

# North Florida Medical Centers, Code of Ethics

## PREAMBLE

The purpose of the *Code of Ethics* of North Florida Medical Centers, Inc. (NFMC) is to serve as a standard of conduct for members of the Board of Directors, employees, contractors and volunteers. It contains standards of ethical behavior for NFMC in its professional relationships. These relationships include colleagues, patients or others served; and the community, as a whole.

The *Code of Ethics* also incorporates standards of ethical behavior governing individual behavior, particularly when that conduct directly relates to the role and identity of the Board Member, employee, contractor or volunteer.

NFMC staff has an obligation to act in ways that will merit the trust, confidence, and respect of healthcare professionals and the general public. Therefore, NFMC Board Members, employees, contractors and volunteers should lead lives that embody an exemplary system of values and ethics.

In fulfilling their commitments and obligations to patients served, Board Members, employees, contractors and volunteers function as moral advocates and models. Since every management decision affects the health and well-being of both individuals and communities, Board Members, employees, contractors and volunteers must carefully evaluate the possible outcomes of their decisions. In a healthcare organization delivering healthcare services, they must work to safeguard and foster the rights, interests and prerogatives of patients served.

The role of moral advocates requires Board Members, employees, contractors and volunteers to take actions necessary to promote such rights, interests and prerogatives.

Being a model means that decisions and actions will reflect personal integrity and ethical leadership that others will seek to emulate.

## I. BOARD MEMBER, EMPLOYEE, CONTRACTOR, and VOLUNTEERS' RESPONSIBILITIES:

Each Board Member, employee, contractor and volunteer shall:

- A. Uphold the *Code of Ethics* and mission of NFMC;
- B. Work with honesty, integrity, respect, fairness and good faith in a manner that will reflect well upon the organization;
- C. Comply with all federal, state and local laws and regulations pertaining to providing quality healthcare in NFMC's service area;

- D. Avoid the improper exploitation of professional relationships for personal gain from contractors or potential contractors, or from parties or potential parties to sub-agreements of NFMC.
- E. NFMC employees, contractors, agents, officers and board members will not solicit nor accept gifts, gratuities, favors or other items/services valued greater than \$200 from NFMC contractors or potential contractors, including parties or potential parties to subcontracts or sub-grants.
- F. Disclose financial and other conflicts of interest;
- G. Use this *Code* to further the interests of NFMC and not for selfish reasons;
- H. Respect professional confidences;
- I. Enhance the dignity and image of NFMC through positive public information programs; and
- J. Refrain from participating in any activity that demeans the credibility and dignity of NFMC.

## II. NFMC'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO PATIENTS SERVED:

All of NFMC shall, within the scope of his or her authority:

- A. Work to ensure the existence of a process to evaluate the quality of care or service rendered;
- B. Avoid practicing or facilitating discrimination and institute safeguards to prevent discriminatory organizational practices;
- C. Work to ensure the existence of a process that will advise patients served of the rights, opportunities, responsibilities and risks regarding available healthcare services;
- D. Work to ensure there is a process in place to facilitate the resolution of conflicts between a patient and the physician that may arise from the primary healthcare received;
- E. Demonstrate zero tolerance for any abuse of power that compromises patients served;
- F. Work to ensure the existence of procedures that will safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of the health information of the patients served; and
- G. Work to ensure the existence of an ongoing process and procedures to review, develop and

consistently implement evidence-based clinical practices throughout NFMC.

### **III. THE BOARD of DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE ORGANIZATION:**

The Board of Directors shall, within the scope of its authority:

- A. Provide healthcare services in NFMC's service area consistent with available resources, and when there are limited resources, work to ensure the existence of a resource allocation process that considers ethical ramifications;
- B. Conduct both competitive and cooperative activities in ways that improve NFMC's healthcare services;
- C. Lead the organization in the use and improvement of standards of management and sound business practices;
- D. Be truthful in all forms of professional and organizational communication, and avoid disseminating information that is false, misleading or deceptive;
- E. Report negative financial and other information promptly and accurately, and initiate appropriate action;
- F. Prevent fraud and abuse and aggressive accounting practices that may result in disputable financial reports;
- G. Create an organizational environment in which both clinical and management mistakes are minimized and, when they do occur, are disclosed and addressed effectively;
- H. Implement an organizational code of ethics and monitor compliance; and
- I. Provide ethics resources and mechanisms for staff to address ethical organizational and clinical issues.

### **IV. NFMC'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO STAFF:**

NFMC has ethical and professional obligations to the staff it manages that encompass but are not limited to:

- A. Creating a work environment that promotes ethical conduct;
- B. Providing a work environment that encourages a free expression of ethical concerns and provides mechanisms for discussing and addressing such concerns;
- C. Promoting a healthy work environment which includes freedom from harassment, sexual and other, and coercion of any kind, especially to perform illegal or unethical acts;
- D. Promoting a culture of inclusivity that seeks to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- E. Providing a work environment that promotes the proper use of employees' knowledge and skills; and
- F. Providing a safe and healthy work environment.

### **V. NFMC'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO ITS COMMUNITIES:**

NFMC shall:

- A. Work to identify and meet the healthcare needs of its service area;
- B. Work to increase access to healthcare services for all people in its service area;
- C. Encourage and participate in public dialogue on healthcare policy issues, and advocate solutions that will improve health status and promote quality healthcare;
- D. Apply short and long-term assessments to management decisions affecting both community and society; and
- E. Provide prospective patients and others with adequate and accurate information, enabling them to make enlightened decisions regarding healthcare services.

### **VI. NFMC'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE**

A Board member, employee, contractor or volunteer of NFMC who has reasonable grounds to believe that another member has violated this *Code* has a duty to communicate such facts to the CEO or the Grants & Compliance Coordinator.