



**BENEWAH COMMUNITY HOSPITAL  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

***"We treat you like family!"***



Approved by the Governing Board: 10/22/2015  
Revised: NONE



Dear Benewah Community Hospital Personnel,

Central to our core values is our ethical practice and accountability. Everyday our clients and their families place their trust in each employee and representative of our facility. This trust is of absolute concern to me, professionally and personally. In order to create the very best healthcare delivery model for our community we not only employ many individuals but also work together as a team with independent clinicians, vendors, business partners, and our partners in the Benewah County leadership.

Benewah Community Hospital is committed to protecting the safety and dignity of all our patients, families, and staff. A strong emphasis in compliance, a just culture, and safety are the hallmarks of our organization. Each of these critical values is expressed in the Code of Conduct. This is one of the most important communications you will receive as an associate with BCH. It formulates the foundation for how we conduct ourselves in the service to our clients. It is measured in the values expressed by our Mission Statement and Core Values.

It is important to me as Chief Executive Officer to have a balanced and measured focus on the Code of Conduct as well as the following success factors:

- Honesty and integrity in all we do;
- Take care of each other;
- Take care of our patients, their families, and the community;
- Grow;
- Be efficient and positive stewards of our resources;
- Manage our capital wisely;
- Organizational excellence through performance improvement.

Thank you for your individual and collective commitment to Benewah Community Hospital.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Koroush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Anthony Koroush  
Chief Executive Officer

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

***Why Have a Code of Conduct? To promote conduct that is honest, ethical, and legal.***

Benewah Community Hospital (BCH) is committed to integrity, ethical behavior, and the highest moral conduct from our Board of Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, providers, employees, volunteers, students, vendors, and any other agents associated with BCH (collectively referred to as “personnel”). This Code of Conduct reaffirms our commitment to do the right thing. Each person is expected to know, understand, abide by the guidelines outlined in the Code of Conduct, and ensure BCH continues to provide the highest levels of compassionate, quality healthcare while complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

These guidelines are designed to assist each of us in making the right choices when confronted with difficult situations. The responsibility for ethical behavior rests with each of us through the judgements and actions that are taken.

All personnel should strive to protect and promote patients’ rights, quality of care, hospital-wide integrity, and ethical business practices.

*If, at any time, you have questions, comments or suggestions regarding the Code of Conduct, or your responsibilities under the Code of Conduct, please call the BCH Compliance Officer at (208)245-7676 or Human Resources at (208) 245-7662.*

## 2 WHO WE ARE

Benewah Community Hospital is a county-owned, critical access hospital with a rural health clinic and specialty clinic located in St. Maries, Idaho. For more than 50 years, BCH has been providing high quality healthcare to individuals, families, and visitors in Benewah, Shoshone, and Kootenai counties. BCH offers our patients a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic services providing high quality care in a rural setting. Our personnel are dedicated to providing our patients with excellent care in a courteous, respectful, and enthusiastic manner.

### **MISSION**

To provide excellence in healthcare and wellness services.

### **PURPOSE**

To provide comprehensive, quality health care appropriate to the needs of our community, in a caring, empathetic manner. Benewah Community Hospital recognizes the importance of preventative healthcare and focuses on the promotion of a healthy lifestyle for the individual as well as the community.



## VALUES

Benewah Community Hospital:

- Recognizes that our patients, families, and community partners come first.
- Provides the highest quality patient-focused care along the continuum of life.
- Serves as a model rural health organization, incorporating the highest standards of care.
- Treats our patients, families, and community partners with dignity, respect, confidentiality, and integrity.
- Maintains an environment that is safe, consistent, compassionate, and unbiased.
- Supports the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of those we serve.
- Highly values the skills and contributions of our workforce, within a shared governance model.

## VISION

- To continuously improve the overall health of our community through the provision of high quality, affordable healthcare services.
- To serve as a leader in a collaborative effort with the community providing health education, support services, and care for all citizens.
- To foster a culture of patient engagement by encouraging active patient participation in their own plans of care as well as seeking patient input on future plans for this organization.

### 3 PROVIDE QUALITY CARE AND SERVICES

BCH's primary purpose for existing is to provide high quality care in a cost effective manner. We are committed to providing healthcare services that meet the needs of our patients, family members, and community in a safe and productive environment. BCH personnel will provide patient care designed to achieve the intended outcome of the patient's treatment plan in an appropriate manner. All patients will be:

- Treated with respect and professionalism and in a manner, which preserves their dignity and self-esteem;
- Involved in decisions about the delivery of their healthcare;
- Provided care and services in a timely and reasonable manner.

All BCH personnel are responsible for providing healthcare services and products while complying with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards, including state and federal regulations regarding patients' rights. Only individuals who are qualified to conduct clinical assessments of prospective patients will do so. BCH will seek out and employ only healthcare professionals with proper experience and expertise in meeting the needs of our patients.



It is essential that all BCH personnel bring knowledge of any deficiencies or errors in services to the attention of someone in authority within the hospital who can properly assess and correct any problems. It is everyone's responsibility to provide only the best care to our patients.

#### 4 CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

**Patient Information:** BCH personnel shall maintain the confidentiality of patients' protected health information as required by BCH's Privacy Policies and applicable laws and regulations. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act are included. BCH personnel should not access patient information unless there is a need to access the information because of their job duties. Refer to the HIPAA Policies and Procedures for more specific information.

**Employee Information:** BCH personnel must also treat salary, benefits, and other personal information as confidential. The Human Resource department will maintain employment files, payroll information, disciplinary matters, and similar information in a confidential manner. BCH personnel files are to be held in the strictest confidence with access allowed only on a need to know basis. For additional information, review the Employee Handbook.

**Passwords:** All passwords and other personal security codes are to be kept confidential. Each person is responsible for the actions resulting from the use of your accounts. Do not share password or let others use your computer while you are logged in. For additional information, review the Information Technology (IT) policies.

**Proprietary Business Information:** Do not give confidential financial, proprietary, or business operations; or documents prepared in anticipation of litigation; and communications with legal counsel to unauthorized persons such as competitors, suppliers, or outside contractors without prior approval of a supervisor. This includes customer lists, discounts, special prices, or computer data.

**Intellectual Property:** BCH and its personnel are committed to adhering to all intellectual property laws. All BCH personnel shall respect the intellectual property and copyright laws regarding books, trade journals, magazines, computer software, and other applicable resources. BCH personnel shall not copy computer software unless specifically allowed in the license agreement and/or authorization has been received from the IT Department.

*What if two employees are in the elevator talking about a patient's confidential information? Politely tell them that you are uncomfortable with their conversation because patient information is confidential. It is everyone's responsibility to do his/her part to protect patient privacy.*

#### 5 EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND LABOR ACT

BCH will provide appropriate emergency care to patients in accordance with state and federal laws, including the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) and the relevant regulations published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). BCH provides emergency care to patients regardless of the patient's ability to pay and without delay as per our EMTALA Policy.



## 6 DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT FREE WORKPLACE

BCH recognizes that the greatest strength of our organization lies in the efforts and talents of our personnel, who create our success and our reputation. All BCH personnel shall be treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. BCH prohibits discrimination and all forms of harassment of personnel by supervisors, coworkers, customers, or vendors.

BCH personnel will strive to work collaboratively with colleagues and communicate respectfully to and about others, and in a positive manner.

*We are all required to treat each other the way that we want to be treated.*

*What are my options if I feel that I have been discriminated against in my performance review? You should discuss your concerns with your supervisor or department manager who should be prepared to give you a candid and honest appraisal of your performance. If this does not resolve your concern, you should bring your concerns to the Human Resource Director.*

## 7 CODING AND BILLING

All Coders and Billers are committed to integrity in our coding, billing and collections requirements.

All Coders will consult the Official International Classification of Diseases (ICD 10) CM guidelines, based on the official version of the World Health Organization, which govern the use of codes and are required for use by HIPAA.

All coders and billers will take affirmation steps to prevent the submission of claims for payment and reimbursement of any kind that are fraudulent, abusive, inaccurate, or medically unnecessary, including, but not limited to the following:

- Billing for items and service not provided to patient;
- Up coding for higher reimbursement than is supported by documentation;
- Coders will ensure that medical information is properly documented in patient's records and complies with medical necessity requirements;
- Submitting duplicate bills (more than one claim for the same service)
- Unbundling claims (submission of bills in a fragmented fashion to maximize reimbursement if guidelines required the service be billed together);
- Inclusion of costs that are not allowable to be reimbursed in a cost report.

If a billing error is discovered, all Billers will take immediate steps to correct the error, alert the payer, and promptly refund any payment not due.

BCH has an obligation to promptly repay money it improperly receives from third party payers within 60 days.



## 8 ACCURATE AND TRUTHFUL DOCUMENTATION

BCH personnel who are responsible for documenting in patient records, financial records, or other BCH business records must perform their duties accurately, truthfully, completely, and in a timely manner. All patient records, financial and accounting reports, expense reports, time sheets, and any other documents must accurately and clearly represent the relevant facts and the true nature of the transaction. No one may alter or falsify information on any Hospital record or document. BCH personnel who suspect inaccurate documentation and/or record keeping must notify their supervisor and/or the Compliance Officer.

## 9 RECORD RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION

All BCH personnel must protect the integrity of the Hospital's documents and records to ensure that records are maintained in accordance with regulatory and legal requirements, and for the required length of time. All records, both medical and business, including both written and computer-based information such as email or computer files, shall be retained and/or destroyed in accordance with BCH's Record Retention Policy.

*Why is accurate record keeping and storage so important? The law requires BCH to prepare and retain a large number of forms and reports in connection with our business. All BCH personnel must ensure this is done in a complete and accurate manner.*

## 10 PROTECTING THE USE OF BCH ASSETS

All BCH personnel are charged with protecting and preserving BCH's assets, including equipment, materials, supplies, and information, and to protect assets from loss, damage, theft, misuse, and waste.

BCH personnel must not remove any equipment, materials, and supplies from the premises for personal use and must only use such assets as authorized.

BCH personnel whose responsibilities include the management of departmental funds shall maintain internal controls, record keeping, and shall exercise appropriate oversight. Any use of BCH's resources for personal financial gain unrelated to Hospital business is not permitted.

***We are all required to:***

- *Protect BCH assets and proprietary information;*
- *Communicate efficiently and effectively;*
- *Not share insider information;*
- *Refer media requests to Human Resources or the Chief Executive Officer;*
- *Retain documents as required.*





## 11 COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

BCH strives to ensure that all activity by or on its behalf complies with applicable laws and regulations. To foster this compliance, all BCH personnel should familiarize themselves with the laws and regulations relating to their position/department. A couple of good resources for an employee to reference are the Employee Handbook or Compliance Program Handbook. Personnel who maintain professional licensure and/or certifications, should reference their State Boards of Registration as well.

## 12 HEALTHCARE FRAUD AND ABUSE PREVENTION

One of the primary goals of BCH's Compliance Program is to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse. The False Claims Act assists the federal and state governments in combating fraud and abuse and recovering losses resulting from fraud in government programs, purchases and/or contracts. Healthcare decision-making must be based on the patient's medical needs, and not based on financial benefits to the Hospital, personnel, or that of any other entity or individual. BCH is committed to this principle.

## 13 BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE

Any business relationship or arrangement between the Hospital and a healthcare provider or entity must be structured to ensure compliance with all legal requirements, including, but not limited to, the fraud and abuse laws and regulations, and to avoid jeopardizing the Hospital's tax-exempt status. Such relationships and arrangements must be documented in writing, signed by the parties and subject to review and approval by the hospital's counsel.

## 14 KICKBACKS, REFERRALS, AND BRIBES

BCH and its personnel may not give, receive, offer, or ask for anything of value in exchange for referring patients, products, or services. This applies to offering or receiving any money, gifts, free or discounted items or services, professional courtesies, or other arrangements with the intent to induce referrals. This applies to all transactions involving potential referral sources, including transactions with other healthcare providers, vendors, or patients. Violations may subject BCH and its personnel to criminal and administrative penalties.

BCH shall ensure that its relationship with providers satisfy the rules concerning the prohibition against physician self-referral (both the Federal Stark Law and applicable state law). In addition, BCH shall routinely screen personnel for their eligibility or exclusion with Medicare and Medicaid programs. Refer to the Screening Policy for more specific information.

*I was discussing a referral with a medical supply company, they asked me to send them more referrals, and they could possibly enter my name for a free all-expense paid trip to Disney Land. Is it okay if I send them all the referrals for medical equipment? Absolutely not. This is a violation of the Anti-Kickback Statute and subjects you, the hospital, and the medical supply company to criminal penalties. You should report this to the Compliance Office immediately.*



## 15 GIFTS, GRATUITIES, AND BUSINESS COURTESIES

BCH personnel are prohibited from soliciting tips, personal gratuities, or gifts from patients, business associates, or vendors. However, BCH personnel may accept non-monetary gratuities or gifts of a nominal value, such as cookies, flowers, or candy if the gift would not influence, or reasonably appear to others to be capable of influencing the business judgment in conducting affairs with the patient or vendor. The exchange of cash of any amount will not be accepted. If a patient or other individual wishes to present a cash donation, he/she should be referred to Human Resources for a donation to BetterCARE, Inc.

***What if I receive something that is not permitted? If an item is not permitted, it should be returned with an explanatory note. The only items that do not need to be returned are perishable items such as food or flowers. Perishable items may be donated to a charity or shared in the work area. If returning the gift would create an awkward situation, please call the Compliance Officer.***

## 16 FAIR COMPETITION

BCH strives to ensure that all activity by or on its behalf complies with laws governing fair competition (these laws are also known as “Antitrust Laws”). These laws prohibit certain activity that could give an organization an unfair business advantage over a competitor. Examples of prohibited unfair competition activities include agreements to fix or stabilize prices, bid rigging, collusion with competitors, boycotts, certain exclusive dealing, and price discrimination agreements, unfair trade practices, including bribery, misappropriation of trade secrets, deception, intimidation and similar unfair practices. BCH personnel must not engage in prohibited unfair competition activities and must seek advice from the Compliance Officer when confronted with business decisions, which might violate these laws.

***I have a friend who works in finance at one of our competitors. She has been asked by her Company to get prices from other businesses similar to hers. Can I give her our pricing information? Absolutely not. Any sharing with competitors pricing information could be perceived as, or be legally treated as, an effort to fix fees or limit competition.***

## 17 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest may occur if any BCH personnel’s outside activities or personal financial interests influence or appear to influence the individual’s ability to make objective decisions in the course of him/her carrying out their BCH responsibilities and obligations. BCH personnel should always avoid such conflicts of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

An employee should never use his/her position to profit personally or to assist others in profiting at the expense of BCH.

BCH requires certain BCH personnel to disclose financial interest that they (or their immediate family member) may have that would interfere or affect the person’s responsibilities for or on behalf of BCH. BCH personnel should refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy for more details concerning conflicts.



**Examples of Potential Conflicts:**

- *Employment with an entity that competes, contracts or is a supplier;*
- *Buying from or making any business decision that involves friends or family, outside jobs or positions that conflict with our work;*
- *Using BCH property, information, or position for personal gain.*

## **18 POLITICAL/LOBBYING ACTIVITY**

Participation by BCH in a political campaign or lobbying could jeopardize the Hospital's tax-exempt status. Therefore, BCH personnel may not use any BCH funds, time, equipment, or other assets to campaign for or against a political candidate, or to engage in a lobbying activity. This includes contributing t-shirts, hats, or any other tangible items that includes the BCH logo.

BCH personnel may participate in and contribute to, a political/lobbying activity of their choosing as a private citizen, but not as a BCH representative.

BCH, where its experience may be helpful, may publically offer recommendations concerning legislation or regulations being considered. In addition, BCH may analyze and take public positions on issues that have a relationship to the operations of the Hospital when that experience contributes to the understanding of such issues.

BCH has many contacts and dealings with governmental agencies and officials. BCH and its personnel shall conduct all such contacts and transactions in an honest and ethical manner. No one shall attempt to influence the decision-making process of government agencies or officials by an improper offer of any benefit. BCH personnel should immediately report any suspected or improper requests or demands by a government agency or official to the Compliance Officer.

## **19 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

BCH shall manage and operate its business in a manner that respects our environment and conserves natural resources. BCH personnel shall:

- Comply with the Hospital's Health and Safety Policies to ensure patients, visitors, the workforce, and others are protected from unnecessary risks and unsafe conditions.
- Dispose of all waste in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and shall strive to utilize resources appropriately and efficiently, including recycling when possible.
- Immediately report suspected violations of an environmental or occupational health and safety law and shall work cooperatively with the appropriate authorities to remedy any environmental contamination that may occur in the workplace.



## 20 MARKETING

BCH may use marketing and advertising activities to educate the public, provide information to the community and increase awareness of Hospital services. The Hospital will present only truthful, fully informative, and non-deceptive information in these materials and announcements.

## 21 GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS, ACCREDITATIONS, AND SURVEYS

BCH and its personnel shall cooperate fully and promptly with appropriate government investigations into potential violations of the law and to the efforts of our accrediting and surveying agencies. Governmental and/or agency inquiries or requests should be promptly referred to the Compliance Officer or Chief Executive Officer.

BCH promptly and thoroughly investigates reports of suspected illegal activities or violations of the Compliance Program or the Code of Conduct. BCH personnel must cooperate with such investigations and may not take actions to prevent, hinder, or delay discovery of an investigation. For example, BCH personnel must never alter or destroy records or documents requested in the course of an investigation, nor shall BCH personnel make a false or misleading statement on such documents or to an investigator. In addition, BCH personnel must never pressure any person to provide false information to, or to hide information from, an investigator.

## 22 RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING

Corporate Compliance is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, all BCH personnel are required to report their good faith belief of any suspected or actual violation of the Code of Conduct, the Compliance Program, or other BCH policies or applicable law. Sometimes it is unclear whether a particular activity or situation may be a violation of the Code of Conduct or the Compliance Program. When this happens, BCH personnel should contact their supervisor or the Compliance Officer.

Reports of suspected or actual violations can be made in a number of ways as described below:

- Orally or in writing to the employee's supervisor or department manager;
- By calling the Compliance Officer directly;
- Calling the toll free hotline at: **800-398-1496** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- By mailing a written concern or complaint to the Compliance Officer;
- By submitting the Compliance Issue Reporting Form in the Lock Box located in the mailroom (see attached form).

BCH personnel who fail to report suspected or actual violations are themselves violating the Code of Conduct and/or the Compliance Program and may be subject to disciplinary action, which could result in personnel termination.



## 23 NON-RETALIATION

BCH is committed to fostering a workplace that is conducive to open discussions. To promote an open culture, the Hospital has a strict Non-Retaliation Policy to protect its personnel. This means there will be no action of retaliation or reprisal in the terms and conditions of employment or affiliation because of an individual's good faith reporting of a violation or suspected violation. Any manager, supervisor, or individual who commits or condones any form of retaliation will be subject to discipline up to, and including, termination. For more information regarding applicable Non-Retaliation and Whistleblower Protection laws, please refer to the Non-Retaliation Policy, the Employee Handbook, and/or the Compliance policies and procedures.

## 24 ENFORCEMENT OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

BCH personnel must understand that they will be subject to discipline for violations of the Code of Conduct, up to and including termination of employment or affiliation with BCH. The specific disciplinary action depends on the nature and severity of the violation. BCH imposes sanctions in a consistent manner in accordance with the Discipline Policy.

***Examples of violations of the Code of Conduct, which could result in disciplinary action, include:***

- *Participating in activities that violate the Code of Conduct;*
- *Encouraging others to violate the Code of Conduct;*
- *Failing to report suspected violations of the Code of Conduct; and*
- *For BCH personnel who are supervisors or managers, failing to detect violations of the Code of Conduct, if such violation should have been discovered in the reasonable course of the Employee's job responsibilities.*



### **CERTIFICATION & ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

- I have read the entire Code of Conduct. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions with regard to its content, and I understand fully how the Code of Conduct relates to my position.
- I hereby acknowledge my obligations and agreements to fulfill those duties and responsibilities as set forth in the Code of Conduct and to follow these standards.
- I further certify that, throughout the remainder of my association with BCH, I shall continue to comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- I understand that violations of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Department

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Date