



## **Volunteer Handbook**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Purpose of this Handbook**

#### **WELCOME TO UNITY HEALTH CARE, INC.**

The purpose of this handbook is to briefly outline the volunteer policies of Unity Health Care, Inc. (“UHC”). It is intended to ensure the efficient and productive operation of UHC, to ensure that all UHC Volunteers understand the terms and conditions of their volunteerism, and to promote consistency of Volunteers. If you have any questions not answered in this handbook, please ask the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs for additional information.

### **B. Philosophy**

UHC is a private non-profit health care agency dedicated to providing primary medical care, disease prevention, health promotion, mental health, outreach, HIV, and case management services to all residents of the service area of Unity Health Care, Inc. regardless of their ability to pay, including adults, infants, adolescents, senior citizens, and the indigent of Washington, D.C.

### **C. Mission**

UHC is a non-profit agency offering a continuum of medical care and human services primarily to homeless and medically underserved people in Washington, D.C. Regardless of ethnic background, race, creed, color or ability to pay, Unity provides compassionate, quality, cost-efficient care through services of a skilled, compassionate, multi-cultural staff.

### **D. Agency Overview**

UHC began as the integration of two health care organizations-Health Care for the Homeless Project, Inc. (HCHP) and Community Health Care, Inc. (CHCI). HCHP was appointed as the emergency grantee of CHC in January of 1996. The two formerly independent programs, with their diverse client-focus, were united under one umbrella and formed what is one of the largest nonprofit, health care providers of its type in the Metro-area. Then, in July 2001, UHC assumed control of the clinics formerly operated by the Public Benefits Corporation (“PBC”). With that merger, Unity proudly operates the largest network of primary care providers for low-income and disadvantaged residents of the District of Columbia.

The story of UHC is a story of determination by a group of dedicated people whose primary objective is to provide medical services to those who have limited or no access to basic primary health care. Many District residents die needlessly from illnesses that could have been prevented and treated if they had access to health care. Conversely,

every day UHC sees and treats people who, because of its response to their health care needs, are able to live healthier lives.

## **II. Terms and Conditions of Volunteering**

### **A. Volunteering at Will**

Unless otherwise specified in a contract governing a particular volunteer's volunteering, volunteering with UHC is strictly at will and is for no fixed or definite term. Either Unity Health Care or the Volunteer may terminate the volunteer experience at any time for any lawful reason, with or without cause.

### **B. Volunteer Position Descriptions**

Each Volunteer shall receive a Volunteer position description upon the first day of volunteering. The Volunteer Supervisor and the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs shall write position descriptions, whenever a Volunteer changes positions they shall receive a new Volunteer Position Description.

### **C. Volunteer Schedule**

Volunteers will have a set schedule that they will keep on a weekly, Bi-Weekly or Monthly Basis. Volunteers are expected to be on time for their shift, in the event that a volunteer cannot make a shift they should notify their immediate Volunteer Supervisor preferably twenty-four hours prior to the start of the shift.

## **III. Health and Safety**

UHC strives to maintain an environment that is safe for its employees, volunteers and patients. Volunteers found to be violating any UHC Health and Safety procedures, including UHC's OSHA policies, will have their relationship with Unity Health Care, Inc. evaluated. Questions and Concerns regarding an unsafe or hazardous condition at UHC should be immediately brought to the attention of the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs or their supervisor.

### **A. Post-Exposure Follow-Up**

Volunteers who believe they have been exposed to blood or other bodily fluid must immediately contact the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs or Human Resources Department so that they appropriated precautions may be taken. Failure to follow this policy could seriously affect an employee's health and the health and safety of those around them.

#### **IV. Standards and Conduct**

UHC requires that all volunteers, employees, agents, officers, and board member behave in professional and courteous manner. All volunteers are required to sign the standards of conduct acknowledging that they have read and understand the policy.

##### **A. Violence or Threats**

No physical force violence against a fellow volunteer, employee, patient, or any other person with whom an volunteer comes in contact as a representative of UHC will be tolerated. Neither volunteers may possess guns or other dangerous weapons on UHC premises.

##### **B. Drug Use and Testing**

The safety and protection of UHC patients and staff is UHC's priority. Consequently, UHC maintains a volunteer place and workplace that is free from alcohol and drug use. Volunteers are subject to the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act and are strictly prohibited from using drugs or alcohol during volunteer time or on UHC property.

Supervisors, employees or volunteers who suspect that a fellow volunteer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, as demonstrated by an unusual pattern of behavior pattern of behavior or odor, should immediately report this to the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs or their immediate Supervisor. Volunteers believed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be required to leave the premises.

An assessment will be conducted of the Volunteer to determine if the Volunteer should continue to volunteer with Unity Health Care Inc. If a Volunteer is determined to have been under the influence of alcohol or drugs prior to the current incident they may be relieved from duty.

Volunteers who are abusing drugs or alcohol may be granted a leave of absence to obtain necessary treatment, depending upon the facts and circumstances of the situation. The Volunteer will not be permitted to begin volunteering again until they present a certification that they are capable of performing their duties and the position is still available. Failure to cooperate with treatment will result in the Volunteer being relieved of their duties with Unity Health Care.

##### **B.Theft**

###### **1. UHC Property**

So that UHC may maintain a safe and secure environment, UHC reserves the right to inspect volunteers personal property brought into premises. In addition, UHC may inspect volunteer lockers, cabinets, desks, work stations, etc. at any time and remove all UHC property and other items that violate UHC policy.

Volunteers are not permitted to take UHC property off the premises. Volunteers found to be in possession of UHC property without authorization will be properly disciplined. Any cases of theft or suspected theft will be reported to the proper authorities for investigation and prosecution.

## **2. Personal Property**

Due to the high number of people who visit UHC, volunteers are asked to refrain from bringing unnecessary personal property and/or personal property of significant value to work. Volunteers are expected to exercise reasonable care with respect to their personal property. UHC is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of personal property. Articles of personal property found on the premises should be returned to the owner, if known, or turned in to the clinic coordinator.

UHC volunteers who believe that their personal property is missing or has been stolen should immediately contact the Health Center Manager or the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs (or their designee) so that the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs may contact the appropriate authorities.

## **C. Non-Harassment Policy**

Harassment of applicants, employees and volunteers on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, political affiliation or belief, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law, including sexual harassment (all as defined and protected by applicable law) is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by UHC.

### **Harassment includes:**

- Jokes
- Verbal abuse and epithets
- Degrading comments
- The display of offensive objects and pictures
- Other conduct that the individual might reasonably find offensive.

Sexual harassment has been defined generally as including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature, whenever:

- Submission to the conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of volunteering

- An volunteers reaction to the conduct is used as a basis for volunteer decisions affecting that volunteer; or
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the volunteer's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

No volunteer, employee or applicant shall be subjected to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures, nor shall any volunteer, employee or applicant be led to believe that an employment opportunity or benefit will in any way depend upon "cooperation" of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is **not** limited to demands for sexual favors. **It may include:**

- Sex-oriented verbal "teasing" or jokes
- Repeated offensive sexual flirtations, or advances or propositions
- Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or their appearance
- The display or sexual suggestive objects or pictures
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity
- Nonconsensual or inappropriate physical contact

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature, or consensual personal and social relationships without a discriminatory volunteer effect. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and that is personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

This policy prohibiting harassment, whether sexual or of another nature, is not limited to relationships between and among, volunteers employees and prospective employees, but also extends to interaction with contractors, clients and the public. No volunteer or employee shall subject anyone with whom they come in contact as a UHC representative to harassment of any type, including that conduct described above. Likewise, no volunteer or employee will be required to suffer sexual harassment by a volunteer, employee, patient, contractor or visitor.

Any unwelcome sexual overtures or other forms of harassment shall be reported immediately in writing to the volunteer or employees Supervisor, or to another Supervisor if the volunteer or employee's Supervisor is the alleged harasser. The Supervisor shall immediately report the allegation to the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs or the Human Resources Director who will fully investigate the report within ten (10) working days of its receipt and take appropriate corrective/disciplinary action.

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the action of the Human Resources Director, or if the alleged harassment continues, the volunteer shall report the matter in writing to the COO, who will investigate the report within ten (10) working days and take

appropriate corrective/disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The decision of the COO is final and binding upon all parties.

UHC will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. However, given UHC's duty to investigate the report, Unity cannot guarantee confidentiality.

No volunteer will be retaliated against for making a report or assisting with the investigation of a report. Anyone found to be retaliating against a volunteer for reporting or assisting with an investigation will be disciplined up to and including termination.

#### **D. Drug-Free Workplace Act**

In accordance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, UHC volunteers and employees are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance (e.g., illegal drugs, alcohol, prescriptive medications) on UHC premises, including any and all sites where UHC provides services or otherwise conducts business and off UHC premises while conducting UHC business.

Volunteers must, as a condition of volunteering, abide by the terms of the above-stated policy and report any conviction under a criminal drug statute if the violation occurred on or off UHC premises while conducting UHC business. A conviction must be reported within five days after the conviction. (The Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 mandates this requirement)

Volunteers are expected to report to work in an appropriate mental and physical condition. Volunteers reporting to work in an inappropriate state (e.g., incoherent, smelling of alcohol, dilated pupils, staggering) may be referred for a physician's assessment and if validated sent home immediately.

#### **E. Confidentiality of Information**

UHC expects that all its employees and volunteers will respect patients' confidentiality at all times. Volunteers and Employees shall regard information relating to patients, clients, volunteers, employees, and UHC in general, written or otherwise, as confidential. Information regarding a patient's or clients medical records, diseases or other conditions, and personal or family history, must never be communicated to anyone other than the professional and paraprofessional personnel who require such information to treat UHC's patients or clients or an agency as required by law. Volunteers and employees are prohibited from accessing patients' records without an appropriate, job-related reason and must refrain from discussing patients in common areas of the clinic in any area where they may be overheard by other patients or visitors.

Any communication about an UHC patient that is requested by an outside person or unauthorized agency cannot not released without the patient's prior written consent. All

such requests must be handled in accordance with UHC's approved medical records and patient confidentiality policies and procedures.

Failure to follow this policy may result in immediate termination of the Volunteer Relationship.

#### **F. Political and Other Public Activity**

Volunteers who participate in political or other public activities in their off hours may not present themselves as representatives of UHC.

#### **G. Solicitation and Distribution**

Solicitation, sales or distribution of literature or products by any person (employee, volunteer, or non-employee) is prohibited on UHC premises.

#### **H. Use, Damage, and Theft of Property**

##### **1. UHC Property**

The hours of operation at UHC's sites vary considerably. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from entering or utilizing UHC property after hours without express written authorization. All UHC property, including property leased to or purchased by UHC, may be used for official approved activities only. Theft willful damage to, or unapproved use of or access to UHC's sites or property shall be grounds for dismissal and, if appropriate, civil or criminal action.

##### **2. UHC Resources**

Falsification of business records, including timesheets or records is a theft. Any volunteer or employee found to be violating any UHC document, including a timesheets, or time record, patient records, or volunteer applications will have their volunteer relationship accessed and possibly terminated.

##### **3. Volunteer Personal Property**

UHC is not responsible for the damage or theft of volunteer's personal property. Volunteers are therefore advised not to bring items of value to the office.

## **I. No smoking Policy**

Smoking is not permitted inside UHC facilities including UHC offices, clinical sites, or in any van or automobile owned or leased by UHC.

## **J. Dress Code and Appearance**

It is important that UHC project a professional image. Employees must therefore dress in clothing that is neat, clean, in good repair, and appropriate for a professional setting as determined by their supervisor.

## **K. Courtesy to Patients and the Public**

All volunteers are required to meet the organizations standards of professionalism and courtesy to patients, co-volunteers, co-workers, and other persons encountered in the workplace. Instances of discourtesy or un-professional conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including discounting of the volunteer relationship.

## **L. Communication Systems**

UHC's information systems, including the telephone, voice mail, internet, and electronic mail (e-mail) systems, are UHC's property. Documents, messages, or other communications are subject to UHC monitoring without notice to volunteers or employees. In general, volunteers and employees should use UHC's information systems for agency business only. UHC reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over its communication systems for any purpose.

### Computer System

Volunteers and employees are strictly prohibited from downloading or installing any software, including software found on the Internet, onto UHC computers without permission from the Information Systems Department. Unauthorized downloading or software or files jeopardizes UHC's entire network and violators of the policy will have their volunteer relationship accessed.

## Phone System

UHC's phone system is to be used primarily for business purposes. Volunteers and employees should keep personal phone calls to a minimum. Employees are to use 411 or other phone services only when absolutely necessary and only for volunteer-related purposes. Volunteers and employees are expected to use a phone book whenever possible and may be charged for excessive or inappropriate use of paid telephone services. Additionally, employees are prohibited from making non-work related long distance phone calls or charging personal calls on UHC-owned cellular phones. UHC will seek reimbursement for such costs and may deduct the cost of such calls directly from employees' paychecks if necessary.

## Harassment

UHC strictly prohibits any display or transmission of material that can be constructed discriminatory or creating a hostile work environment, including sexually explicit or obscene images, messages or cartoons, or the transmission of e-mail communications that contain ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything that may be constructed as harassment, disparagements of others based on their race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or religious or political beliefs. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including the separation of the volunteer relationship.

## Privacy

**Volunteers should not maintain an expectation of privacy with respect to e-mail messages, telephone messages, voice mail, Internet usage, or other communication mechanisms. These systems belong to UHC and may be accessed and monitored without notice.**