

**PENN STATE HEALTH**  
**CODE OF CONDUCT**

**POLICY STATEMENT:** All employees of Penn State Health and Penn State Health-controlled entities; non-employed medical staff; contractors who provide patient care, billing or coding services; Corporate Officers and Board of Directors will be required to certify that they have received, read and acknowledge the Code of Conduct. Adherence to the Code of Conduct will be an element in evaluating employees.

**Introduction**

Penn State Health's leadership has adopted a comprehensive Corporate Compliance Plan and Code of Conduct and is committed to full compliance with all Federal health care program requirements. This Code of Conduct outlines how employees of Penn State Health and Penn State Health-controlled entities; non-employed medical staff; contractors who provide patient care, billing or coding services; Corporate Officers and Board of Directors for Penn State Health should properly conduct business to follow federal and state laws.

It is leadership's expectation that everyone will understand and follow this code and perform their jobs honestly and with specific regard for such laws. It is your responsibility to act ethically and legally with each person you come in contact with – patients, families, visitors, physicians, volunteers, vendors and other employees. This is the promise we make to our patients and the communities we serve.

This Code of Conduct was developed to ensure that you understand the complexity of the laws so you can abide by them. You need to be aware of laws that apply specifically to your job and obey them at all times.

This Code of Conduct does not replace any existing policies or procedures. It is designed to supplement institutional procedures and policies.

If you know of or suspect any conduct that may be illegal or unethical or is a potential violation of any Federal health care program requirement or Penn State Health policy or policy of any of its entities, you are expected to report it to your supervisor, the Penn State Health Compliance Officer at 531-1114 or to the Compliance Hotline at **800-560-1637** which may be called anonymously, 24 hours a day or which may be accessed online at **<http://pennstatehershey.org/hotline>**

The Compliance Hotline number for Penn State Health St. Joseph is **855-375-6749**.

## **Patient Rights**

Because we want to provide the best possible care to our patients and their families, we hire the most qualified people, educate them and continually monitor and enhance their skills, behaviors and knowledge. In an effort to improve our business, we do not ignore mistakes, but take steps to correct them.

Patients expect reasonable access to care, regardless of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. We treat patients whether they can pay or not and respect their personal beliefs and values. We encourage patients to participate in medical and ethical decisions about their care. We do not share confidential patient information with anyone who does not have a legal need to know. We provide excellent care to avoid instances of poor services, such as:

- ❑ Bad manners to a patient or family member;
- ❑ Action that might put patients in danger;
- ❑ Failure to provide prescribed care;
- ❑ Stealing patient property;
- ❑ Not documenting a patient's living will;
- ❑ Not reporting problems with equipment; and
- ❑ Not providing a proper examination for emergency department patients.

Patient care standards are included in the policy and procedure manuals throughout the Penn State Health entities. You need to be aware of the policies and laws that apply to your specific job.

## **Fraud & Abuse**

Healthcare fraud and abuse takes many different forms. Filing false claims, intentionally or carelessly using incorrect billing codes, providing unnecessary services, or paying for patient referrals, could be considered fraudulent or abusive. You must avoid these types of activities. Be sure that services performed are properly documented and that billings and codes are accurate.

We arrange financial and business relationships with the advice of legal counsel whenever necessary. We report costs under generally accepted accounting principles and according to the policy. We report expenses timely, with the proper authority, and through the prescribed process. In making estimates for financial reporting, we make the best possible estimate regardless of the impact on results or other measures.

Penn State Health is operated for the benefit of the community. Persons in a position to influence Penn State Health or any of its entities should not personally benefit from Penn State health activities.

Care and compliance with applicable policies and guidelines must be exercised when providing gifts, meals, refreshments, travel or lodging for government or public officials, to avoid the appearance of intent to influence an official action or decision. You are to consult your supervisor or department head, the chief compliance officer, or call the Compliance Hotline, if you have any questions about possible fraud and abuse.

## **Record Keeping**

A large health system like ours has many kinds of records. Because it is impossible to list all of the applicable rules, you need to learn the rules that apply to the documents you are required to work with. Remember:

- ❑ We do not falsify facts or make false records;
- ❑ We give records only to people who have a legal “need to know”;
- ❑ We keep records for as long as the law requires;
- ❑ We preserve patient confidentiality; and
- ❑ We dispose of records in accordance with established policy.

## **Integrity of Workforce**

Our reputation for quality service is a result of your performance. Remember to conduct yourself with personal integrity, good judgment and common sense at all times. Business decisions should be made in the best interest of the Penn State Health, without regard to personal interests or gain. A conflict of interest can result when an employee benefits, or appears to benefit, from a Penn State Health business decision. Potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed to your supervisor or administrator. The receipt of gifts or gratuities from those seeking to influence Penn State Health decisions are to be politely declined.

## **Open & Honest Communication**

You should support other staff members and be honest in your work with them. We try to create a workplace where everyone feels free to discuss concerns about any issue. We deal honestly and fairly with patients, families, community members, vendors, competitors, payers, and outside contractors.

## **Workplace Safety & Health**

We expect you to follow safety standards and regulations, and to report unsafe conditions to your supervisor.

## **Penn State Health Resources**

We are required to protect Penn State Health property and to use our facilities and equipment appropriately. You may not borrow Penn State Health property without permission or use time, facilities, or equipment for unapproved purposes. Ask your supervisor if you have questions about the appropriate use of property.

## **Relationships with Competitors/Vendors**

Information about business affairs of the Penn State Health, such as strategy, prices, costs, finances, and similar matters are confidential. You should not discuss private hospital business with anyone outside of the medical center. Contracts and contract negotiations are conducted in accordance with the law. Business integrity is important in choosing our business partners.

## **General Laws**

You are expected to comply with laws and rules specific to your job, not just those mentioned in this document. When in doubt, ask for clarification from your supervisor, department head, administrator, or the chief compliance officer.

Should any federal or state law enforcement official request information from you, please have them contact the chief compliance officer. If these officials are physically present requesting information, please contact your supervisor and the compliance officer immediately.

## **Failure to Comply with Federal Health Care Program Requirements**

Health care providers and suppliers (persons and organizations) who violate the Federal False Claims Act can be subject to civil monetary penalties ranging from \$10,781 to \$21,563 for each false claim submitted. In addition to this civil penalty, providers and suppliers can be required to pay three times the amount of damages sustained by the U.S. government. If a provider or supplier is convicted of a False Claims Act violation, the Office of Inspector General may seek to exclude the provider or supplier from participation in Federal health care programs.

## **Conclusion**

You are required to obey the laws, carry out your duties in an ethical manner, and follow established policies and procedures. We also expect you to report any known or perceived violations or any employee misconduct. Violations are serious matters. Corrective action, (including termination) outlined in institutional policies, as well as possible legal action, could result.

Approved by Compliance Committee – December 20, 2016