


POLICY & PROCEDURE

 STOUGHTON HEALTH <i>Creating Excellence Together</i>	Effective Date: June 2022	General Policy Manual	Policy #: 1.09
	Original – 3/01 Revision	Page 1 of 4	Title: Stoughton Health Code of Business Ethics

MISSION – ETHICS AND STEWARDSHIP SERVICES

I. PURPOSE:

To outline the Code of Business Ethics (“Code”) for Stoughton Health and all who act on the organization’s behalf.

II. POLICY:

Governing Board members, executive management, administrators, employees, nurses, physicians (Med Exec), other clinicians, agents, and any other representative of Stoughton Health shall be guided by this Code, which is rooted in our mission and values and relevant laws, regulations, and accreditation standards.

III. PROCEDURES:

This code addresses several areas of organizational and personal business activity that have ethical implications, namely:

- Patient care;
- Admission, transfer and discharge;
- Billing;
- Marketing;
- Resource utilization;
- Relationships with employees;
- Relationships with the community;
- Relationships with payers, suppliers, and other organizations;
- And conflicts of interest

It is intended to guide Stoughton Health and those who represent Stoughton Health in making decisions, relating to others and delivering health care in a manner that is consistent with our mission and values as well as our fundamental ethical commitments. While this Code is not exhaustive and does not necessarily offer specific answers to concrete questions, it does provide a positive vision for organizational and personal business activity that Stoughton Health and all those who act on the organization’s behalf should strive to achieve even though at times this may not always be possible.

Ethics in Patient Care

- We honor and protect the dignity of all patients.
- We care for patients holistically, attending to their physical, psychological, and spiritual needs.
- We value ethnic and gender diversity and provide patient care with respect.
- We respect the rights of patients and make a copy of these rights, which includes information on complaint processing procedures, available to them.
- We care for patients with available resources throughout the continuum of care based on their identified health care needs and sound medical judgment following standards of care, with due consideration for patients’ preferences and values, and in the context of our commitment to manage available resources responsibly while maximizing positive patient outcomes. We have policies and procedures available upon request that address the relationship between the use of our services and financial incentives.
- We provide accurate information and deal honestly with patients, never engaging in any activity intended to defraud them of money, property, services, or care.

- We formulate timely and appropriate patient care plans in conjunction with the patient, the family, and/or significant others, and members of the health care team.
- We coordinate the care of patients and provide appropriate information to caregivers, including the patient's follow-up care plan, explanation of medication and medical equipment, and advance directives as patients are transferred to other settings.
- We prevent unauthorized sharing of patient information.
- We conform to all applicable State and Federal laws and maintain compliance with all standards and regulations pertaining to patient care.
- We do not discriminate against race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, newborn status, disability, or source of payment.

Ethics in Admission, Transfer, and Discharge

- We provide clear and understandable information to patients as needed concerning services, costs, admission, transfer, and discharge practices.
- We admit patients on the basis of their medical condition and do not refuse admission or treatment based on socioeconomic factors.
- We transfer patients when appropriate, at the request of the patient and/or family, when qualified caregivers determine the patient requires treatment beyond the capabilities of the facility, or for other reasons as determined on a case-by-case basis.
- We confirm in advance that the facility to which the patient is transferred can adequately meet the patient's health needs.
- We ensure clinical decisions, including decisions to admit or discharge patients, are made by qualified caregivers and are based on identified patient needs, not financial indicators.
- We resolve conflicts regarding admission and discharge consistently according to organizational policies and work toward their resolution equitably and justly.

Ethics in Billing

- We maintain ethical, fair and prompt billing practices and respect patients and their families throughout the billing and collecting process. We issue accurate, understandable, and timely bills to patients and payers and charge only for services rendered.
- We interact with our customers through employees who are well informed about the billing process, responsive to inquiries and requests for assistance, and mindful of our ethical commitments.
- We help patients in understanding how they are charged for their health care services and in the resolution of billing conflicts involving third parties.
- We resolve billing issues and disputes consistently according to organizational policies and work toward their resolution in a way that is mutually agreeable to both the patient and the organization.
- We administer the charity care budget fairly and consistently in conformance with organizational policies and investigate third party funding for self-pay patients when appropriate.
- We educate uninsured patients and their families about possible low-cost state-initiated programs.

Ethics in Marketing

- We market services that are supported by sound quality control measures, and are aligned with the mission and values and community needs.
- We create communications that are responsive and sensitive to our diverse audiences and seek the opinions of our customers and associates in developing our communications.
- We provide clear, truthful, and accurate information in all advertising, communications, and disclosures of information and data.
- We exercise responsibility in communications with internal and external audiences and avoid misleading or exaggerated statements.

Ethics in Resource Utilization

- We manage the resources entrusted to us and our partners in a responsible, accountable, and environmentally conscious manner.
- We steward our resources wisely including buildings, equipment, supplies, financial assets, and human resources.
- We reinvest our financial assets in the physical and technological infrastructure of our organization for the purpose of improving services to patients and the community while appropriately controlling costs.
- We educate employees and associates that the prudent and responsible use of resources includes acting in a manner consistent with organizational policies and procedures related to travel, entertainment, and other reimbursement requests.

Ethics in Relationships with Employees

- We honor employees and demonstrate dignity and respect in all interactions.
- We create a work environment that fosters open communication and provides employees with an opportunity to increase their skills, participate in relevant business decisions, and take part in furthering the organization's mission and core services.
- We provide a work setting that is safe, free from verbal, physical, and sexual harassment, and discrimination.
- We protect employees and their job status when they provide sensitive information about the potential wrongdoing of a co-worker or associate of the organization.
- We treat employees in a manner that accommodates their beliefs, customs, and values when it does not conflict with our mission and values or applicable laws.
- We prevent unauthorized sharing of personnel information.
- We promote just hiring practices and offer fair and competitive wages and benefits.
- We hire a diverse work force and provide equal employment opportunities irrespective of a person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability/handicap, marital status, sexual orientation, alienage, or citizenship, or status as a veteran or a disabled veteran.
- We resolve employee concerns and disputes consistently according to organizational policies and work toward their resolution in an equitable, just and timely manner.
- We maintain compliance with standards and regulations pertaining to employment.
- We expect fair, just, and respectful relations among employees with their supervisors.

Ethics in Relationships with the Community

- We promote the overall health and well-being of the community.
- We advocate for the best interests of all citizens and members of the community.
- We consider the needs of the community with appropriate communal involvement when planning programs, services, and health promotion activities.
- We search for opportunities to collaborate and partner with community agencies, educational institutions, and other health care organizations to promote medical research and education as well as the wider interests of the community.
- We select partners who have similar ethical commitments and promote business practices consistent with our values and those of the local community.

Ethics in Relationships with Payers, Suppliers, and Other Organizations

- We deal honestly and fairly with all customers, payers, suppliers, competitors, and financial partners.
- We conduct our relations with payers, suppliers, and other organizations in ways that promote diversity and avoid discrimination and unfair treatment.
- We cooperate with appropriate authorities when necessary by reporting cases of suspected abuse and violence, infectious diseases, and other reportable events.
- We ensure proper ethical and legal relationships between outside organizations, including payers and suppliers, and representatives of our organization.

Ethical Management of Conflicts of Interest

- We expect all of our employees and board members to avoid foreseeable conflicts of interest in external relationships.
- We provide education on potential conflicts of interest and require individuals who have authority to influence the business decisions of the organization to sign an annual Conflict of Interest statement.
- We require notice of, and review all, potential conflicts of interest and take appropriate action.
- We do not accept personal gifts or other benefits valued at more than 50 dollars each, or 100 dollars annually, from any individual, business, or organization.

IV. COORDINATION:

Owner: Administration

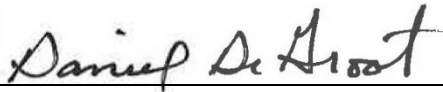
Reviewed by:

General Policy Review Committee

Governing Board

Medical Executive Committee

Quality/Risk Manager



President/CEO

6/30/22

Date