



**CONTRA COSTA HEALTH PLAN**  
**CODE OF CONDUCT**

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This Code of Conduct and its contents is not, and may not be, construed as, a contract of employment or any other type of contract. Employment with Contra Costa Health Plan (“CCHP”) at all times is “at will,” and either the employee or CCHP has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time.

This Code applies to all employees, board members, officers, directors, clinical staff, volunteers, vendors, contractors, consultants and agents of CCHP.

## MISSION

Contra Costa Health Plan, a division of Contra Costa Health Services, cares for and improves the health of all people in Contra Costa County with special attention to those who are most vulnerable to health problems.

- We provide high quality services with respect and responsiveness to all.
- We are an integrated system of health care services, community health improvement and environmental protection.
- We anticipate community health needs and change to meet those needs.
- We work in partnership with our patients, cities and diverse communities, as well as other health, education and human service agencies.
- We encourage creative, ethical and tenacious leadership to implement effective health policies and programs.

## Principles of the Code of Conduct

The following principles are the basis for the CCHP Code of Conduct. All CCHP personnel shall:

1. Treat all members with respect and dignity in an appropriate professional manner without regard to race, language, age, gender, religion, national origin or sexual preference.
2. Follow the Code of Conduct and conduct themselves in an ethical manner.
2. Report any concerns about possible compliance issues to the Compliance Officer or any member of the Compliance Committee. There shall be no retaliation against anyone who reports concerns that he/she believes create compliance issues for the organization. CCHP does not tolerate any acts of intimidation for good faith participation in the compliance program.
3. Communicate their questions or concerns to their immediate supervisor if they require clarification of a procedure, regulation or law related to their duties. Personnel will not be penalized for raising Compliance issues. CCHP expects that all personnel will be actively involved in correcting errors in a timely manner.
4. Obey all laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures to the very best of their abilities and knowledge.

## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

### Ethics

At Contra Costa Health Plan (“CCHP”), we are committed to adhering to high ethical standards in our operations. Ethical decision-making is not just about compliance with laws and regulations but about making choices that uphold the trust and respect of our colleagues, members, and stakeholders.

In both personal and professional settings, ethical decision-making involves evaluating choices in a way that considers the potential consequences such as impact on others, the organization, and society as a whole. We encourage all employees and stakeholders to approach decisions with care, seek advice when necessary, and ensure that their actions reflect our shared values of integrity and respect.

It is not possible or practical to list all behaviors that may be considered unacceptable in the workplace. Any seriously inappropriate conduct, as determined by CCHP, may result in consequences up to and including termination for the first offense. If you have questions about a topic or issue, you may go to your supervisor, manager, the Health Services Personnel Office, or the Compliance department.

#### **Unsure of what to do? Try considering the answers to these questions:**

**Does this decision align with CCHP’s core values and principles?** Will this choice reflect integrity, honesty, and fairness?

**How will this decision affect others?** What impact will it have on my colleagues, clients, community, or stakeholders?

**Is this decision legal?** Does it comply with applicable laws, regulations, and organizational policies?

**Am I avoiding conflicts of interest?** Is this decision influenced by personal interests, biases, or external pressures?

**Would I be comfortable if this decision were made public?** How would it look if others, such as my peers or the general public, knew about this decision?

**Have I sought advice or consulted others if I’m unsure?** Did I reach out to someone for guidance or perspective?

## Do you have a question or want to file a report?

If you have questions or concerns about something you hear or observe, but aren't sure if you should speak up, we encourage you to reach out to the Compliance department. Our goal is to prevent unethical or non-compliant activities before they occur.

When you report concerns in good faith, you allow us to address our risks and potentially fix our problems. This ensures that CCHP can continue to provide high-quality, affordable programs, services, and care for all our members. Every member of the CCHP community has a duty to report concerns immediately.

While you can talk to your supervisor or other team leader directly about a concern, we also ensure there are multiple ways to reach us. You may contact our department directly by reaching out to someone you already know, or you can submit a report to our department through any of the methods listed below. CCHP also contracts with an independent hotline that is available 24/7 and accepts anonymous reports.

To make a complaint:

- Contact any member of the compliance department or the Compliance or Privacy Officer
- Call our third-party hotline: 1-800-304-9490; for privacy matters call 1-800-659-4611
- E-mail [compliance@cchealth.org](mailto:compliance@cchealth.org)
- Fax to 925-523-7092
- Sending mail to: CCHP Compliance Department, c/o Privacy Officer, 597 Center Avenue, Suite 200, Martinez, CA 94553

## How Reports are Reviewed

Reports of non-compliance are considered serious matters and all reports are reviewed in a timely manner. The type of complaint that is filed usually determines who reviews or investigates the report. Sometimes, subject matter experts from a certain department are involved.

In order to ensure your complaint can be reviewed thoroughly, reports should include dates, times, names of individuals involved, witnesses, and a detailed description of events.

If asked, all employees must cooperate with our investigation process. Questions should be answered honestly and any documents that are requested should be provided,

unaltered, in a timely manner. Failure to report a violation, refusal to cooperate with, or obstructing a Compliance investigation may lead to disciplinary action.

## Confidentiality

Reports may be filed anonymously and are kept confidential to the extent possible. However, please know that in some cases, anonymity may not be guaranteed based on the details of the incident, or when required by law.

## Promise of No Retaliation

CCHP has a strict non-retaliation policy. Retaliation against any employee for reporting policy violations in good faith will not be tolerated. Any CCHP employee or agent who attempts to or encourages others to retaliate against an individual who has reported a violation or who fails to cooperate with an investigation will be referred to the Health Services Personnel Office for disciplinary action.

### Common Compliance Concerns

Code of Conduct violations

HIPAA violations

Fraud, waste and abuse

Illegal acts such as bribery or theft

Conflicts of interest

## BUSINESS PRACTICES

### Professional Interactions

All individuals have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and privacy, and members of the CCHP community are no exception. Our goals and values reflect honesty, integrity, adherence to the law, and quality. All members of our community should strive to conduct themselves according to these guiding principles.

As a Health Plan, in order to ensure CCHP provides a high level of service to members, CCHP :

- Must never deny payment of a qualified claim that is authorized for coverage
- Must never delay or deny approval of a medically necessary referral that was submitted timely

- Must ensure our members have access to sufficient providers in our network to meet their needs.

## Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest is any situation in which your personal interests may influence how you handle CCHP business or your professional conduct. Employees must not engage in any conduct that would create an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Any potential or actual conflict must be disclosed to Compliance. The following situations are examples of conflicts of interest:

- An employee participates in the selection, award, or administration of a contract or services where a family member, or any person with whom they have a business or personal connection, also has a financial interest.
- An employee discloses or uses confidential CCHP information for personal profit, advantage, or other unauthorized reasons.
- A clinician suggests a certain provider because they receive kickbacks from the provider.
- An employee conducts or accepts outside employment or work, directly or through an intermediary, which can or will adversely affect your work obligations for CCHP. You may engage in work outside your regular work schedule at CCHP if this work does not detract from your job performance, is not harmful to CCHP's best interests, and does not present a conflict of interest with your employment with CCHP.

If you or a family member is an owner, part-owner, employee of, or is receiving money from a company that does business with, proposes to do business with, competes with, solicits employees from, or receives any other remuneration from CCHP, please notify the Compliance department.

CCHP resources are to be used for business purposes and not for personal gain. If you have questions about what constitutes a conflict of interest, please ask your supervisor or Compliance.

### Gifts and Tips—Receiving

We serve diverse and vulnerable groups of people. Our members depend on our programs and staff to look out for them and act in their best interests. Accordingly, employees shall not solicit and shall discourage personal gifts from members or their families and friends. Members should be politely thanked and told that CCHP employees are not permitted to



accept gifts or gratuities. Similarly, soliciting or accepting gifts from vendors and service providers is not permitted.

### Gifts and Tips—Offering

Employees also must not offer or give anything of value in order to generate business, influence a contract, win an award, or affect legislation. If any individual requests or demands gifts or benefits from CCHP, you should report it immediately to the Compliance department.

## Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

As a government-sponsored program, we must steward our resources wisely. By preventing unnecessary costs, we can improve health outcomes and demonstrate the efficacy of our programs. Doing so may ensure that we continue to serve our members for many years to come.

*Fraud - Intentional deception or misrepresentation to acquire something.*

- Examples include expense account fraud, timesheet fraud, identity theft, embezzlement

*Waste - Extravagant, careless, or needless expenditures. Examples of waste include:*

- Booking expensive travel options without considering cost effective alternatives
- Paying for unused software subscriptions
- Paying more for goods and services due to lack of price comparisons

*Abuse- Wrongful or improper use of CCHP assets that may directly or indirectly result in unnecessary costs. Examples include:*

- Using copy machines to print fliers for personal reasons such as a restaurant or school
- Requesting or approving unnecessary overtime

## Exclusions

By law, CCHP cannot employ or contract with any person or entity that has been:

- Excluded, suspended, or debarred from participation in federal or state programs
- Convicted of a crime in connection with the delivery or administration of health care services.

## Adherence to Other Laws

### U.S. False Claims Act (FCA)

The Federal False Claims Act and other similar laws make it a crime to present false claims to the government. All business records, financial records, timecards, and medical records should be accurate and complete. Records should never be falsified or altered to disguise the truth. Employees should also refrain from editorializing in any business records and instead adhere to providing factual information.

### U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA)

The FCPA prohibits giving money or things of value to a government official to influence their actions or secure business advantages or with the intent of gaining or retaining business.

### Stark Law

Stark Law, also known as the Physician Self-Referral Law, prohibits physicians from referring patients for certain health services to entities with which they or their immediate family members have a financial relationship. The law aims to prevent conflicts of interest and overutilization of healthcare services by restricting self-referrals that could result in unnecessary costs to the healthcare system. This often comes up where a physician might order lab work or equipment for a patient and recommend they fill the order at a lab or supplier they co-own. Please notify the Compliance Department if you are aware of any such instances.

### Anti-Kickback Laws

Anti-kickback laws impose criminal and civil penalties on individuals and companies who attempt to offer, give, solicit, or accept a kickback. CCHP prohibits making or offering kickbacks to anyone for the purpose of obtaining, retaining, or influencing our business. Kickbacks may include items of value (cash or gifts), promising favors, preferential selection or hiring, business courtesies (free products or services), or waivers of expenses. The Compliance Department should be consulted prior to offering, giving, soliciting, or receiving anything of value that is not fair market value for services or products received.

### Anti-Rebate Laws

Anti-rebating laws prohibit any person representing CCHP from offering current or prospective customers a promise of employment, stock, dividends, contracts,

agreements, goods and services, or other in-kind contributions. State and local laws vary, so ensure you contact the Ethics & Compliance or Legal Department for guidance.

### **Relations with Pharmaceutical Companies**

State and federal regulations include guidelines for any compensation received from a drug company. Any direct or indirect compensation creates a potential or an appearance to influence CCHP's business decisions regarding drug coverage and utilization decisions. No employees should engage in activity that may be perceived as compensation with a drug company without counsel from the Health Services Legal Department.

## **PRIVACY, SECURITY, AND PROTECTION OF ASSETS**

CCHP has a variety of assets and property, such as records, emails, laptops, equipment, time, and supplies, under its care. These records and devices must be accurate and complete, and preserved from tampering and retained for the required amounts of time for business reasons including law enforcement purposes, internal investigations, or legal counsel. Care should be used when CCHP assets are used for any type of communication.

### **Information Security and Data Protection**

All employees must abide by the terms of their employee agreements, training courses, and any other similar agreement that protects CCHP's business information. The obligation to keep this information confidential exists both during and after separation from employment. Confidential and proprietary CCHP business information includes all information relating to CCHP's non-public information such as financial affairs, marketing, operational and strategic information, or administration, as well as member records.

In order to ensure that our systems remain functional and we continue to operate efficiently, our Information Security department has developed best practices and acceptable use policies.

Some best practices include:

- Not leaving records or laptops unattended in vehicles. Be sure to report any lost or stolen items immediately.
- Not clicking on any suspicious links. Do not download information from unknown sources.
- Reporting suspicious items or behavior, including unattended items to the Security Department.

- When sending an email with sensitive information, include the word “SECURE” in the subject line.
- Not using another employee’s username and password or don’t share your username and password.

## Privacy and Confidential Information

Each employee is responsible for safeguarding sensitive information and other personal and private information. You may only access and use sensitive information for purposes related to your job duties, and you may only access the minimum amount of information required to perform your duties.

There are multiple federal, state, and local laws that protect sensitive information such as personally identifiable information (PII) and protected health information (PHI). PHI is protected by the California Confidentiality of Medical Information Act (CMIA) and the Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). In addition to those laws, CCHP may be a **business associate** of other government agencies and is contractually obligated to protect sensitive information.

PHI access, use, and disclosure are typically limited to others involved in the care and treatment of a member, in the payment for such care and treatment, or in CCHP’s internal operations. Written authorization from the member or their legal representative is required in advance of disclosing PHI for any other purpose.

CCHP is accountable for all incidents that involve unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of sensitive information (e.g. PII or PHI). These incidents, or suspected incidents, should be immediately reported to Compliance.

*A covered entity is a health care provider, health plan, or health care clearinghouse that is subject to HIPAA.*

*A business associate is a person or entity that performs certain functions or activities that involve the use or disclosure of protected health information (PHI) on behalf of, or provides services to, a covered entity.*

## Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

CCHP is committed to responsible and ethical use of technologies that enhance our services, enrich customer experiences, and improve health outcomes.

Any AI use should be thoroughly reviewed to ensure the usage is safe, ethical, and lawful. Users of AI must ensure that any use avoids data breaches or biased decisions.

**CAUTION!**

**Artificial Intelligence can be used to impersonate a real person. Be wary of phone calls or videos that come from trusted colleagues, senior executives, or vendors that include urgent requests or demands for financial transactions**

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### Media and Speaking Engagements

You may be approached by members of the media, academia, or industry groups to speak on behalf of CCHP or to present CCHP materials or information. If you are approached by the media for interviews or comments, you should not respond; instead, you should immediately contact our Marketing Department. For other speaking engagements such as conferences or teaching settings, you must gain advance approval from the Office of Communications and Media before participating in such activities.

### Social Media

CCHP recognizes the value of social media platforms as vital resources to promote the organization's mission and values, operational goals, and marketing activities. CCHP is committed to supporting honest, transparent, and knowledgeable communication through social media.

CCHP supports employees' right to use social media for their own, personal purposes. However, social media use must not interfere with any employee's performance or disrupt the workplace. Whether during work or non-work hours, employees must ensure that their use of social media does not violate the [Social Media Policy](#) and/or applicable state and federal laws.

When posting on any public platform, please know that you:

- Must not post any sensitive or confidential information, including member images or information.
- Make clear that you are not representing CCHP, but that your posts and opinions are your personal views.

## Political Activity

As a non-profit organization, CCHP is prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. Employees may not engage in partisan political activities as an actual or perceived representative of CCHP (e.g., employees should not support or oppose any candidate running for public office on behalf of CCHP). This includes wearing overtly political clothing supporting or campaigning against a person or political party while on duty.

However, we respect your right to participate in political activities as a private citizen and when off duty. Be sure you do not use your CCHP title, email address, letterhead, or department funds for campaigning for or against any political candidate.

## WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

### Drug and Smoke-Free Workplace

While in or around CCHP premises, individuals should refrain from substance misuse or abuse. Unlawful use, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or sale of illicit and mood-altering substances is strictly prohibited. Accordingly, smoking, including e-cigarettes or similar items, is not permitted in our buildings or closer than 20 feet from CCHP building egresses and ingresses.

### Environment and Safety

CCHP is committed to complying with all laws and regulations that govern workplace health and safety, including staff training, the inspection of facilities, investigation of accidents, and communication and observance of safety and health rules. We all play a role in creating a safe, secure, and injury-free workplace.

All employees shall:

- Be aware of emergency and security procedures.
- Comply with all laws and regulations which govern occupational and patient health and safety and to make every reasonable effort to ensure that members/clients, employees, and visitors are protected from undue health risks and unsafe conditions.
- Comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations.
- Ensure that CCHP has obtained and renews all necessary licenses, permits, and approvals.

- Employ the proper procedures and controls in the identification, handling, storage and disposal of toxic, hazardous, and biohazardous materials and waste to prioritize minimizing exposure. Please see the Employee Handbook for more information about Health and Safety.

## No Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment, or Violence

CCHP does not tolerate violent statements, behaviors or actions on workplace premises. Discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, color, religion, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship, marital status, mental disability, physical disability, genetic information, military status, veteran status, medical condition, or any additional characteristic protected by law is also not tolerated. People who engage in harassment, threatening, abusive, or violent behavior, whether on or off duty, may be referred to the Health Services Personnel Office for further action including and up to termination.

## Non-Solicitation and Distribution

Employees are prohibited from soliciting others, including members and colleagues, during work hours if such solicitation is not part of their job duties. Solicitation includes, but is not limited to, requests for donations, contributions to charities, support for political organizations, requests or encouragement to patronize a particular business, and/or merchandise purchases.

Solicitation by distribution of non-CCHP literature is also prohibited. Distribution includes placing or handing out advertising materials, handbills, and other printed and written literature. Employees may not use CCHP stationery, supplies, computers, or equipment for solicitation or distribution purposes.

Requests from outside people or organizations to sell merchandise, solicit contributions, distribute literature, arrange displays, or use CCHP facilities should be referred to the Health Services Personnel Office, a director, or any supervisor.

## Additional Guides and Resources

All members of the CCHP community are expected to behave responsibly and with integrity. Compliance is the responsibility of everyone. This Code does not cover every situation you may encounter but provides the framework that guides our mission and actions.

This Code is supplemented by the **CCHP Policies and Procedures**.

If you have questions, would like to report a violation of the code, or need additional guidance, you may contact your supervisor, manager, or the Compliance department directly.