

Butte County Department of Behavioral Health Code of Ethics

January 2004

Mission Statement

The Butte County Department of Behavioral Health's (BCDBH) mission is to establish a continuum of health promotion and treatment services for individuals and families at-risk of or currently suffering from substance abuse and or serious mental illness. This will be done through the collaboration and partnership with all segments of our community. It is our vision that individuals, families, and the community will be empowered to reach their optimum level of wellness.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

BCDBH strives to fully comply with all the rules and regulations governing the health care industry and Butte County Behavioral Health. We are committed to compliance with all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, MOUs and personnel codes. Further, we are committed to compliance with all license and certificate of need laws and regulations.

Purpose of Our Code of Ethics

Our Code of Ethics provides guidance to all BCDBH employees and business partners and assists us in carrying out our daily activities within appropriate ethical and legal standards. These obligations apply to our relationships with clients, family members, affiliated providers, third-party payers, sub-contractors, independent contractors, vendors, consultants, and one another.

The Code is a critical component of our overall Ethics and Compliance Program. We have developed the Code to ensure that we meet our ethical standards and comply with applicable laws and regulations.

The Code is intended to be a statement that is comprehensive and easily understood. In some instances, the Code deals fully with the subject covered. In many cases, however, the subject discussed has so much complexity that additional guidance is necessary for those directly involved with the particular area to have sufficient direction.

Though we promote the concept of management autonomy at local facilities in order to meet local needs, the policies set forth in this Code are mandatory and must be followed.

Leadership Responsibilities

While all BCDBH employees and business partners are obligated to follow our Code, we expect our leaders to set the example, to be in every respect, a model. They must ensure that those on their team have sufficient information to comply with laws, regulations, and policies; as well as the resources to resolve ethical dilemmas. They must help to create a culture within BCDBH, which promotes the highest standards of ethics and compliance. This culture must encourage everyone in the organization to raise concerns when they arise. We must never sacrifice ethical and compliant behavior in the pursuit of business objectives.

Our Code of Ethics

To assure that the commitment to full compliance with all federal and state laws, regulations, rules and guidelines that apply to BCDBH operations and services is shared by its employees and business partners, the following Code of Ethics has been established. Each employee and those with whom we have business relationships will be required to certify his or her acceptance of, as a condition of employment or contractual agreement, with BCDBH:

- I. BCDBH and its employees and business partners will abide by the letter and spirit of all applicable laws and regulations and will act in such a manner that their activities will reflect favorably upon BCDBH and community. Every employee is expected to report any activity he or she reasonably believes is in violation of the law, ethical standards or BCDBH's policies. There will be no retaliation or retribution directed toward any reporting employee.
- II. BCDBH and its employees and business partners will adhere to the highest ethical standards of conduct in all professional and business activities and will act in a manner that enhances BCDBH's standing as a vital and ethical contributor in the behavioral health profession and community. All licensed staff will comply with the ethics standards put forth by their respective licensing Boards.
- III. BCDBH and its employees and business partners will deal fairly and honestly with those who are affected by our actions and will treat them, as we would expect to be treated if the situation were reversed.
- IV. BCDBH will undertake only those activities that will withstand public scrutiny and will not pursue any course of action that involves a violation of the law or these principles.
- V. BCDBH will promote relationships based on mutual trust and respect and will provide an environment in which individuals may question a practice without fear of adverse consequences.
- VI. All BCDBH employees and business partners will be sensitive to situations that could raise questions of potential or apparent conflicts between personal interests and the interests of BCDBH. As part of the BCDBH community, each of us should consider ourselves as persons in positions of trust, and each of us should conduct ourselves accordingly.
- VII. BCDBH and its business partners are entrusted with many kinds of confidential, proprietary and private information. It is imperative that those who have access to this information do not make any unauthorized or impermissible disclosures of the information, either during or after employment or end of contractual agreement.
- VIII. All BCDBH accounts, financial reports, expense reimbursements, time sheets, and other documents, including those submitted to government agencies, must be timely, accurate, clear and complete. All entries into BCDBH books and records, including department accounts and cost reports, must accurately reflect each transaction.
- IX. BCDBH will take great care to ensure that all billings to government and to private insurance payers reflect truth and accuracy and conform to all pertinent federal and state laws and regulations. We prohibit any employee or business partner from knowingly presenting or causing to be presented, claims for payment or approval, which are false, fictitious, or fraudulent.
- X. BCDBH will operate oversight systems designed to verify that claims are submitted only for services actually provided and that services are billed as provided. These systems will emphasize the critical nature of complete and accurate documentation of services provided. As part of our documentation effort, we will maintain current, timely and accurate medical records.
- XI. BCDBH employees and its business partners are expected to comply fully with the records retention and destruction schedule for the department in which they work and with all federal and state requirements for this retention and destruction.