

Code of Ethics

PREAMBLE

The preservation of the highest standards of integrity and ethical practice is vital to the work of ACHCA members across the continuum of post-acute and long-term services and supports, including skilled nursing (SNF), assisted living (ALF), home health (HH), and hospice. This Code sets forth fundamental expectations for professional conduct. Members shall avoid not only conduct specifically proscribed but also conduct inconsistent with the spirit and purpose of this Code. While the ultimate responsibility for ethical conduct rests with the individual member, ACHCA establishes this Code to make clear its expectations of the membership.

SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

Member: Any person serving in administrative, executive, or leadership roles in skilled nursing facilities, nursing facilities, residential care or assisted living communities, and or operating in home and community-based services, including corporate, campus, and service-line leaders.

People served: Any person which includes residents, patients, clients, families/caregivers, and responsible parties.

Organization: the member's employing entity (facility, agency, corporate office, or system).

EXPECTATION I – PRIMACY OF PERSONS SERVED

Individuals shall hold paramount the welfare, rights, dignity, safety, and quality of life of persons served.

Prescriptions – The Member shall:

- Provide the highest quality, person-centered, equitable services practicable within available resources and applicable standards of practice.
- Comply with all applicable laws and regulations (e.g., Medicare/Medicaid requirements, Conditions of Participation, residents'/patients' rights), professional standards, and accreditation requirements.
- Protect privacy and confidentiality, maintain secure records and information systems, and promote cybersecurity safeguards.
- Ensure timely and accurately informed consent; honor advance directives and goals-of-care, including hospice and palliative preferences.
- Prevent, identify, and report abuse, neglect, exploitation, and misappropriation of property; ensure non-retaliation for good-faith reporting.
- Promote safety, infection prevention, emergency preparedness, and clinically appropriate use of medications and restraints (physical or chemical).
- Support seamless transitions of care and coordination across settings; avoid unsafe or discriminatory admission, transfer, or discharge practices.
- Foster an environment free from discrimination and harassment, taking steps to avoid discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Proscriptions – The Member shall not:

- Disclose professional or personal information to unauthorized parties except as required by law or to protect public welfare.
- Engage in exploitation, abuse, neglect, harassment, or retaliation against any person served, staff, family member, or reporter of concerns.

EXPECTATION II – PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND PERSONAL CONDUCT

Individuals shall maintain high standards of professional competence, integrity, and accountability.

Prescriptions – The Member shall:

- Maintain licensure/credentials and competencies required for role and setting; pursue continuing education and professional development.
- Practice within areas of competence; seek consultation and refer as appropriate; ensure competent supervision and delegation.
- Model integrity, civility, and just culture; address impairment (e.g., substance misuse, health conditions) that may affect safe performance.
- Use technology, electronic health records, telehealth, AI/decision-support, and social media responsibly, transparently, and lawfully.
- Uphold fair employment practices and a safe workplace; promote workforce well-being and psychological safety.

Proscriptions – The Member shall not:

- Misrepresent qualifications, experience, affiliations, or outcomes.
- Provide services or make administrative decisions beyond competence or that compromise safety or rights.
- Engage in conduct detrimental to the profession, including fraud, intimidation, harassment, or falsification of records.

EXPECTATION III – INTEGRITY, STEWARDSHIP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL DUTY

Individuals shall place the legitimate interests of the organization and persons served above personal gain, maintaining honest, transparent, and lawful operations.

Prescriptions – The Member shall:

- Establish and sustain effective compliance programs; cooperate honestly with payers, surveyors, and regulators.
- Ensure accurate clinical documentation, cost reporting, coding, and billing; promptly correct and disclose material errors.
- Manage resources prudently; support data integrity for quality/safety metrics and public reporting.
- Maintain robust conflict-of-interest (COI) disclosure and management, including relationships with vendors, referral sources, and payers.
- Provide balanced, truthful information in marketing and communications; avoid misleading claims about services, outcomes, or levels of care.
- Provide fair processes for grievances and dispute resolution and foster non-partisan, fact-based decision making.

Proscriptions – The Member shall not:

- Participate in activities that create unmanaged COI or the appearance of impropriety, including improper gifts, kickbacks, or self-dealing.
 - Falsify, destroy, or conceal records; engage in deceptive, fraudulent, or abusive billing or reporting practices.
 - Retaliate against individuals who raise good-faith concerns or participate in investigations.
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EXPECTATION IV – RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC, THE PROFESSION, AND COLLEAGUES

Individuals shall honor responsibilities to the public, the profession, and interprofessional partners.

Prescriptions – The Member shall:

- Advance knowledge in post-acute and long-term care through scholarship, quality improvement, and evidence-informed practice.
- Collaborate with community partners to plan and deliver a full range of health, social, and supportive services.
- Share expertise with colleagues, students/trainees, and the public to increase understanding of aging services and the administrator's role.
- Inform the ACHCA Standards & Ethics Committee of actual or potential violations of this Code and fully cooperate with sanctioned inquiries.

Proscriptions – The Member shall not:

- Defend, support, or ignore unethical conduct by colleagues, students, vendors, or partners.
 - Publicly communicate in ways that knowingly misinform stakeholders about care, outcomes, or regulatory matters.
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EXPECTATION V – LOYALTY TO ACHCA AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE PROFESSION

Individuals shall support ACHCA's mission and reputation, use the ACHCA name responsibly, and contribute to the profession's strength.

Prescriptions – The Member shall:

- Uphold ACHCA's bylaws, policies, and lawful directives; maintain membership in good standing.
- Represent ACHCA with integrity; use the ACHCA name, logo, and affiliations appropriately and only as authorized.
- Not publicly disparage, or defame, ACHCA, its Districts, Chapters, members, employers, sponsors or partners.
- Participate constructively in ACHCA programs, committees, mentorship, and leadership development; foster inclusion and professionalism.
- Disclose and manage conflicts of interest when serving in ACHCA roles; recuse where appropriate.
- Raise concerns or disagreements through appropriate channels, seeking solutions that strengthen the association and profession.

Proscriptions – The Member shall not:

- Claim ACHCA endorsements, titles, or affiliations without authorization, or misuse ACHCA intellectual property.
 - Engage in conduct that materially harms ACHCA's lawful mission or reputation, while recognizing members' rights to good-faith criticism, whistleblowing, and protected concerted activity.
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ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

- **Reporting & Cooperation:** Members shall report suspected violations in good faith and cooperate fully with ACHCA-sanctioned reviews.
- **Non-Retaliation:** Retaliation against good-faith reporters, witnesses, or participants in investigations is prohibited.
- **Remedial Action & Sanctions:** Findings may result in education, remediation, censure, suspension, or termination of membership, consistent with ACHCA policy and due process.
- **Acknowledgment:** As a condition of membership or renewal, members acknowledge this Code and commit to abide by it.

Effective Date: Adopted by ACHCA Board of Directors, November 21, 2025