

# **Code of Ethics Policy for Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)**

## **1. Purpose**

This Code of Ethics establishes the principles and standards that guide all DMHAS workforce, contractors, and volunteers in delivering healthcare services DMHAS. It ensures trust, integrity, and accountability in serving the public interest.

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## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All full-time, part-time, and temporary staff (i.e. all DMHAS workforce)
  - Contracted providers and consultants
  - Volunteers and interns
  - Any individual representing the agency in clinical, administrative, or support roles
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## **3. Core Ethical Principles**

All personnel must uphold these fundamental values:

- Respect for Persons
  - Honor patient dignity, autonomy, and cultural diversity.
  - Obtain informed consent and protect vulnerable populations.
- Beneficence and Nonmaleficence
  - Act in the best interest of patients; prevent harm.
  - Balance potential benefits and risks of clinical decisions.
- Justice and Equity
  - Ensure fair access to services regardless of background.
  - Allocate resources impartially, guided by clinical need.
- Integrity and Honesty
  - Report information accurately and refrain from misrepresentation.
  - Disclose errors promptly and take corrective action.

- Confidentiality and Privacy
    - Safeguard patient health information in compliance with statutes.
    - Limit disclosures to those directly involved in care or oversight.
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## **4. Professional Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Clinical Standards**

- Adhere to evidence-based guidelines and accepted best practices.
- Maintain professional competence through continuous education.

### **4.2 Administrative Conduct**

- Use public resources prudently and transparently.
- Avoid conflicts of interest when contracting, procurement, or research.

### **4.3 Collaborative Environment**

- Foster respectful teamwork across disciplines and levels of authority.
  - Encourage open dialogue, constructive feedback, and shared decision-making.
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## **5. Conflict of Interest**

- Disclose any personal, financial, or other interests that may influence professional judgment.
  - Recuse oneself from procurement decisions, clinical trials, or policy development when a conflict exists.
  - Seek guidance from the DMHAS Ethics Liaison Officer and/or the state Ethics Office for ambiguous situations.
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## **6. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

- Access only the minimum patient information necessary to perform duties (Minimum Necessary Rule).
- Report any breach or unauthorized disclosure to the Chief Compliance, Privacy and Ethics Liaison immediately.

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## **7. Reporting and Accountability**

- Promptly report suspected violations of this Code through designated channels (supervisor, HR, or DMHAS Ethics Liaison, or State ethics Office).
- Retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith is strictly prohibited.
- Violations may result in disciplinary action up to termination, and referral for civil or criminal proceedings where applicable.

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## **8. Enforcement and Review**

- The DMHAS Ethics Liaison Officer and state Ethics Office oversees investigations, provides guidance, and ensures fair enforcement.
- This policy will be reviewed annually to incorporate legal, regulatory, or organizational changes.
- All personnel must complete annual compliance training and reaffirm their commitment to the Code.

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## **Implementation and Next Steps**

To embed these standards into daily operations:

1. Include ethics orientation session at NEOP (new employee orientation) for new hires.
2. Establish an anonymous compliance ethics hotline

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## **Additional Resources**

- Patient privacy and HIPAA compliance guidelines
- Include case studies on ethical dilemmas in public healthcare during NEOP and annual Compliance training