

# Sharp HealthCare Code of Conduct

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES, AFFILIATED PHYSICIANS, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS







## Message From the President and CEO

For more than 60 years, Sharp HealthCare has been dedicated to improving the health of those we serve with a commitment to excellence in all that we do. Together, we continue on our journey to transform the health care experience by making Sharp the best place to work, the best place to practice medicine and the best place to receive care.

Our patients and their loved ones expect us to treat them with dignity and respect, and our partners trust us to conduct business with integrity and honesty. This is why we strive to uphold an exemplary standard of ethics and integrity across the organization.

The Sharp HealthCare Code of Conduct sets forth standards and expectations by which we manage and execute our operations. These principles apply to every Sharp team member, affiliated physician, volunteer, board member, student and contractor. Our Code of Conduct also underscores our philosophy that honest and open communication is the expectation and not the exception.

You uphold The Sharp Experience by fulfilling your responsibilities according to laws, regulations and Sharp policies. You safeguard our vision, values, resources and reputation by reporting any improper or fraudulent activity. We welcome your comments and concerns, and provide a strict non-retaliation policy that applies to every reporting team member.

If you have any questions, please contact your manager, compliance liaison or Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department. On behalf of Sharp HealthCare's Leadership Team, thank you for your dedication to Sharp HealthCare and for helping us uphold the principles set forth in our Code of Conduct.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ch. Howard".

**Christopher D. Howard**

*President and Chief Executive Officer  
Sharp HealthCare*

## Contents

<b>Our Vision and Values</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sharp's Fundamental Commitments</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Purpose of Sharp's Code of Conduct</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Sharp Experience</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Pillars of Excellence</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Just Culture</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>High-Reliability Organization</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sharp HealthCare Behavior Standards</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Principle 1: Quality of Care</b>	<b>11</b>
Patient Rights and Access to Health Information	11
Confidentiality and Privacy	12
Admissions, Continuity of Care, Transfers and Referrals	12
Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA)	12
Informed Consent	13
Advance Care Planning	13
Research Activity	13
<b>Principle 2: Business Ethics</b>	<b>14</b>
Electronic and Paper Medical Record Documentation	14
Medical Necessity	14
Medical Records, Coding and Billing	14
Record Maintenance and Retention	15
Social Media	15
Competition and Antitrust	16
False Claims Act Compliance	16
Honest Communication and Respect in the Workplace	17
Workplace Fraud	17
Misconduct and Dishonesty	17
Access to Patient Health and Business Information	18
<b>Principle 3: Conflicts of Interest</b>	<b>19</b>
Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment	19
Customer and Business Associate/Contractor Relations	20
Community and Political Involvement	21
<b>Principle 4: Corporate Assets</b>	<b>22</b>
Protecting Sharp HealthCare's Assets	22
Safety, Health and Environmental Matters	22
Workplace Conduct and Employment Practices	23
Proprietary Information and System Property	24
Acceptable Use of Information and Computing Resources	25
Personal Electronic Devices	25

<b>Principle 5: Regulatory Affairs</b>	<b>26</b>
Requests From Government Officials and Regulatory Agencies	26
Government Business	26
Laws and Regulations	27
Mail and Wire Fraud Statutes	27
False Claims Acts	27
False Statements Acts	27
Anti-kickback Statutes	27
Obstruction of a Federal Audit	27
California Medical Privacy Laws	28
Federal and California Whistleblower Protection Laws	28
Health Care Reform Laws	28
Disclosure	28
Affiliated Individuals and Organizations	28
Excluded Persons and Entities	29
Marketing and Media Inquiries	29
Tax-Exempt Status	29
Cost Reports	29
 <b>Principle 6: Compliance Reporting and Our Shared Responsibilities</b>	 <b>30</b>
What to Do When Compliance Issues Arise	30
Management Responsibility	31
Reporting Compliance Violations	31
Confidential Hotline	32
Online Reporting	32
Non-retaliation Policy	32
Workplace Harassment	33
Investigation and Resolution	33
Disciplinary Action	33
 <b>Resource Guide</b>	 <b>34</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Instructions for Completing Certification</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Certification</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Department Contacts</b>	<b>37</b>



## Our Vision and Values

Sharp HealthCare's vision is to be the best health care system in the universe. Our core values of integrity, care, safety, innovation and excellence are important to us personally and professionally. These principles form the basis of interaction in everything we do.



### Our Goals

We seek to create a working environment in which each employee lives the Sharp values every day. Our Code of Conduct reflects how we can demonstrate these values in our relationships with patients, co-workers, the organization, the government, business partners, contractors, competitors and the community.

### Our Responsibilities

Every Sharp employee, affiliated physician, medical director, volunteer, board member, student and contractor has a responsibility to read the Code of Conduct and live by its values. If you have a question or concern, we ask that you speak up and report conduct that is inconsistent with our values. Sharp's policies and procedures provide additional guidance to help us perform our jobs to the best of our abilities.

Our policies are located on Sharp's intranet site, SharpNET, under Tools & Resources. If you need assistance finding a specific policy, contact your manager, Human Resources or the Corporate Compliance Department.

### Leadership Responsibilities

While all Sharp team members are obligated to abide by our Code of Conduct, we expect our leaders to set the example. They should be a model in every respect. Sharp leaders must demonstrate ethical behavior and take action when ethical issues arise.

They are expected to create an environment where all Sharp team members feel free to raise concerns and propose ideas. We count on our leaders to ensure their team members have sufficient information to comply with laws, regulations and policies to resolve ethical dilemmas. Our leaders must help create a culture within Sharp that promotes the highest standards of ethics and compliance. We must never sacrifice ethical and lawful behavior in the pursuit of business objectives.

**"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence."**

— Vince Lombardi

## Sharp's Fundamental Commitments

### **TO OUR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES:**

We are committed to providing quality care that is convenient, cost-effective and accessible. We treat everyone we serve with compassion and dignity.

**TO OUR SHARP COLLEAGUES:** We are committed to a culture that treats all colleagues with fairness, dignity and respect. We strive to provide them with an opportunity to grow and develop professionally. We also welcome opportunities to work in a team environment in which all ideas are considered.

**TO OUR AFFILIATED PHYSICIANS:** We are committed to providing a work environment that has excellent facilities, modern equipment and outstanding professional teamwork.

**TO OUR THIRD-PARTY PAYERS:** We are committed to working with our third-party payers in a way that honors contractual obligations and reflects our shared concern for safe, efficient and effective quality health care. We encourage each of our third-party payers to adopt their own set of comparable ethical principles. Their principles should explicitly recognize their obligations to patients as well as the need for fairness in dealing with providers.

**TO OUR REGULATORS:** We are committed to a fair and just environment. One in which compliance with rules, regulations and sound business practices are woven into our corporate culture. We accept the responsibility to aggressively self-govern and monitor compliance in alignment with the requirements of law and our Code of Conduct.



### **TO THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE:**

We are committed to providing San Diegans with safe, quality, cost-effective health care. We realize as an organization that we have a responsibility to help those in need. We proudly support charitable contributions and events in an effort to promote the health and well-being of the community.

### **TO OUR SUPPLIERS AND CONTRACTORS:**

We are committed to fair competition among prospective suppliers. In addition to abiding by our Code of Conduct, we encourage our suppliers to adopt their own set of comparable ethical principles.

**TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:** We value individuals who provide voluntary assistance to help meet the needs of patients and their families, as well as to support our Sharp colleagues. We are committed to ensuring that our volunteers feel a sense of pride in their volunteer work and are recognized for their generous efforts and accomplishments.

## Purpose of Sharp's Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct is a constantly evolving document, intended to keep pace with changing regulations and conditions. In some instances, it is meant to give all the guidance necessary on a particular subject. In others, it is intended to work in conjunction with other documents, such as Sharp Policies and Procedures that will fill in details. Wherever there may be an apparent disconnect or gap, use our Code of Conduct as your guiding principle.

We must all follow the principles set forth in the Code of Conduct. Any action that violates the law or regulations is expressly prohibited by Sharp and violates this Code of Conduct. Any employee who violates the Code of Conduct is acting outside of the scope of his or her employment and could be subject to discipline, including termination of employment.

If you have any questions regarding the principles and policies outlined in our Code of Conduct, contact your manager, compliance liaison, or Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department. You may also confidentially and anonymously report any issues related to compliance to the Sharp Confidential Hotline at 1-800-350-5022.

**"The future is not some place we are going to, but a place we are creating. The paths to it are not found, they are made."**

— John Schaar

## The Sharp Experience

Since 2001, Sharp has been on an exciting journey to transform the health care experience. This ongoing commitment involves enhancing the way we interact with our affiliated physicians and colleagues, and improving the way we serve our patients and their loved ones. We call this The Sharp Experience because it encompasses all that we do at Sharp HealthCare.

The Sharp Experience supports our vision to create an organization that is:

### **The best place to work**

We strive to attract highly skilled staff members — individuals who are passionate about providing quality health care and service. We believe in building a culture of teamwork, recognition, celebration, and professional and personal growth. We are deeply committed to serving patients and supporting one another.

### **The best place to practice medicine**

We want to create an environment for positive, collaborative relationships between physicians, nurses and other caregivers. Our physicians receive access to state-of-the-art equipment and technology. They also enjoy the camaraderie of a highly skilled medical staff.

### **The best place to receive care**

Sharp strives to provide a new standard of service in the health care industry — much like that of a five-star hotel. We employ service-oriented individuals who see it as their privilege to exceed the expectations of every patient. Our staff members treat each patient with the utmost care, compassion and respect. We also create healing environments that are pleasant, soothing, safe and easy to access and navigate.

### **The best health care system in the universe**

Ultimately, Sharp's goal is to be the very best health care system in the universe.



## Pillars of Excellence

We created seven Pillars of Excellence to provide the framework and alignment for everything we do. These pillars stand as a visible testament to our commitment to making health care better.

**Quality** — Demonstrate and improve clinical excellence and patient safety to set community standards and exceed patient expectations.

**Safety** — Keep patients, employees and physicians safe and free from harm.

**Service** — Create exceptional experiences at every touch point for customers, physicians and partners by demonstrating service excellence.

**People** — Create a values-driven culture that attracts, retains and promotes the best and brightest people who are committed to Sharp HealthCare's mission and values.

**Finance** — Achieve financial results to assure Sharp's ability to provide quality health care services, new technology and investment in the organization.

**Growth** — Achieve consistent net revenue growth to enhance market dominance, sustain infrastructure improvements and support innovative development.

**Community** — Be an exemplary public citizen by making a difference in the community and supporting the stewardship of our environment.

### SHARP HEALTHCARE MUST-HAVES

- Greet people with a smile and “hello,” using their name when possible.
- Take people where they are going, rather than pointing or giving directions.
- Use key words at key times. “Is there anything else I can do for you? I have the time.”
- Foster an attitude of gratitude. Send thank-you notes to deserving team members.
- Round with reason to better connect with staff, patients, family and other customers.

## Just Culture

Sharp commits to creating an open, fair and just culture. We do this by:

- Designing safe systems
- Learning through transparent dialogue about risks and safety expectations
- Proactively managing risks and behavioral choices
- Responding in a fair and consistent manner to adverse events

We strive to create a safe environment that encourages reporting of mistakes and hazards. If a mistake or adverse event occurs, we will manage the incident fairly.



## High-Reliability Organization

We continuously strive to advance The Sharp Experience, and in 2014, Sharp leadership made a commitment to guide us to become a High-Reliability Organization (HRO). Our goal is to build on our culture of excellence and become the safest, most reliable health care system in the universe.

Being reliable across all seven Pillars of Excellence serves our mission and helps to achieve our vision of being the best place to work, practice medicine and receive care. By hardwiring highly reliable processes and behaviors within our Sharp Experience culture, we can ensure zero defects and zero harm by doing right, every time.

## Sharp HealthCare Behavior Standards

Sharp's Behavior Standards provide a clear and simple description of exactly what is expected of every Sharp employee regarding behavior — essentially what it should look like, sound like and feel like at Sharp.

### Attitude Is Everything

**Attitude, compassion and demeanor create a positive first — and lasting — impression.**

- I build strong relationships by treating every person with kindness, respect and dignity.
- I use body language that radiates a friendly, open-minded attitude, and I seek to put people at ease.
- I immediately welcome every person with eye contact, a smile and a friendly greeting.
- I listen with care and empathy, avoid interrupting and confirm what I have heard.
- I acknowledge questions or concerns and meet immediate needs or find someone who can help.

### Reward and Recognition

**Reward and recognition are central to the Sharp vision and culture.**

- I celebrate everyone's accomplishments and dedication to making Sharp the best place to work, practice medicine and receive care.
- I express gratitude and appreciation to others and openly praise them for their achievements.
- I thank people for speaking up to reduce harm and prevent defects.
- I acknowledge when a team member exemplifies The Sharp Experience.

### Courteous Communication

**Body language, tone and word choice reflect respect for everyone at all times.**

- I communicate with courtesy and clarity, ensuring dignity and mutual respect in all verbal and nonverbal communication.

- I commit to being in the moment and to actively listening with purpose and curiosity — receiving and providing thoughtful feedback.
- I call patients, family members and team members by their preferred names.
- I am open to receiving messages of different opinions and acknowledge differences respectfully.
- I always use “please” and “thank you,” and end encounters courteously.

### Teamwork

**Team members share a common vision: to make Sharp the best place to work, practice medicine and receive care.**

- I build up my team, sharing in our successes and failures.
- I share information and ideas freely and never make assumptions.
- I recognize that we all have areas of expertise.
- I resolve conflicts promptly and directly with those involved.
- I praise in public and respectfully coach in private.

### Service Recovery

**When The Sharp Experience doesn't go right, we pledge to make things better.**

- I listen and respond with respect, empathy and compassion, and I apologize for not exceeding expectations.
- I thank each person for bringing their concerns forward.
- I am proactive in making amends and provide service recovery even in difficult situations.
- I anticipate and correct problems before they become complaints.
- I work to make things right and follow up to ensure we have corrected the problem.

## Sharp HealthCare Behavior Standards (*Continued*)

### Zero Harm

**Sharp HealthCare is committed to ensuring a safe environment to achieve zero harm to employees, our patients and their families.**

- I take ownership for safety concerns, whether they are environmental, clinical or behavioral.
- I always speak up to reduce harm and prevent defects.
- I report potential safety concerns immediately.
- I use proper tools and equipment and do not take shortcuts that compromise safety.
- I follow policies and procedures that are designed to keep everyone safe.

### Appearance Matters

**Dressing and grooming professionally, and maintaining a clean work environment demonstrate respect to all.**

- I practice good personal hygiene.
- I meet and exceed Sharp's dress code, always wearing neat and appropriate clothing and jewelry.
- I wear my identification badge in a place so that my name and title are visible.
- I keep work areas, meeting rooms and public spaces clean and clutter-free.
- I pick up and dispose of litter, clean up spills and return equipment to its proper place.

**"I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought to be distilled into actions which bring results."**

— Florence Nightingale



### THE POWER OF KINDNESS

At Sharp, we understand that often it is the little things that make the greatest difference. The power of our small and meaningful acts of kindness cannot be underestimated.

### Service Excellence

**Through service excellence, we create meaningful and positively memorable experiences.**

- I acknowledge everyone with care, compassion and empathy.
- I stay connected and engaged with those I serve.
- I promote peace of mind and relieve anxiety by explaining what we are doing and why.
- I keep team members, patients and family members informed about the process and expected time frames.
- I take action to prevent delays and proactively notify those impacted when delays are known in advance.
- I go above and beyond to provide the best Sharp Experience for everyone.

## Sharp HealthCare Behavior Standards (*Continued*)

### Privacy and Confidentiality

**Sharp HealthCare protects everyone's privacy and confidentiality in all situations.**

- I am sensitive to the personal nature of health care, and I do all I can to honor the trust others place in me.
- I only access patient information for patients under my direct care.
- I knock and announce myself before entering a patient room.
- I ensure patients are comfortable and appropriately covered at all times.
- I speak about personal matters in a private area with a quiet and respectful voice.
- I keep confidential information and assets private for patients, physicians, staff and Sharp HealthCare.

### Electronic Communication Manners

**Using the most appropriate channel of communication demonstrates respect for others and ensures that clear, undistorted content is received.**

- I use discretion in sending, responding to and forwarding electronic communications, including faxes.
- I respond to emails or texts as soon as is appropriate.
- I am clear, concise and maintain a respectful tone when sending electronic communications.
- I remember that difficult discussions are seldom best handled via email, text or online chat.
- I use the secure email function when discussing patient information through email, and I use an objective communication style that maintains patients' dignity and protects their privacy.

### Mutual Respect

**Mutually respectful behavior is the cornerstone to achieving zero harm and zero defects, and it demonstrates that we value each other.**

- I treat others the way I want to be treated.
- I communicate with words and actions that convey respect for others.
- I focus on the issue, not the person, when I have a conflict with someone.
- I recognize that I am responsible for my words and actions.
- I ensure my comments and actions produce zero harm and zero defects.
- I create an environment that is free from bullying and hostility.
- I speak up when I observe disrespectful behavior.

### Diversity

**At Sharp HealthCare, we recognize that our differences, unique talents and varied backgrounds come together to create a stronger whole.**

- I celebrate diversity and embrace everyone regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, creed, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or other characteristic.
- I recognize the power, strength and value of the diverse cultures of our workforce.
- I ensure equality and acceptance for all.
- I am open to others' viewpoints, ideas and talents.
- I serve everyone equally.

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."**

— Margaret Mead





## PRINCIPLE 1

# Quality of Care

At Sharp, our goal is to offer quality care and services that set community standards and exceed patients' expectations. We believe in treating our patients and their families in a way that preserves their dignity, autonomy, self-esteem, civil rights and involvement in their own care. We will not compromise quality. We will provide care regardless of age, ancestry, citizenship, color, creed, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, religion, national origin, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation payer source or ability to pay.

### Patient Rights and Access to Health Information

We provide each patient with information regarding his or her rights and responsibilities, and strive to protect those rights while rendering care and treatment. We have the duty to provide accurate and timely information regarding:

- Continuity of care
- Diagnosis
- Financial data
- Follow-up and home-care plans
- Prognosis
- Provider information
- Specialty care
- Health status
- Treatment options

In addition, the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Regulations created rights for patients concerning their own health information.

These patient rights include the right to:

- Receive a Notice of Privacy Practices
- Inspect and obtain a copy of their own health information
- Request amendments to their health information
- Request an accounting of disclosures
- File a privacy complaint

Additional information regarding patient rights and access to health information is available under the HIPAA Privacy Policies and Procedures section on SharpNET.

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### Patient Information

**Q.** I work in a department where I have access to patient information. I am concerned about one of my family members. May I access that family member's record?

**A.** No, you may not access any individual's protected health information (PHI) because of concern or curiosity. Any access to PHI is on a need-to-know basis as required to carry out your job responsibilities. Sharp's patient privacy policies adhere to strict federal and California laws that prohibit the unauthorized access of a patient's electronic health record.

**Q.** I accidentally provided a patient with someone else's discharge instructions. What should I do?

**A.** Immediately report any privacy violations by contacting one or more of the following: your entity's privacy liaison, your manager or the Corporate Compliance Department.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

We are obligated to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of PHI. This obligation applies to every Sharp employee, affiliated physician, volunteer and contractor. Access to PHI is on a need-to-know basis as required to carry out job responsibilities. We must all make a reasonable effort to use or disclose only the minimum necessary information needed to do our jobs. A breach of confidentiality is grounds for corrective action, which may include immediate termination.

The care of patients is always personal in nature. Therefore, any information about a patient's condition, care, treatment and medical data is absolutely confidential. Federal and California privacy laws and HIPAA regulations protect health information from unlawful access, use, disclosure, loss, tampering, alteration or destruction. This includes information obtained from the hospital information systems. Unless authorized by federal or California law, the disclosure of patient information requires a patient, or the patient's representative, to sign a written "Authorization for the Use or Disclosure of Protected Health Information" form.

A patient's information should never be discussed with anyone, inside or outside of Sharp, other than with those who are directly involved in the patient's care. In addition, you should never discuss this information in public areas.

In order to maintain the confidentiality and integrity of information security, you must follow HIPAA and other privacy guidelines. If you send confidential information electronically, it must be only in accordance with HIPAA and information security policies and procedures. We require, among other things, that the individual and/or entity receiving the information is validated and the information is encrypted.

### **Admissions, Continuity of Care, Transfers and Referrals**

Our affiliated physicians make decisions to admit or discharge patients based on sound clinical decision-making. This includes accurate and complete

### **PRINCIPLE 1**

#### **QUALITY OF CARE**

We are committed to operating in accordance with the highest levels of professional and business practices to provide exceptional care.

clinical admission criteria, as well as medical necessity. We do not allow waiving of insurance copayments or deductibles. Under certain circumstances, Sharp may provide financial accommodations to patients. You should always consult management regarding any special financial situations.

We expect our affiliated physicians to discharge patients with an after-care or follow-up plan. When a patient needs follow-up care, we do not inappropriately steer patients to use Sharp owned or operated home health agencies, skilled nursing facilities or hospice care facilities.

Our affiliated physicians make referrals based solely on the interests of the individual seeking care and treatment. However, such referrals may be subject to contractual arrangements. Sharp does not make cash payments (or provide non-cash incentives) to anyone for providing a referral or to induce a referral. Patients must be given the right to request transfers to other facilities. In such cases, physicians must explain to the patient the benefits, risks and alternatives.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA)**

Sharp adheres to the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) by providing emergency treatment to all patients, regardless of ability to pay. Every patient seeking medical care at one of our hospitals is provided with an appropriate medical screening examination. This screening determines whether the patient has an emergency medical condition or is in active labor. If the medical screening examination reveals that an emergency medical condition exists, the patient is provided with stabilizing treatment within the capability of the hospital.

### **Informed Consent**

The informed consent process is the responsibility of the physician. It represents a key component in providing the highest quality of care for patients and minimizes liability risk. Patients have the right to know the names of health care providers. They also have a right to be involved in the management of their care. Patients and, when appropriate, their families are informed about the health status, diagnosis, prognosis, and course of treatment. This information includes the associated risks, benefits, alternatives to treatment and risks of non-treatment, in terms they can understand. We collaborate with patients and their families in resolving questions about care and treatment decisions. For identified procedures, the physician must document his or her discussion with the patient and that informed consent was obtained.

We validate informed consent by including a signed authorization or consent form in the medical record. The form requires the signature of a witness to verify the authenticity of the patient's signature or mark if the patient is unable to write his or her name. Witnessing of a consent form also indicates that the patient did not request additional information prior to signing the form.

### **Advance Care Planning**

Adult patients with decision-making capacity have a fundamental right to make their own health care decisions. This includes the right to:

- Create an advance health care directive, including the designation of a surrogate health care decision-maker
- Make informed decisions regarding medical care
- Refuse or accept courses of treatment, even when the decision may hasten death, within legal limits
- Work with a physician to create a Physician's Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)
- Update and review the advance directive/POLST as needed

Sharp complies with federal and California laws regarding the implementation of advance directives. We retain and honor patients' advance directives and

## **QUALITY OF CARE**

### **SHARP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

- Always treat patients and other customers with respect, compassion and dignity
- Make clinical decisions based on identified patient-care needs and not the patient's financial circumstances or Sharp HealthCare's financial interests
- Avoid discussions concerning patient health information in public areas (e.g., restrooms, elevators)
- Never leave patient files, reports or other information where the public could view them
- Uphold the privacy and confidentiality of health record information
- Protect the patient's right to privacy in collecting and identifying personal information
- Adhere to the mission, vision and values of Sharp HealthCare

POLSTs within the limits of the law and within our organization's mission, vision, values and capabilities. Biomedical ethics committees are available to assist patients, families and health care providers with addressing uncertainty and conflict about health care issues that may arise.

### **Research Activity**

Sharp HealthCare is involved in numerous clinical research studies. The protection and rights of participants in research studies are vitally important. Research conducted at Sharp entities is reviewed by the Sharp Institutional Review Board (IRB) or other accredited IRB. The purpose of Sharp's IRB or other accredited IRB review is to ensure strict adherence to the regulations and guidance of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP), California laws, and Sharp policies. Sharp promotes a culture of safety and respect for individuals who choose to participate in research for the greater good of the community. In addition, Sharp is committed to ensuring that the billing for clinical trials is accurate and appropriate.



## PRINCIPLE 2

# Business Ethics

Our team members and contractors conduct business with honesty, fairness and integrity. We demonstrate these characteristics through truthfulness, the absence of deception and fraud, and respect for applicable laws. Our daily actions exemplify Sharp's Behavior Standards. We select contractors based on quality, performance, reputation, price and suitability of products or services.

### Electronic and Paper Medical Record Documentation

The accuracy and completeness of Sharp's medical records are essential to maintaining ethical and professional business practices. Patient medical records are the only source of information that Sharp entities can rely on for the proper billing of the services and care provided. All Sharp employees, affiliated physicians and independent contractors who document in a medical record are responsible for accurate, appropriate, legible and timely charting of the care provided to any patient. Medical records must be completed in compliance with all medical staff bylaws, accreditation standards and relevant laws and regulations.

### Medical Necessity

Diagnostic or procedural codes and other pertinent medical information included in the medical record must be accurate, reasonable and complete. These standards are essential to support the "medical necessity" for the service and/or care being billed. Physicians are to order services and/or care for their patients based on medical necessity.

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### Unauthorized Changes to Medical Records

**Q.** What should I do if a manager or physician asks me to falsely document a patient's medical record with a treatment that was not provided?

**A.** You should refuse and report this to Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department. We may consider this type of activity as falsification of a patient's medical record. This serious situation violates our Code of Conduct and federal and California laws.

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### Medical Records, Coding and Billing

Sharp HealthCare generates patient medical information, charges, bills and claims. We work to ensure that these documents accurately reflect the services provided. Sharp entities comply with applicable laws, rules, regulations and program requirements for coding and billing. Our affiliated physicians and other care providers document information in an accurate and timely manner. Late entries and marginal notes in medical records will be explained, dated and signed. In addition, ordering physicians must sign all verbal orders.

**"Ethics is about how we meet the challenge of doing the right thing when that will cost more than we want to pay."**

— Josephson Institute of Ethics



Our medical record coders are educated on and expected to ethically apply and use official coding guidelines to support accurate billing. We only report the codes that are consistently supported by authenticated clinical documentation. We do not provide financial or other types of incentives to upcode claims. We prohibit making or presenting improper, false or fraudulent claims or financial reports. This standard includes cost reports to any government or private health care program, employee, department or agency. We maintain medical and business documents and records in a consistent, legible and organized manner. These standards allow for a more efficient follow-up audit and review process.

#### **Record Maintenance and Retention**

We are all responsible for the integrity and accuracy of Sharp HealthCare's documents and records. We retain medical and business documents and records in accordance with federal and California laws, our record retention policy, and to defend our activities and decisions. This is only possible if we maintain information, as recorded or documented in letters, memos, paper and electronic health records, emails, computer files and other media, as these are finalized and archived, without later tampering or falsification. Sharp requires that you handle all records in accordance with our "Record Retention & Destruction Guidelines Policy." You can find this policy and related policies in the Policies and Procedures section on SharpNET.

#### **Social Media**

Sharp acknowledges that blogs and social networks are useful technologies for online communication. We recognize that employees may use these sites to express themselves and communicate with others. We also recognize that specific legal obligations arise in cases where someone could be said to be

## **PRINCIPLE 2**

### **BUSINESS ETHICS**

We expect day-to-day decisions made by everyone at Sharp to reflect our mission, commitments, values and behavior standards.

#### **Disposal of Confidential Documents**

**Q.** Is it OK if I put documents containing patient health information in the recycle bin?

**A.** No, all documents containing confidential or patient health information are proprietary information. You must place these documents in the large container marked "shredding" in accordance with Sharp's "Confidentiality of Information Policy."

representing an organization rather than expressing a personal view, and have established specific guidelines regarding appropriate participation on social media sites.

Sharp has an active corporate social media strategy. Our Digital Marketing Department manages this area. The creation of official accounts on external websites or social networks on behalf of Sharp must be approved by and coordinated with Digital Marketing. Team members who use social media and external websites while at work or on the Sharp network must comply with "Sharp's Acceptable Use Policy," "Social Media Networking Sites Policy" and departmental guidelines. We may limit your access to social media sites. In addition, access is not universally available to all Sharp users and on all Sharp computers or devices.

### Competition and Antitrust

We have a strong commitment to legal, ethical and moral standards. It is important that we all act with integrity and honesty regarding competitive information. We must avoid all actions that are anti-competitive or otherwise contrary to laws that govern competitive practices in the marketplace. We may only gain competitive information through appropriate ethical and legal means. We may collect such information from public sources, such as company websites, advertisements, published articles and presentations.

To reduce the risk of violating antitrust and competition laws, we must not:

- Engage in any discussions or agreements with competitors regarding confidential information such as: price or other terms for product sales, prices paid to suppliers or providers, dividing up customers or geographic markets
- Join action to boycott or coerce certain customers, suppliers or providers
- Recruit new employees with the intent to obtain confidential information

Many of us are involved in trade and professional associations. These affiliations promote a sharing of information. However, it is not always appropriate to share business information with these associations and their members. We must take care to safeguard any confidential business data. Seek advice from Legal Affairs when confronted with business decisions involving a potential violation of the antitrust laws.

For more information, see our “Antitrust Policy” in the Policies and Procedures section on SharpNET. If you receive any competitor information that you believe is confidential, or obtained by inappropriate means, contact the Legal Affairs Department immediately.

### False Claims Act Compliance

We work diligently to ensure that our patient bills and the claims we submit to any payer, including Medicare and Medi-Cal, commercial insurance or our patients, are accurate. The federal False Claims Act prohibits any person or organization from knowingly submitting a false claim to the federal government for payment. “Knowingly” can include deliberate ignorance or reckless disregard of facts that make the claim false.

Examples of possible false claims include someone knowingly billing Medicare for any of the following:

- Services that were not provided
- Services that were not ordered by a physician
- Services that are more expensive than the services that were actually provided

Our Corporate Compliance program contains policies that help detect and prevent fraud, waste and abuse. They support compliance with the False Claims Act by:

- Educating team members to report any concern about a possible false claim at a Sharp entity to our supervisors, the Compliance Officer or Sharp’s Confidential Hotline at 1-800-350-5022
- Investigating all reported concerns and correcting any billing errors discovered
- Monitoring and auditing to prevent or detect errors in documentation, coding or billing
- Protecting our team members from adverse action when we do the right thing and report any genuine concern



### Honest Communication and Respect in the Workplace

We encourage and foster a workplace where employees are free to discuss any concerns they may have. An effective open communication process is crucial to ensuring compliance with federal and California laws and regulations. Transparent communication also helps maintain the exceptional quality of the services we provide. We must conduct ourselves in a professional manner. We should treat everyone with kindness, courtesy, dignity and respect at all times. We are responsible for respecting the rights of those we interact with and for reporting questionable behavior.

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#### Reporting Suspicious Conduct

**Q.** I think a fellow team member is committing acts of misconduct. Will I get in trouble if I report this and my suspicions are incorrect?

**A.** No, Sharp's policy prohibits reprimand or retaliation so long as you report an honest concern.

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#### Workplace Fraud

Workplace fraud is an expensive and growing problem that has a negative impact on organizations and its employees. Organizations lose an estimated 5 percent of annual revenues due to fraudulent activities.

Workplace fraud occurs when an individual obtains a benefit through misconduct and/or dishonesty. Sharp has a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace fraud.

### Misconduct and Dishonesty

Some examples of misconduct and dishonesty include the following:

- Accepting or seeking anything of value (limits defined in policy) from contractors, vendors or other persons providing services or materials to the organization
- Acts that violate our Code of Conduct
- Destruction, removal or inappropriate use of records, furniture, fixtures and equipment and/or any similar or related inappropriate conduct
- Disclosing confidential and proprietary information to outside parties
- Forgery or other alteration of documents
- Misstatements and other irregularities in the organization's records, including the intentional misstatement of the results of operations
- Profiting as a result of insider knowledge of the organization's activities
- Theft or other misappropriation of assets, including assets of the organization, our customers, suppliers or others with whom we have a business relationship

Sharp specifically prohibits these and any other illegal activities. Each one of us has a responsibility to immediately report suspected misconduct or dishonesty to our managers or the Corporate Compliance Department.

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#### Fraud and Misconduct

**Q.** I noticed that my co-worker often takes medical supplies for his personal use. What should I do?

**A.** You need to notify your manager or the Compliance Department because this could indicate potential fraud or misconduct.

### **Access to Patient Health and Business Information**

All Sharp team members are responsible for helping ensure the confidentiality and integrity of corporate and protected health information (PHI). Access to medical records, billing records, computing environments, data communications and data resources are limited to the “minimum necessary” levels to accomplish the purpose required by each user’s job duties.

We assign each team member a unique user identification code. You must create a strong password to access Sharp’s information systems. You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of the health information accessed. Sharp prohibits any sharing of passwords or badges. We also forbid the unauthorized access or disclosure of confidential information. Failure to follow these confidentiality measures will result in disciplinary action up to and including revocation of access and/or termination.

If your password becomes compromised or revealed to anyone other than the authorized user, you should contact the Information Systems Department’s Technical Assistance Center immediately. Access to the Sharp network is limited to Sharp assets only, unless a Remote Access Service Agreement has been approved by management and the Information Systems Department.

**“There’s harmony and inner peace to be found in following a moral compass that points in the same direction regardless of fashion or trend.”**

— Ted Koppel

## **BUSINESS ETHICS**

### **SHARP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

#### **We will:**

- Support all coding assignments and bills for services with clinical documentation
- Ensure all clinical documentation supports the medical necessity and level of services provided
- Prepare and maintain all patient and corporate records accurately and retain such records for time periods required by law and Sharp HealthCare
- Protect our computer passwords from disclosure
- Report any arrangements where individuals are influenced in any way for referrals
- Follow our entity’s document destruction/shredding policies
- Avoid false billing as a means of reducing third-party edits or denials
- Refrain from processing a bill in a way that is contrary to our understanding of the rules or regulations of that payer
- Prohibit the use or sharing of Sharp proprietary information for our own personal use
- Refuse to engage in relationships with competitors that may infer a conflict of interest, collusion or improper competition





## PRINCIPLE 3

# Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest includes anything that divides our loyalty between Sharp's best interests and the interest of others. Here are some instances in which a conflict of interest may exist:

- Accepting gifts, payments or services from those doing business or seeking to do business with Sharp
- Direct or indirect financial interest in a company or private business that is a competitor or supplier of goods and services to Sharp
- Hiring or contracting with a family member or friend to provide goods and/or services to Sharp
- Serving as a director, officer, consultant or other key role with a company or private business that (1) conducts business, (2) seeks to do business or (3) competes with Sharp
- Situations where financial or personal considerations may compromise or appear to compromise delivery of patient care

### **Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment**

Certain gifts and gratuities may pose ethical issues. Our "Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy" helps guide us to make the right choice when faced with an ethical dilemma regarding gifts. As Sharp team members, we may not offer or accept cash or cash equivalent in any amount. This applies to any person or entity, that is doing business with, seeking to do business with

or who is a competitor of Sharp HealthCare. If a patient, family member or other individual offers a monetary gift, you should promptly refer the individual to the appropriate foundation office where they can make a donation.

You should not accept personal gifts, favors or benefits unless the item has a value less than \$100 and the annual total of any such gifts does not exceed \$100 from any single third party.

Business entertainment paid for by third parties may be acceptable so long as it meets the following standards: (1) Sharp HealthCare business is being conducted and (2) such activities occur in a manner and location conducive to the conduct of business so as not to be construed as personal benefits.

Acceptable items include the following:

- Unsolicited advertising or promotional materials (such as a pen, cup/mug, calendar, paperweight)
- Other traditional marketing items (with little to no value other than name recognition)

If you have questions about accepting gifts, talk with the Corporate Compliance Department or refer to the "Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy" on SharpNET for further guidance.

### PRINCIPLE 3

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We are dedicated to conducting business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest.

### Gifts

**Q.** I work with many vendors in my department. A vendor brought in a fruit basket. May I accept this gift?

**A.** You should be fine accepting this gift as long as you adhere to Sharp's policies. Sharp's "Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy" allows accepting gifts that have a value of less than \$100, and do not exceed an annual total of \$100 from any single third party. You may accept perishable or consumable gifts if it is a reasonable value and you share it with your department or group. Always check with your manager or Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department if you are unsure.



### Customer and Business Associate/ Contractor Relations

We must conduct all business relationships with contractors impartially and in a fair manner in compliance with Sharp's policies.

Sharp team members may not require contractors to (1) cease business with Sharp's competitors or (2) purchase Sharp products or services in order to gain favorable contracts with Sharp. In addition, we will not accept special discounts or other favorable treatment offered by contractors in an effort to gain favor.

Anyone representing Sharp HealthCare or acting on its behalf in negotiating agreements has a responsibility to:

- Hold Sharp's interests above all other entities
- Decline gratuities, favors or other gifts offered in return for doing business with Sharp, or for providing access to decision-makers within Sharp
- Ensure performance of the appropriate market and financial analyses to reasonably determine the value to Sharp of entering into a relationship with a supplier, vendor or business partner
- Report efforts by independent contractors to inappropriately influence business relations and activities

Sharp HealthCare's leadership must secure a written Business Associate Agreement with all persons and organizations who will receive, use or gain access to protected health information. Business Associate Agreements provide three things. They:

- Identify the protected health information to be disclosed and used
- Ensure the appropriate use of that protected health information
- Impose security, inspection and reporting requirements on the business associate

Protected health, confidential and proprietary information shared by a customer or a representative of a contracting entity is confidential.

### Community and Political Involvement

Sharp encourages team members, as private citizens, to participate in the political process and to serve as advocates for community-service organizations. However, you have a duty to conduct your affiliations and contacts with community officials, religious and charitable organizations, political parties and governmental agencies in compliance with applicable law.

Participation in such activities should not:

- Bring discredit, embarrassment or liability to Sharp
- Create a conflict of interest
- Interfere with the satisfactory performance of job-related duties
- Jeopardize the tax-exempt status of Sharp

Sharp prohibits the use of its funds, equipment, facilities and/or assets to support a political party, candidate(s) or holder of any government position, or any community organization without administrative approval.

Each of us may personally participate in and contribute to individuals, organizations or campaigns, but must do so clearly as a private citizen. We must also use our own funds, our own name, and we may not use our Sharp title or role.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

### SHARP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

- Refrain from accepting gifts from suppliers or customers whose intention may be to give or receive business in return
- Always follow purchasing policies
- Refrain from accepting any cash from a patient, customer or supplier
- Justify and properly document all rebates, discounts and allowances we receive
- Act with integrity and professionalism, and avoid conflicts of interest
- Verify that a Business Associate Agreement exists prior to sharing protected health information
- Ensure that our relationship with a competitor or supplier does not create a conflict of interest
- Follow Sharp policies and procedures that prohibit the use of Sharp data or property for personal gain
- Protect information about the system, suppliers or competitors from persons who could use that information for unlawful purposes
- Make sure that our family members are not involved in another business activity that might interfere with how we perform our duties as Sharp team members



## PRINCIPLE 4

# Corporate Assets

### Protecting Sharp HealthCare's Assets

We prepare all Sharp financial documents accurately, reliably, honestly and in accordance with established finance and accounting procedures. We have standards and procedures to ensure that we protect our assets and use them for their intended purpose. We input our entries of cost, financial or similar business information only to the regularly maintained books and records of Sharp. Any Sharp purchased or leased resources are intended to be used solely for business purposes. We do not allow private use of Sharp's assets and resources for personal benefit or gain. We prohibit any unauthorized destruction of Sharp's property.

### Safety, Health and Environmental Matters

Sharp is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for patients, family members, employees, providers, visitors and customers. We make every effort to provide a safe physical environment and prevent injuries. The Injury and Illness Prevention Program is reviewed and updated annually. All employees and medical staff are encouraged to use proper equipment and follow safety procedures, instructions and safeguards. Sharp complies with all established safety and infection control regulations and upholds ergonomic standards for maintaining a safe work environment. We are respectful of the environment and conserve natural resources. Our policies and procedures reflect our effort to preserve our environment. We use Sharp's buildings, property, laboratory processes and medical products in accordance with federal, California and accreditation standards. We comply with all regulatory requirements to manage our environment of care.

**"If we had only one rule in this company, it would be the Golden Rule. If we've got that one right, no other rules are necessary."**

— Jim Blanchard



To this end, Sharp implements the following initiatives:

- Injury and Illness Prevention Program
- Injury prevention specialists' consultation services
- Procedures for investigating and addressing accidents and unsafe conditions
- Safety committees
- System to report hazardous or unhealthy work conditions
- Training in healthful and safe work practices

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### Workforce Harassment

**Q.** One of my co-workers makes offensive comments and I have repeatedly asked him to stop. Is this conduct acceptable?

**A.** No, your co-worker's conduct may be inappropriate. Sharp fosters an environment free of any type of harassment, derogatory comments and disruptive behavior. You should contact your manager or Sharp Human Resources.

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## PRINCIPLE 4

### CORPORATE ASSETS

We commit to workplace excellence by respecting the dignity of those we serve. We protect Sharp HealthCare's property, and promote creativity, innovation and accountability.

### Workplace Conduct and Employment Practices

Sharp provides equal employment opportunities to prospective and current employees. We make hiring decisions based solely on merit, qualifications and abilities. We respect all of our employees and business affiliates. Sharp does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of age; ancestry; citizenship; color; creed; gender; gender identity; gender expression; genetic information; pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; breastfeeding; family care or medical leave status; race; religion; national origin; physical or mental disability; medical condition; marital status; sexual orientation; veteran or military status; or any other characteristic protected by law. We support and observe a workplace free of alcohol, drugs and tobacco use. We foster an environment free of any type of harassment, derogatory comments and disruptive behavior.

### **Proprietary Information and System Property**

Sharp complies with all copyright and software licensing laws. We realize that any unauthorized duplication of copyrighted computer software violates the law and the Code of Conduct. As authorized users of Sharp's information systems, we understand that we may not make copies of Sharp's computer software programs for personal use. In addition, we may not download or copy software onto Sharp's computing devices, unless explicitly directed or permitted to do so by Sharp's Information Systems Department.

We strive to comply with all licensing conditions required by such software. Sharp has internal programs intended to monitor and verify compliance with these principles. Failure to comply with Sharp's policies could result in appropriate disciplinary action.

We enforce strong internal controls to prevent the making or use of unauthorized software copies. This includes effective measures to verify compliance with these standards and appropriate disciplinary measures for violation of these standards.

We understand that copyrighted or trademarked materials may not be copied or used without written permission. We are prohibited from using or copying any customer and/or supplier price lists, contracts, documents, publications, computer systems, software information or products unless expressly authorized to do so.

Confidential and/or exclusive business information is a protected Sharp HealthCare asset. You should not share such information with others — including fellow team members — without a legitimate business reason. Similarly, it is Sharp's policy to respect the trade secrets and intellectual property rights of others. You may only use Sharp's assets for authorized business purposes.



### **Acceptable Use of Information and Computing Resources**

Every person who is eligible and authorized to access information contained on the Sharp computer network is responsible for the protection of Sharp's confidential and proprietary data assets. Our responsibilities include:

- Adherence to all laws, regulations and policies that protect information and maintain medical privacy
- Appropriate access to confidential data
- Protecting passwords from use by any other person
- Reasonable and professional use of email and web services
- Safe practices for virus prevention and mitigation

Any violations are dealt with in accordance with Sharp's Information Security policies.

### **Personal Electronic Devices**

Personal electronic devices should not be used to capture audio, video or photographs while providing patient care or in patient rooms. Hospital-owned cameras are available to support patient care and should be used if the need arises to take a picture of a patient. Any pictures or recordings that were captured using hospital equipment are the property of Sharp. Personal electronic devices may be used by physicians, physician assistants or nurse practitioners for patient-related business only in areas where patient information may not be overheard by persons not directly involved with care of said patient.

## **CORPORATE ASSETS**

### **SHARP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

- Use accurate timekeeping
- File honest expense reports
- Take appropriate action to report and correct a potential safety hazard
- Handle biohazardous materials according to policy
- Use Sharp equipment or supplies for business purposes only
- Protect proprietary information, ideas and intellectual property assets for Sharp HealthCare
- Properly handle confidential and proprietary information that is printed, faxed, copied, emailed or accessed from home, laptop, mobile phone or any other electronic device

## PRINCIPLE 5

# Regulatory Affairs

### **Requests From Government Officials and Regulatory Agencies**

Under the direction of the Legal Affairs Department, Sharp cooperates fully with requests for information from government auditors, investigators or other regulatory agency officials. The following instructions apply to all Sharp team members.

If you are contacted by a government agent in connection with an investigation or request for documents:

**Ask:** If you are contacted in person, ask for identification and a business card, and make copies of both. If a search warrant is presented, ask to make a photocopy of the search warrant and affidavit. If contacted by phone, ask for and write down the agent's name, office address, telephone number and the subject the agent wishes to discuss.

**Call:** Call your supervisor and the Corporate Compliance Department at 858-499-3138 immediately. Alternatively, you may call any member of administration, including the Legal Affairs Department at 858-499-4021.

**Take:** Take notes and write a list of any documentation presented to a government representative.

**Tell:** Tell the representative the truth. If you don't know, say, "I don't know." You should not guess when responding. You may be required to answer questions about the location of documents only. You have the right to wait until Sharp legal counsel is present to answer any questions. For more information, refer to the "Compliance Related Government Investigations Policy" in the Policies and Procedures section on SharpNET.

### **Government Business**

You must exercise special care when dealing with government officials and agencies. Laws, regulations and ethical standards that apply to doing business with federal, California and local government agencies often differ from those that apply to dealings with non-government customers and suppliers. Sharp team members who work with government business divisions are responsible for knowing and complying with applicable laws and regulations. The next page provides a brief summary of some of these laws and regulations.

**"We make commitments with care, and then live up to them. In all things, we do what we say we are going to do."**

— Charles Brewer

## **Laws and Regulations**

The submission of false information or false claims to the government may violate laws such as the Mail and Wire Fraud Statutes, False Claims Act and False Statements Act.

### **Mail and Wire Fraud Statutes**

The use of mail or wire services, such as fax machines, email or telephone systems, to transmit false or misleading information with intent to defraud constitutes mail and wire fraud.

### **False Claims Acts**

A false claim is any attempt to obtain money from the federal government or the state of California by knowingly presenting false or misleading information relating to payment from the government. An example of a violation of these laws includes, but is not limited to:

- An employee knowingly recording or processing any information inaccurately (e.g., changing a beneficiary name)
- Changing dollar amounts on claims
- Filing false expense reports
- Filing false time reports

For detailed information on the federal and California False Claims Act, refer to the “Reporting Fraud, Misconduct & Non-Retaliation Policy” in the Policies and Procedures section on SharpNET.

### **False Statements Acts**

Federal and California laws prohibit a person from making a false or misleading statement or withholding material information in connection with the delivery of services to or payment from the government. If done with the intent to mislead the government, examples of potential violations include:

- Falsifying conflict-of-interest information
- Making a false statement to a government auditor
- Presenting false or misleading information in a contractor performance review
- Providing false reports or data

## **PRINCIPLE 5**

### **REGULATORY AFFAIRS**

We will ensure compliance in all our business transactions. This includes conformity with all statutes, regulations and guidelines applicable to federal and California health care programs, and with Sharp HealthCare’s own policies and procedures.

### **Anti-kickback Statutes**

Federal and California anti-kickback statutes impose severe criminal, civil and monetary penalties on individuals or organizations that offer a kickback, as well as on individuals or organizations that accept such kickbacks. A kickback may include any of the following (provided directly or indirectly) to improperly obtain or reward favorable treatment: (1) money, (2) commission, (3) compensation of any kind, (4) credit, (5) discount, (6) fee, (7) gift, (8) gratuity or (9) rebate.

Sharp prohibits payment or acceptance of anything of value in return for, or to induce the referral of any patient for any service. Service includes any that may be payable under Medicare, Medi-Cal or any other federal or California health care program. Payments or items of value offered to influence referrals to or from Sharp are considered inducements and are prohibited.

### **Obstruction of a Federal Audit**

This law prohibits anyone from intentionally deceiving or defrauding the United States. In addition, the law prohibits anyone from attempting to influence, obstruct or impede a federal auditor in the performance of official duties. This law includes, but is not limited to, routine government audits and government investigations.



### California Medical Privacy Laws

California requires that health care providers uphold and preserve the privacy and confidentiality of a patient's medical information. The California Health and Safety Code prohibits the unlawful or unauthorized access to or use or disclosure of a patient's medical information. Sharp's privacy policies emphasize that the inappropriate access, review or viewing of patient medical information without a direct need for medical diagnosis, treatment or other lawful use is prohibited and subject to sanctions and disciplinary actions up to and including termination. Any negligent treatment of patient medical information may also be subject to remedies and penalties.

Sharp is required by law to report privacy breaches within 15 business days of detection and may be assessed a penalty of \$100 per day for late reporting to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the affected patient. Facilities and individuals (including physicians, nurses, clerks and other personnel) can be fined up to \$250,000 for breaches in patient privacy. For more details, refer to the "Health Information: Access, Use & Disclosure Policy" in the Policies and Procedures section on SharpNET.

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### Breach of Protected Health Information

**Q.** I work in a department where I am required to fax patient medical information. I accidentally faxed a patient's laboratory results to the wrong person. What should I do?

**A.** Anytime you accidentally provide a patient's medical information to an unintended recipient, you need to notify your entity privacy liaison, your manager or Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department immediately.

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### Federal and California Whistleblower Protection Laws

Both federal and California whistleblower laws offer protection for whistleblowers from retaliation where their allegations could legitimately support a violation of the False Claims Act. California provides a whistleblower hotline to receive calls and maintain the anonymity of the caller. The federal government provides confidential forms to report fraud and abuse.

### Health Care Reform Laws

The Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act (FERA) contains amendments to the False Claims Act. Among other things, FERA amended the "reverse false claim" provision of the False Claims Act. It provides that an entity violates the False Claims Act if it "knowingly avoids or decreases an obligation" to pay money to the United States. Furthermore, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) expressly requires health care providers and others to report and return overpayments. The term overpayment is defined as "any funds that a person receives or retains under Title XVIII or XIX to which the person after applicable reconciliation is not entitled under such title."

### Disclosure

Sharp is committed to appropriately disclosing violations of law, regulations or requirements under all government or business contracts to applicable governing entities.

### Affiliated Individuals and Organizations

We work closely with individuals and organizations not employed by Sharp who serve as board members, medical professionals, contractors, students and volunteers. We expect each individual and organization to honor and abide by all applicable portions of the Code of Conduct and our policies while working in any Sharp facility or conducting business with or on behalf of Sharp HealthCare.

**"Watch the little things; a small leak will sink a great ship."**

— Benjamin Franklin

### Excluded Persons and Entities

Sharp does not contract with, employ or bill for services rendered by individuals or entities that:

- Are excluded or ineligible to participate in a federal health care program
- Are suspended or debarred from federal government contracts
- Have been convicted of a criminal offense related to the provision of health care items or services (and has not yet been reinstated in a federal health care program)

These individuals, companies or groups are prohibited from doing business with us or gaining employment by Sharp. We will consider a business relationship only if there is reinstatement by the governing agency. Current employees, vendors and credentialed practitioners at one or more of Sharp's entities are required to report to the Corporate Compliance Department if they become excluded, debarred or ineligible to participate in federal health care programs or have been convicted of a criminal offense related to the provision of health care items or services.

### Marketing and Media Inquiries

Sharp's advertising must be truthful and accurate. We must clearly support any marketing claims about our services with evidence. All pricing advertisements must accurately reflect the true charges for services. Sharp HealthCare will not use or disclose protected health information for the purposes of marketing communications without a written authorization from the individual. The release of sensitive information could have a negative impact on patients, physicians and employees, as well as Sharp's reputation and interests. We frequently receive requests from the media for information regarding a patient's condition, requests for interviews with staff members, visitors or patients. You should refer all requests from news media personnel to management and the Public Relations and Communications Department.

## REGULATORY AFFAIRS

### SHARP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

- Verify the accuracy of information before providing it to others for use in marketing
- Do not discuss Sharp's business with members of the media unless directed to do so by management
- Obtain patient authorization prior to disseminating any marketing communication

### Tax-Exempt Status

Sharp entities are not-for-profit corporations exempt from taxation under the Internal Revenue Code and other applicable California laws. As such, Sharp must comply with Internal Revenue Service laws and regulations, engage in activities that further its tax-exempt purposes, and use resources to promote such purposes. Sharp expressly prohibits team members from using Sharp HealthCare's tax-exempt status for personal gain.

### Cost Reports

Federal and California laws and regulations require Sharp to submit reports of its operating costs, revenue and statistics. These laws and regulations define what costs are permissible and outline the reimbursement procedures for the cost of services provided through federal and California programs. We are committed to providing appropriate education to staff regarding federal and California laws, regulations and guidelines. All issues related to the preparation, submission and settlement of cost reports must be performed by or coordinated with Sharp's Finance Department. All issues or concerns regarding compliance with federal and California laws are reviewed and addressed by the Finance and Corporate Compliance Departments.

## PRINCIPLE 6

# Compliance Reporting and Our Shared Responsibilities

### What to Do When Compliance Issues Arise

Our Code of Conduct cannot address every potential situation or issue, therefore it is critical that we understand the principles in this guide and apply them appropriately. Our Code of Conduct provides guidelines for behavior, and while not a contract of employment, compliance with it is a condition of employment and of doing business with Sharp HealthCare. Sharp employees, affiliated physicians, volunteers and independent contractors are responsible for knowing, understanding and complying with our Code of Conduct and the policies and procedures it serves to reinforce.



### Ethics Self-Assessment

**Q.** I am occasionally involved in situations that require me to make difficult ethical decisions. What do I do?

**A.** Anytime you have a difficult ethical dilemma, ask yourself the following questions before acting:

- Is it the ethical thing to do?
- Is this consistent with Sharp's Code of Conduct?
- What are the consequences to Sharp, others and me?
- Will my actions embarrass me and/or harm Sharp's reputation?
- Will this violate any laws?

If you still need help, you can contact your manager or Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department.

**"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."**

— William James

Our Code of Conduct provides a framework for putting our values and integrity into action, and serves as a guide for ethical conduct. As Sharp team members, we must take responsibility for safeguarding the integrity of our organization, and the integrity of our own actions.

Our conduct is our own responsibility. We must never engage in dishonest or illegal behavior, even if directed to do so by a manager or co-worker. We should also never direct others to act in such a manner. If requested to act in a dishonest or illegal manner, we must report it immediately to our Corporate Compliance Department.

### Management Responsibility

Our management has a responsibility to support Sharp's Code of Conduct, and is accountable for the following:

- Ensuring that all current and new employees under their supervision are educated in the meaning and application of the Code of Conduct
- Emphasizing, by word and action, Sharp's continuing commitment to compliance in the prevention, detection and correction of inappropriate conduct
- Annually reviewing employees' knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct
- Supporting and assisting employees in complying with our principles
- Ensuring strict compliance with Sharp's Non-retaliation Policy

### Reporting Compliance Violations

As Sharp team members, we each have an obligation to report in good faith any actual or suspected violation of the Code of Conduct. Good faith reporting means that the individual has a strong belief that a potential violation has occurred.

## PRINCIPLE 6

### COMPLIANCE REPORTING AND OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

We are committed to preventing, detecting and reporting violations of Sharp policies, statutes, regulations or guidelines applicable to federal and California health care programs.

#### Good Faith Reporting

**Q.** I reported a possible violation but I did not include all the facts because I did not want to get my co-workers in trouble. Did I make a good faith report?

**A.** No, this does not qualify as a good faith report. You are on the right track by reporting. However, because you failed to include all the facts, you did not make a good faith report. Good faith reporting requires the following (to the extent that you know):

- Describing what your concerns are
- Describing the location where the event occurred
- Listing any witnesses who can confirm your report
- Discussing any relevant information you feel is necessary
- Providing the names of the individual(s) involved
- Stating the time and date of event
- Stating what the issue is

Reporting suspected violations is not an act of disloyalty. Rather, it shows responsibility and fairness to patients and payers as well as protects Sharp's reputation and assets.

To report compliance violations, you may do any of the following:

- Contact your manager to discuss questionable issues
- Contact senior management or the compliance liaison from your facility (see the Compliance Department Organization Chart tab on SharpNET for liaisons)
- Contact the Sharp HealthCare Compliance Department or Legal Affairs Department
- To report anonymously, call the Sharp HealthCare Confidential Hotline at 1-800-350-5022 or file a report online at [mycompliancereport.com](http://mycompliancereport.com)

### Confidential Hotline

All calls to the Confidential Hotline are received by trained personnel, independent of Sharp HealthCare. These individuals document and forward all issues to Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department for appropriate action. We do not record any calls made to the Confidential Hotline. You have the option to remain anonymous during your conversation.

If you choose to identify yourself, your identity will remain confidential, as permitted or required by law. All disclosures, interviews and reports will also be kept confidential, as permitted or required by law. We value your input and will follow up and investigate all calls in a timely manner.

### Online Reporting

If you would like to file a report online, visit [mycompliancereport.com](http://mycompliancereport.com), click on "Begin New Report" and enter "shc" as the access ID. Your report will go directly to the vice president of Corporate Compliance. You can choose to submit the report anonymously. If you choose not to submit your report anonymously, your identity will remain confidential, as permitted or required by law.

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### Retaliation

**Q.** I think my boss is treating me differently after I reported a co-worker's suspicious conduct. Is this a retaliatory act?

**A.** Maybe. Examples of retaliatory acts include: demotion, suspension and any harassment or discrimination as a result of a team member's reporting.

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### Non-retaliation Policy

We understand that team members may be reluctant to report suspicious activity due to fear of retaliation. We want to assure our team that we enforce a strong non-retaliation policy. This means that we prohibit any form of retaliation or retribution toward a team member who reports, in good faith, an alleged act of misconduct.

Sharp makes every effort to maintain the anonymity of individuals who report compliance concerns. We will treat your information as confidential and privileged to the extent allowed by law. We expect reporting individuals to provide us with enough information to allow an investigation in order to resolve the issue in question. We prohibit retaliation against any reporting employee because of such reporting. Any team member engaging in retaliatory activity is subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

For more details, refer to the "Reporting Fraud, Misconduct & Non-retaliation Policy" in the Policies and Procedures section on SharpNET.

**"The time is always right to do what is right."**

— Martin Luther King Jr.



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### Reporting as a Means of Retaliation

**Q.** I reported a co-worker on Sharp's Confidential Hotline because I was angry with her. Is this OK?

**A.** It depends on whether you sincerely believed that a potential violation occurred. You should always report a concern in good faith. However, you should not report other team members solely as a form of retaliation against them.

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### Workplace Harassment

We are committed to providing a work environment free of all forms of harassment. Our commitment is to establish expectations to provide a working environment that is both productive and professional based on mutual respect and the highest level of ethical and lawful conduct. We prohibit unlawful harassment in any form, including sexual harassment, or harassment based on or related to: age; ancestry; citizenship; color; creed; gender; gender identity; gender expression; genetic information; pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; breastfeeding; family care or medical leave status; race; religion; national origin; physical or mental disability; medical condition; marital status; sexual orientation; veteran or military status; or any characteristic protected by California or federal employment discrimination laws. We also prohibit unlawful retaliation in any form.

### Investigation and Resolution

Our Compliance Department will impartially and thoroughly review, evaluate and respond to allegations of misconduct, concerns and/or inquiries made directly to the Compliance Department, the Confidential Hotline or submitted online through [mycompliancereport.com](https://mycompliancereport.com). Our Compliance Department will investigate and verify all allegations before we take any action.

### Disciplinary Action

As Sharp team members, we understand that we must adhere to the Code of Conduct and

## COMPLIANCE REPORTING AND OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

### SHARP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

- Comply with the intent and purpose of Sharp's Code of Conduct
- Be honest in all of our actions
- Remain aware of how our actions may be perceived by others

Sharp policies and procedures, and doing so is a condition of employment and of doing business with Sharp HealthCare. Persons who violate any compliance principles or any Sharp policy are subject to discipline. Discipline may include potential loss of employment, the inability to continue doing business with Sharp or the loss of staff membership privileges. Sharp may take disciplinary action for, but not limited to, any of the following circumstances:

- Authorizing or participating in actions that violate Sharp's policies and procedures
- Failing to report a possible violation of Sharp's Code of Conduct
- Refusing to cooperate in the investigation of a potential violation
- Disclosing confidential information about an investigation
- Retaliating against an individual for reporting a potential violation
- Making intentional false reports of misconduct or violation of Sharp's Code of Conduct

The nature of any disciplinary action will depend on the nature of the violation and the circumstances involved.

## Resource Guide

This section is designed to provide you with internal resources available for reporting and resolving potential violations as outlined in this guide. You have several options when you:

- Have a question or concern about Sharp's Code of Conduct (or an issue not covered here)
- Need help reporting or discussing a possible violation
- Have any questions about compliance requirements or ethical dilemmas

Sharp provides necessary education regarding our Code of Conduct and the confidential reporting options for all team members. Some team members will receive specialized education on the following subjects:

- Billing
- Coding
- Documentation
- Employment regulations
- Information security awareness
- Medical necessity
- Medical privacy that relates specifically to job responsibilities
- Reimbursement

## Resources

### Management

Our managers are responsible for knowing and demonstrating compliance with Sharp's Code of Conduct. They are also responsible for providing guidance on operational policies and procedures within their department. Your manager is one of your contacts who can answer questions. He or she can also provide direction regarding compliance concerns. You may consult with

your manager for information about compliance requirements and operational policies and procedures. If you do not feel comfortable talking with your manager about a potential compliance issue, you may use one of the following available resources.

### Corporate Compliance

Sharp's Corporate Compliance Department facilitates investigations and ensures resolution of suspected violations of federal and California laws, and our policies and procedures. Our Corporate Compliance Department works collaboratively with management, Human Resources, the Legal Affairs Department, Internal Audit Services and external examiners to ensure fair resolution of ethical and compliance concerns.

### Human Resources

Sharp's Human Resources Department can assist you in assessing your concerns and directing you to the appropriate resource or remedy. Compliance concerns can include a number of related workplace issues that can be best managed through human resources and management. All local Human Resources directors and the vice president of Employee/Labor Relations & Recruitment Services are available to assist you.

### Legal Affairs

Sharp's Legal Affairs Department provides important interpretation of legal and regulatory business requirements. Team members work collaboratively with the Corporate Compliance Department to investigate and resolve compliance concerns and related disciplinary action.

### Internal Audit Services

Sharp's Internal Audit Services conducts annual focused reviews to assess business operational controls. As appropriate, Internal Audit Services may assist our Corporate Compliance Department with investigations.

## Instructions for Completing Certification

### Sharp HealthCare Employee

Complete your certification online as part of the annual mandatory compliance education.

You do NOT need to complete this written certification.

### Physician or Volunteer

Please complete this page and return it to your respective Sharp HealthCare department contact.

## Certification

I certify that I have received and read the Sharp HealthCare Code of Conduct and that I understand its purpose and how these guidelines apply to me.

I agree to comply with the policies and procedures outlined in this guide at all times.

I agree to adhere to and comply with the following requirements as a condition of my employment or engagement with Sharp HealthCare. Sharp will take disciplinary action, including and up to termination, for violations of:

- Sharp's Code of Conduct
- Sharp HealthCare's policies and procedures
- Applicable laws and regulations
- Terms and guidelines of government health care payers and programs
- Obligation to report all known or suspected violations listed in the Code of Conduct

I recognize that Sharp prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a good-faith report of a compliance issue.

I have a responsibility to discuss the importance of the Code of Conduct with anyone under my supervision, as applicable.

I understand that these standards may be amended, modified or clarified at any time and that I will have access to any updates that may occur.

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First and Last Name (print)

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Signature

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Date Signed (month/day/year)

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Employee Number

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Sharp HealthCare Facility

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Department



## Department Contacts

### **Sharp Confidential Hotline**

1-800-350-5022

### **Vice President of Corporate Compliance**

858-499-4015

### **Corporate Compliance Director of Privacy**

858-499-3025

### **Corporate Compliance Department**

858-499-3138

### **Legal Affairs Department**

858-499-4021

### **Human Resources Department**

858-499-5228

### **Information Systems Security Administrator**

858-627-5256

Your entity also has designated compliance and privacy liaisons. For a list of entity liaisons, search “Compliance Committee Structure” on SharpNET.



“The glue that holds all relationships together — including the relationship between the leader and the led — is trust, and trust is based on integrity.”  
— Brian Tracy





*A Health Care Organization Designed Not For Profit, But For People*