy/protocol and principles of natural justice and administrative fairness.

Develop and deliver education and public awareness resources for patients, families, clients, professionals and the general public to advance an understanding of the Health Charter and patient rights, related legislation as appropriate, navigating the system, the interests and needs of jurisdictional clients, and options within health care services.

- Work with the Manager/Education Coordinator to develop public education materials and content.
- Deliver public education on a variety of relevant topics to diverse audiences (e.g., OAHA services, interests, needs, the Health Charter and patient rights).
- Build and maintain relationships and capacity through value-added relationships with key stakeholders.
- Participate in the regular evaluation and revision of content to reflect evolving stakeholder needs.

Participate in a number of activities to support the administration of the OAHA in alignment with business plan goals and priorities.

- Maintain thorough documentation in the OAHA database (electronic client files system).

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- Provide research and analysis to support the development of operational policies, processes, or protocols.
- Analyze complaint trends over time to identify improvement opportunities and solutions as well as potential areas for own motion investigations.
- Visit health care facilities at the request of patients, health care providers or the OAHA to answer questions and ensure awareness of expectations and responsibilities under the Health Charter, patient rights and the role of the OAHA.
- Participate in system-wide or 'own motion' investigations/reviews at the direction of the Advocate.

SCOPE: List specific information that illustrates the challenges, problem solving and creativity requirements and decision making capacity of the position. Also identify the internal or external areas the job impacts (see Writing Guide [Pages 11-12](#)).

Under the supervision of the Manager, within legislation, regulation and policy guidelines, the Advocate Representative independently determines:

- How best to respond to a query, concern, or complaint, based on thorough analysis of the issue(s), and application of the legislated jurisdiction, existing regulations, policies, and processes.
- When to proceed with a early resolution or recommend an in-depth investigation/review process.
- Recommendations to be presented to the Manager for approval; the Representative is authorized to proceed with an early resolution when warranted by analysis of information.
- The sources of information to be accessed and their credibility.
- Informal resolution strategies to be considered and employed.
- The breadth of information to provide.
- The limits of confidentiality and information exchanges pursuant to the matter at hand.
- When to refer to another agency.

The Advocate Representative conducts investigations/reviews at the direction of the Manager and approval of the Advocate. Complexity is increased by the nature of complaints — each is unique, and within one complaint there might be multiple issues to pursue. During an investigation/review, multiple parties could be investigating the same issue, each for their own jurisdiction and scope (e.g., Alberta Health Services). The Advocate Representative must be able to be fair and objective when responding to any call or letter, yet sensitive to emotionally charged situations. In unusually complex cases, cases that may be media or politically sensitive, or when there may be an emerging trend, the Advocate Representative alerts and consults with the Manager.

A portfolio of investigations/reviews is managed by this position at any one time. The Advocate Representative determines the best way to complete investigations/reviews, maintains liaison with the complainant and the authority throughout the resolution process, and communicates with all parties at the conclusion of the investigation. Results and decisions made by the Advocate in response to investigations/reviews are based on the recommendations developed by the Advocate Representative.

When delivering education presentations or training, the Advocate Representative determines the best approach to use.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES: Include information on required diplomas and degrees along with identifying the most important knowledge factors, including knowledge about practical procedures, administrative, technical or professional techniques, technical, scientific or program related processes, etc. Detail specific training if there is an occupational certification/registration requirement for the position. Specify the type of experience required for the position (see Writing Guide [Pages 12-14](#)).

- Thorough knowledge of related legislation (e.g., *Alberta Health Act*, *Mental Health Act* and regulations, *Health Professions Act*, *Protection for Persons in Care Act*, *Health Information Act* and regulations, *Freedom of*

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Information and Privacy Act and regulations, Mental Health Patient Advocate Regulation, Patient Concerns Resolution Process Regulation)

- Thorough knowledge of the purpose, functions, and responsibilities of each Advocate
- Thorough knowledge of the policies, processes and protocols of the OAHA
- Experience in a health care or related setting, and/or work experience with vulnerable populations or in a complaint-handling or advocate role
- Skill and knowledge of investigative techniques and ability to conduct independent investigations
- Strong listening, written and oral communication skills, including public speaking
- Well-developed skills in MS Office, Internet, email and data entry systems used at the OAHA
- Strong research skills to research policies, practices, operational practices etc.
- Strong problem-solving, analytical, reasoning, and synthesis skills
- Sound decision-making skills and professional judgement
- Capacity to separate patient concerns from symptomology and relate to all clients with empathy, sensitivity and respect
- Manage difficult/emotionally charged clients in face-to-face meetings and during telephone intake
- Conflict management, negotiation, mediation and conciliation skills to effectively resolve complaints and influence actions of clients and stakeholders
- Knowledge of laws of evidence and principles of administrative fairness and their application in practice
- Strong time management skills with the ability to manage diverse caseloads and projects concurrently
- Self-directed yet demonstrated capacity to work as a team member
- Commitment to quality improvement
- Post-secondary degree or diploma in a related field or equivalencies.
- A vehicle and a valid driver's license for occasional travel to various hospitals/communities across Alberta.

Qualifications:

- University degree in a related field (Social Sciences, Social Work, Public Health, Criminology, Sociology, Psychology, Nursing & Psychiatry)
- Minimum 2 years' experience working as a Social Services professional
- The following equivalencies will be considered based on directly related education or experience:
 - 1 year of education for 1 year of experience; or
 - 1 year of experience for 1 year of education
- Experience providing outreach services, delivering public education materials and training to various stakeholders within health care field.
- Preferences will be given to candidates who have:
 - Minimum 1 year experience conducting investigations
 - Minimum 1 year experience in receiving & reviewing complaints
 - Have experience working in a complaints handling role
 - Have a valid Class 5 Alberta driver's license or equivalent

CONTACTS: Identify the main contacts the position communicates with and the purpose of the communication (See Writing Guide [Pages 14-15](#)).

- Manager — consult on complex cases to determine solutions; raise awareness to significant emerging issues; participate in projects to aid OAHA administration; collaborate on development and delivery of education materials
- Director— prepare correspondence and recommendations for each formal investigation/review for review and approval; participate as needed on system-wide or 'own motion' investigations

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- Advocate Representative Team— share information; collaborate on projects; discuss policies and procedures to increase consistency across investigations; consult on complex cases
- Stakeholder Groups (e.g., Boards, agencies, service providers and patient concerns consultants/advocates; Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, Alberta Ombudsman, Alberta Human Rights Commission, Protection for Persons in Care, professional bodies such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta) — engage as part of complaint resolution
- Public (e.g., Albertans, mental health patients or former patients, families, caregivers) — respond to queries, concerns and complaints; provide assistance and guidance / referrals to support navigation of the health care system
- Peers and related units in other provincial or federal government departments

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: List position numbers, class titles, and working titles of positions directly supervised (see Writing Guide [Page 15](#))

N/A

CHANGES SINCE LAST CLASSIFICATION REVIEW: Identify significant changes, that have impacted the responsibilities assigned to your position since the last review (see Writing Guide [Pages 15-16](#)).

ORGANIZATION CHART: An organization chart that includes supervisor, peers and staff **MUST** be attached (see Writing Guide [Page 17](#)).

Incumbent

Name

Signature

Date

Manager

Name

Signature

Date

Division Director/ADM

Name

Signature

Date