

NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF HOME & COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCIES

CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

The Nebraska Association of Home and Community Health Agencies (NAHCHA) was founded with the intention of encouraging the development and the delivery of the highest quality of medical, social, and supportive services to the aged, infirm, and disabled.

In the process of bringing these essential services to the needy, the Association and its members seek to establish and retain the highest possible level of public confidence.

This Code of Ethics, adopted by the NAHCHA Board of Directors in January 2001 serves as a statement to the general public that the Association and its individual members stand for integrity and the highest ethical standards.

This Code of Ethics serves to inform members and the general public as to what are acceptable guidelines for ethical conduct for home care agencies and their employees.

It is inherent in the declaration of this Code of Ethics that the Association and its members pledge to protect and preserve the basic rights of their patients and to deal with them in an honest and ethical manner.

Finally, the Code of Ethics serves as notice to government officials that the Association expects its members to abide by all applicable laws and regulations. It is a precondition of membership in the Association that they do so and that failure to comply will result in expulsion from membership in the Association in addition to other penalties prescribed by law.

The Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guideline to agencies in the following areas:

- A. Patient Rights and Responsibilities
- B. Relationships to Other Provider Agencies
- C. Responsibility to National Association for Home Care
- D. Fiscal Responsibilities
- E. Marketing and Public Relations
- F. Personnel
- G. Legislative
- H. Hearing Process

A. PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is anticipated that observance of these rights and responsibilities will contribute to more effective patient care and greater satisfaction for the patient as well as the agency. The rights will be respected by all agency personnel and integrated into all home care agency programs. A copy of these rights will be prominently displayed within the agency and made available to patients upon request.

1. The patient is fully informed of all his/her rights and responsibilities.
2. The patient has the right to appropriate and professional care relating to physician orders.
3. The patient has the right of choice of care providers.
4. The patient has the right to receive information necessary to give informed consent prior to the start of any procedure or treatment.
5. The patient has the right to refuse treatment within the confines of the law and to be informed of the consequences of his action.
6. The patient has the right to privacy.
7. The patient has the right to receive a timely response to his request for service from the agency.
8. A patient will be admitted for service only if the agency has the ability to provide safe professional care at the level of intensity needed. The patient has the right to reasonable continuity of care.
9. The patient has the right to be informed within reasonable time of anticipated termination of service or plans for transfer to another agency.

NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF HOME & COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCIES

CODE OF ETHICS

10. The patient has the right to voice grievances and suggest changes in service or staff without fear of restraint or discrimination.
11. A fair hearing shall be available to any individual to whom service has been denied, reduced, or terminated or who is otherwise aggrieved by agency action. The fair hearing procedure shall be set forth by each agency as appropriate to the unique patient situation (e.g., funding source, level of care, diagnosis).
12. The patient has the right to be fully informed of agency policies and charges for services, including eligibility for third-party reimbursements.
13. A patient denied service solely on his/her inability to pay shall have the right of referral.
14. The patient and the public have the right to honest, accurate forthright information regarding the home care industry in general and his/her chosen agency in particular (e.g., cost/visit, employee qualifications).

B. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PROVIDER AGENCIES

1. The principal objective of Home Care Agencies is to provide the best possible service to patients. Agencies shall honestly and conscientiously cooperate in providing information about referrals and shall work together to assure comprehensive services to patients and their families.
2. Members shall engage in ethical conduct of their affairs so that maximum fair trade occurs.

C. RESPONSIBILITY TO NAHCHA

1. The Bylaws and policies of NAHCHA reflect mutual cooperation among members in attaining goals that assure quality care for the patient and family. The members of NAHCHA shall abide by those Bylaws and policies.
2. Members shall promptly pay all membership dues and shall participate and contribute talent to foster a dynamic, progressive organization from which all members can benefit professionally.

D. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The amount of service billed is consistent with amount and type of service provided.
2. The cost per visit includes only legitimate expenses.
3. The medical equipment sold or rented to patients is provided at a reasonable cost consistent with quality, quantity, and timeliness.
4. The salaries and benefits of the provider and administrative staff shall be consistent with the size of the agency, responsibility, and geographical location.
5. The provider shall not engage in kickbacks and payoffs.
6. The provider shall submit dues to NAHCHA based on the actual revenues received from all home care activities for the previous year.

E. MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Oral and written statements will fairly represent service, benefits, cost, and agency capability.
2. Agencies, which promote their service in the public media, shall include information descriptive of home care in general, as well as agency-specific information.

F. PERSONNEL

1. The agency shall be an equal opportunity employer and comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
2. The agency shall have written personnel policies available to all employees and uniformly applied to all employees.
3. The agency shall provide an ongoing evaluation process for all employees.
4. The agency shall hire qualified employees and utilize them at the level of their competency.
5. The agency shall provide supervision to all employees.