

# Grievance Procedure Under Section 1557 of the ACA, Section 504, and the ADA

Nondiscrimination Complaint Resolution Process

Effective Date: April 30, 2026

---

## SECTION 1: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Coastal Rheumatology Associates, LLC ("the Practice") is committed to providing high-quality healthcare in an environment free from discrimination. In furtherance of that commitment, the Practice has adopted this internal grievance procedure to provide a prompt and equitable resolution for complaints alleging any action prohibited by:

- **Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act** (42 U.S.C. § 18116), as amended by the 2024 Final Rule;
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** (29 U.S.C. § 794);
- **Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act** (42 U.S.C. §§ 12181–12189); or
- Any other applicable federal or state nondiscrimination law.

This grievance procedure is available to any individual who believes they have experienced discrimination in connection with the Practice's health programs, services, or activities.

### **Non-Retaliation Policy**

Coastal Rheumatology Associates, LLC does not retaliate against any individual who files a grievance, participates in the investigation of a grievance, or otherwise opposes any act or practice prohibited by applicable nondiscrimination laws. Any form of

intimidation, threat, coercion, or discrimination against such individuals is strictly prohibited.

## **SECTION 2: HOW TO FILE A GRIEVANCE**

### **2.1 Who May File**

A grievance may be filed by any patient, prospective patient, companion, or authorized representative who believes they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of:

- Race or color
- National origin (including limited English proficiency)
- Age
- Disability
- Sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics)
- Religion
- Any other characteristic protected by applicable law

### **2.2 Filing Deadline**

Grievances must be submitted **in writing** to the Section 1557/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator within **sixty (60) calendar days** of the date the person filing the grievance becomes aware of the alleged discriminatory action.

### **2.3 Coordinator Contact Information**

All grievances should be directed to:

**Christina Asbury**

Section 1557/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

Coastal Rheumatology Associates, LLC

**Address:** 5400 Waters Avenue, Savannah, GA 31404

**Phone:** 912-349-4227

**Email:** casbury@southeasternra.com

## 2.4 Required Information

The written grievance must include the following:

1. The complainant's full name and contact information (mailing address, phone number, and/or email address);
2. A detailed description of the alleged discriminatory act(s), including the names of individuals involved, if known; and
3. The date(s) on which the alleged discriminatory act(s) occurred.

## 2.5 Accommodations for Filing

The Practice recognizes that some individuals may need assistance in preparing or submitting a grievance. Alternative means of filing — including assistance with writing, the use of auxiliary aids and services, and language assistance — will be provided upon request for individuals who require accommodation. Please contact the Coordinator to arrange assistance.

## SECTION 3: INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION

**3.1 Acknowledgment.** Within **fifteen (15) business days** of receiving the grievance, the Coordinator will acknowledge receipt in writing and initiate an investigation into the complaint.

**3.2 Investigation.** The investigation may include, but is not limited to, interviews with the complainant, relevant staff members, and any witnesses identified by either party, as well as a review of relevant documentation, policies, and records.

**3.3 Communication.** The complainant will be kept reasonably informed of the status and progress of the investigation throughout the process.

**3.4 Written Determination.** Within **thirty (30) calendar days** of receiving the grievance, the Coordinator will issue a written determination to the complainant. The determination will include:

- A summary of the findings of the investigation;
- A decision regarding whether a violation occurred; and
- Any proposed resolution or corrective action, if applicable.

**3.5 Extension of Time.** If additional time is needed to complete the investigation, the Coordinator will notify the complainant in writing of the reason for the delay and the expected timeline for completion.

## **SECTION 4: APPEAL PROCESS**

**4.1 Right to Appeal.** If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, they may submit a written appeal to the Coordinator within **fifteen (15) calendar days** of receiving the written determination. The appeal should clearly state the basis for disagreement with the original decision.

**4.2 Independent Review.** The appeal will be reviewed by an individual who was not involved in the original investigation or determination.

**4.3 Appeal Response.** A written response to the appeal will be issued within **thirty (30) calendar days** of receipt of the appeal. The decision on appeal is the final decision of the Practice under this grievance procedure.

## **SECTION 5: RIGHT TO FILE AN EXTERNAL COMPLAINT**

**Important: Filing a Grievance Is Optional**

Use of this internal grievance procedure is entirely voluntary. Filing a grievance with the Practice is **not required** before filing a complaint with an external agency, and use of this procedure does not prevent or delay your right to file an external complaint at any time.

In addition to — or instead of — using this grievance procedure, any individual may file a complaint with the following external agencies:

### **5.1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights (HHS OCR)**

For complaints under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act:

<b>Method</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
<b>Online</b>	<a href="https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf">https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf</a>
<b>Mail</b>	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights 200 Independence Avenue SW, Room 509F, HHH Building Washington, DC 20201
<b>Phone</b>	1-800-368-1019 TDD: 1-800-537-7697
<b>Email</b>	OCRComplaint@hhs.gov

Complaints to HHS OCR must generally be filed within **180 days** of the date of the alleged discriminatory act.

### **5.2 U.S. Department of Justice**

For complaints under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section. Information is available at [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) or by calling **1-800-514-0301** (TDD: 1-800-514-0383).

## **SECTION 6: RECORD RETENTION**

All grievance records — including the original complaint, investigation notes, correspondence, findings, determinations, and any appeal documentation — will be maintained by the Practice for a minimum of **three (3) years** from the date of final resolution.

Records will be stored in a secure and confidential manner, with access limited to authorized personnel involved in the administration of this grievance procedure or as required by law.

## **SECTION 7: ACCOMMODATIONS**

Coastal Rheumatology Associates, LLC is committed to ensuring that all individuals can fully and meaningfully participate in the grievance process. The Practice will provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services at no cost, including but not limited to:

- Qualified interpreters (sign language and spoken language);
- Documents in alternative formats (large print, Braille, audio, or electronic text);
- Assistive listening devices;
- Written translation of grievance materials into languages other than English; and
- Other reasonable modifications necessary to ensure effective communication and equal access.

To request an accommodation at any point during the grievance process, please contact the Coordinator using the contact information provided in Section 2.3 above.

---

### **Coastal Rheumatology Associates, LLC**

5400 Waters Avenue • Savannah, GA 31404

Phone: 912-349-4227 • Email: [casbury@southeasternra.com](mailto:casbury@southeasternra.com)

This document was last updated on April 30, 2026. It is provided for informational purposes and reflects the Practice's commitment to compliance with applicable federal nondiscrimination laws.