

Pennsylvania State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators Newsletter

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Ethical Code for Practicing Administrators

By Eva J. Bering, Board Chairwoman

Several years ago, the National Association of Boards (NAB) adopted the Code of Ethics promulgated by the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) to preserve the highest standards of integrity, ethical principles and professional conduct among practicing administrators.

Even though the Pennsylvania State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators does not have an individual code of ethics, the board did review and support the position of NAB Ethical Code. The expectations are as follows:

1. An individual shall hold paramount the welfare of persons for whom care is provided.

The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Strive to provide to all those entrusted to his or her care the highest quality of appropriate service possible in light of resources and other constraints;
- Operate the facility consistent with laws, regulations, and standards of practice recognized in the field of health care administration;
- Perform administrative duties with the personal integrity that will earn the confidence, trust and respect of the general public;
- Take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, handicap, marital status, ancestry or any other factor that is illegally discriminatory; and
- Not disclose professional or personal information regarding recipients of service to unauthorized personnel unless required to do so by law or to protect the public welfare.

2. An individual shall maintain high standards of professional competence.

The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Possess and maintain the competencies necessary to effectively perform his or her responsibilities;
- Practice administration in accordance with capabilities and proficiencies and when appropriate seek counsel from qualified others; and
- Actively strive to enhance knowledge and expertise in long-term care administration through continuing education and professional development.

3. Individuals shall strive, in all matters relating to their professional function, to maintain a professional posture that places paramount the interests of the facility and its residents.

The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Avoid partisanship and provide a forum for the fair resolution of any disputes that may arise in service delivery or management;
- Disclose to the governing body or other authority as may be appropriate, any actual or potential circumstance concerning him or her that might reasonable be thought to create a conflict of interest or have a substantial adverse impact on the facility or its residents.

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4. Individuals shall honor their responsibilities to the public, their profession and their relationship with colleagues and members of related professions

The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Foster increased knowledge within the profession of health care administration and support research efforts toward this end;
- Participate with others in the community to plan for and provide a full range of health care services; and
- Share areas of expertise with colleagues, students, and the general public to increase awareness and promote understanding of health care in general and the profession in particular.

The Health Care Administrator shall not defend, support or ignore unethical conduct perpetrated by colleagues, peers or students.

Family Expectations...Are They Realistic?

By Leonard S. Oddo, Board Member

Experience has shown that establishing realistic expectations will help maximize family satisfaction. As health care providers, we know there are some difficult realities in the national data:

- 75 percent of all long-term care residents will fall;
- 1,800 falls will result in death annually;
- 50 percent of residents over the age of 70 will die within one year of sustaining a hip fracture;
- 50 percent of residents are malnourished when admitted to the long-term care facility.

As an industry, we know these statistics, but unfortunately, family members and loved ones of the residents receiving our care do not. Through normal aging and a variety of disease processes, the population that comes to us makes these facts unavoidable.

As healthcare providers, providing families with education concerning realistic expectations is imperative for the industry's survival. With the ever growing litigious environment in long-term care, education can not come soon enough.

Some facilities have identified this need and initiated some form of education to occur during the referral process. Although this is an appropriate time to begin, the discussion must be ongoing for families throughout the resident's stay. Every interaction with the responsible party should initiate conversation surrounding the topic of education. Additionally, the facilities need to ensure that the resident-specific plans of care reflect realistic goals to stay aligned with these expectations.

Family education of what realistically occurs in nursing homes will not only increase trust and communication with the family, but also decrease regulatory surveys and deficiencies as a result of those surveys and also reduce civil claims. For teaching tools and further information, do not hesitate to contact your professional associations for resources.

Links of Interest to Health Professionals

- [2009 Novel Influenza A \(H1N1\)](#), information from the PA Department of Health
- [Clean Hands Save Lives](#), protecting Pennsylvanians from acquiring hospital infections

Governor's Newsletter

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