



Alberta Health Services

Code of Conduct

March 2023

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Message from Alberta Health Services Leadership

At Alberta Health Services (AHS), we work in a complex environment and serve a diverse population of 4.5 million Albertans. Our people come from different backgrounds, and one of the many things we share is a commitment to provide safe, quality healthcare and services to patients, their families, the public and one another. We do so with compassion and respect.

That's why the Code of Conduct (Code) is so important. Every day, we interact with patients, their families and communities, and our colleagues, pursuing our goal to provide great care. The Code guides those interactions, helps us better understand what we need from one another, and emphasizes the role we play and approach we must take when making decisions. It helps us build trust and keeps us accountable and focused on the safe, quality health services Albertans expect and deserve. No matter where you work in AHS, the Code is foundational to the work we do, along with our vision, mission, and values. Together, they guide what we do, how we do it, and why we do it.

We strive to listen and respond to the unique voices across our organization. It's your voice that provides the direction for this Code and guides us in fostering a supportive environment where everyone feels safe, healthy, valued and included. To maintain this environment, we must all commit to our individual responsibility.

We encourage you to use the Code to guide your actions by thinking about how they might impact others, working in the best interest of patients and families, being fair and objective, reporting any concerns you might have, and standing up for what is right. We will do the same and support you as best we can along the way.

Together, we can achieve anything. Thank you for everything you do for Albertans.

Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

Healthy Albertans.
Healthy Communities.
Together.

Our Mission

To provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

Our Values



compassion

We show kindness and empathy for all in our care, and for each other.

accountability

We are honest, principled and transparent.

respect

We treat others with respect and dignity.

excellence

We strive to be our best and give our best.

safety

We place safety and quality improvement at the centre of all our decisions.

Our vision sets us on a path for the future — it shows where we want to go. It is our hope of what we want to achieve. **Our mission** defines why we exist and describes how we will work toward our vision. It gets us excited about where we are going and how we will get there. By having a vision and a mission, we ensure our workforce of more than 130,000 people work together towards common goals.

Our values reflect what we care about and what we believe in. They guide us in everything we do. We strive to live our values together because we are stronger together. Our five values form the framework for how we act and make all our decisions. They express what is important to us and we strive to reflect them every day so patients, clients and their families have quality care experiences in every encounter.

A Guide to the Code of Conduct

The AHS Code of Conduct (Code) draws on our vision, mission, and values to outline the principles and expectations we have of ourselves. The Code is based on both rights and responsibilities. It protects and guides equally all of those who are part of, or work within, AHS.

Our behaviour has a direct impact on our workplaces and our ability to provide quality care. We often have different backgrounds, training and education. What we share is a commitment to improve the health and quality of care for our patients, each other and the public. Our ability to provide high-quality care has been and will continue to be possible due to the quality and integrity of the people who are part of AHS.

The Code is our foundational governance document. It anchors all the other rules by

which we govern ourselves. This includes AHS bylaws, principles, directives, policies, procedures, standards and any other applicable documents that guide our actions.

Everyone who provides care or services on behalf of AHS must read, understand and comply with the Code as well as AHS bylaws, principles, directives, policies, procedures, standards and any other documents that apply to your role. It is important to be aware of your responsibilities under the Code and to ask questions if you are in doubt, or are concerned, that the Code is not being followed.

Breaches of the Code are serious matters. If it is determined that a breach has occurred, the consequences may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment, appointment/privileges, contractual, or any other relationship with AHS.

Who is Covered by the Code of Conduct

The Code applies to everyone who provides care or services or who acts on behalf of AHS. This includes:

- AHS Official Administrator or Board.
- Employees of AHS and its subsidiaries including permanent and probationary full-time and part-time employees, temporary employees, casual employees, resident physicians and individuals employed under an individual consulting or service contract.
- Physicians, dentists, podiatrists, midwives and other allied health professionals with an AHS appointment and privileges.
- Researchers working with AHS or studying AHS staff or patients.
- Contractors, students, trainees, educators and volunteers.

Code of Conduct Principles

We work in a complex environment and serve a diverse population.

The Code outlines the principles of conduct we set for ourselves, our work, our relationships, and the information and assets entrusted to us. Regardless of where we are working — in an AHS facility, on the road, or at home — our actions need to be guided by the Code and AHS Values.

While the Code is unable to tell us what to do in every situation, its principles can act as a compass or road map to help us live our vision, mission and values as we navigate challenging situations.



Photo by Ali Kazal on Unsplash.

1. Our Code: It Starts With Each of Us



We are AHS. This means that our actions and words define and shape AHS. Our day-to-day activities start with our commitment to individual accountability. We each commit to:

- Behave ethically, take responsibility for our actions, and learn from mistakes.
- Uphold AHS bylaws, principles, directives, policies, procedures, standards and any other applicable documents that guide our actions.
- Consider how what we say or do may impact our own reputation or that of AHS.
- Recognize and address real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Come forward if you think you have been treated unfairly and support others to do the same.

Key value:  **accountability**



2. Our Code: In Our Work

A commitment to excellence and a patient-safety culture support better outcomes for patients, fewer adverse events, improved engagement and our overall wellbeing. We each commit to:



- Report safety concerns promptly, recognize our limitations and seek help when needed.
- Promote excellence, while evaluating, and improving the quality, safety and effectiveness of our services and the outcomes of our decisions.
- Communicate effectively and accurately.
- Engage and involve patients, front-line staff and leaders to recognize and respond to risk.

Key values:  safety  excellence



3. Our Code: In Our Relationships



Treating each other with compassion and respect is fundamental to fostering an atmosphere of trust where people share and learn from one another and work together to achieve common goals. Strong working relationships help us to achieve our mission and support our well-being. Open and inclusive work environments allow us to experiment with new ideas, to constructively challenge each other, to share information and, in return, to support others. We each commit to:

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Show empathy and understanding.
- Be sensitive to diversity and inclusion and the unique needs of individuals and groups.
- Listen to and consider ideas and concerns of co-workers and others.
- Communicate in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Be trustworthy.
- Not tolerate workplace harassment or violence in any form.

Key values:  



4. Our Code: Protecting Information & Assets



We are committed to protecting all confidential health and personal information of our patients, co-workers, the public and AHS business information, and complying with relevant legislation.

We will protect our resources, including our physical assets and intellectual property. Examples include equipment, facilities, devices, data, technology and networks. We each commit to:

- Protect and be accountable with patients, clients, co-workers and AHS information and assets.
- Promptly report any privacy breaches.
- Collect, use, access, disclose and store the minimum amount of information necessary to comply with laws and effectively perform our work.
- Not engage in public discussions or comments about confidential AHS information, whether it concerns patients, clients, co-workers or AHS business.

Key values:  safety  accountability



What To Do If You Have Questions or Concerns

Manager

If you are unable to contact your manager (or next level manager) for some reason, contact your local AHS [Human Resources Business Partnership \(HRBP\)](#) contact, union representative, or AHS Ethics & Compliance.



AHS Ethics & Compliance

Report serious wrongdoing under the [AHS Whistleblower Policy](#) and [Public Interest Disclosure Act](#).



AHS Clinical Ethics

For support in addressing ethical issues that arise in patient care, policy development, or organizational initiatives.



Medical/Midwifery Staff

Concerns regarding medical/midwifery staff members can be made to a medical/midwifery leader, or next level leader (e.g. Zone Clinical Department Head).



MySafetyNet

For work-related health and safety incidents, hazards, illnesses and injuries, including bullying, harassment or violence. You should also advise your manager of the situation. If your manager is the subject of your concern, they will not receive your MSN report and you do not need to advise them of your concern.



AHS Privacy

Report privacy breaches. Anyone at AHS who becomes aware of a privacy breach is required to inform their manager, take immediate action to reduce the risk of harm and report the breach.



AHS Reporting & Learning System for Patient Safety (RLS)

Report a clinical adverse event, close call or hazard.



Protection Against Retaliation

AHS prohibits any form of retaliation or reprisal for concerns reported in good faith. Anyone who retaliates against an individual who has brought forward concerns in good faith, or who has participated in a workplace investigation in good faith, may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, appointment/privileges, contractual, or any other relationship with AHS. Report any concerns about retaliation to your supervisor, next level manager or [AHS Ethics & Compliance](#).

Role of Managers

Individuals within AHS who have leadership or management responsibilities — whether as a team lead, supervisor or manager — are uniquely positioned to model integrity, foster AHS values and support a positive work environment.

Managers are expected to:

Listen

- Listen, especially when someone has something difficult to say.
- Remember that it can be intimidating to speak up.

Respond

- Respond to questions and concerns and take action to resolve them as soon as practical. Document issues.

Consult

- Consult appropriate resources and expertise within AHS to resolve issues. Refer issues to your manager, [HRBP](#) or [AHS Ethics & Compliance](#) as appropriate.

Positive outcomes are more likely to be achieved when managers lead by example, create space for dialogue and address issues with respect and compassion.

Role of the Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer

The Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer provides guidance on the Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Bylaw, Whistleblower Policy and related investigations, questions or concerns. They are the Designated Officer for AHS under the AHS Whistleblower Policy.

The Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer is not an appeal body for operational or policy decisions of AHS nor established processes such as collective agreements. Further information can be found in [Ethics & Compliance's Scope of Services](#).

Resources

The following list is provided for information only and is not an exhaustive list of resources. AHS employees can access further resources on Insite, as well as the full slate of AHS policies, procedures, and directives from the Policy Services webpage on [Insite](#).

Clinical Ethics Service	• AHS Ethics Framework • Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services Policy Suite • Managing Challenging Relationships Booklet • Moral Distress Debriefing Tool • Values-Based Decision-Making Toolkit
Communications and Media Relations	• Community Engagement and Communications Policy • Social Media Policy • Social Media: Ethical and Practical Considerations for Health Care
Ethics & Compliance	• Conflict of Interest Bylaw • Fraud, Theft or Misappropriation Policy • Investigations Policy • Whistleblower Policy
Finance	• Corporate Contracts Policy • Delegation of Approval Authority Policy • Travel, Hospitality and Working Session Expenses Policy

Human Resources Business Partnerships (HRBP)	• Learning and Professional Development Policy • Recruitment and Employment Practices Policy • Respectful Workplaces and the Prevention of Harassment and Violence Policy Suite • Total Compensation and Rewards Policy • Volunteer Resources Policy • Workplace Accommodation Policy
Information Technology and Security	• Collection, Access, Use, and Disclosure of Information Policy • Information Security and Privacy Safeguards Policy • Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy • Mobile Wireless Devices and Services Policy • Records Management Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality	• See also Information Technology and Security • Access to Information (Physical, Electronic, Remote) Policy • Contractor Requirements for Security of Information and Information Technology Resources Policy • Delegation of Authority and Responsibilities for Compliance with FOIPP and the HIA Policy • Information Classification Policy • Privacy Protection and Information Access Policy
Safety and Quality	• Consent to Treatment/Procedure(s) Policy • Dispute Prevention and Resolution in Clinical Settings Policy • Family Presence: Designated Family/Support Person and Visitor Access Policy • Keeping Patients Safe From Abuse Policy • Patient Concerns Resolution Policy • Patient Safety Policy Suite
Workplace Health and Safety	• Alcohol and Drugs Policy • Communicable Disease Assessment Policy • Occupational Exposure and Blood and Body Fluids Policy • Tobacco and Smoke Free Environments Policy • Workplace Accommodation Policy • Workplace Health and Safety Policy



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