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Owner Tracy Lightfoot:
Dir Privacy Civil Rights
Area Compliance,
Privacy & Civil Rights
Applicability MultiCare System
Wide with Yakima

Patient Nondiscrimination

Scope:

This policy applies to all MultiCare Health System (MHS) workforce members, which includes but is not limited to employees, medical staff, residents, students, volunteers, and contractors.

Location Scope:

This policy applies to all wholly owned and controlled MHS entities, including but not limited to the following: MultiCare Allenmore Hospital, MultiCare Auburn Medical Center, MultiCare Capital Medical Center, MultiCare Covington Medical Center, MultiCare Deaconess Hospital, MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital, MultiCare Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital, MultiCare Navos Hospital, MultiCare Tacoma General Hospital, MultiCare Valley Hospital, MultiCare Yakima Memorial Hospital, Behavioral Health Network facilities and all wholly owned and controlled administrative and ambulatory locations and services.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of MHS to provide equal access to its facilities and services without discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, citizenship, medical condition, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

This policy applies to MHS workforce member’s interactions with patients, companions, and visitors of MHS. For questions regarding employment discrimination, please see the MHS Policy and Procedure *"Equal Employment Opportunity and Employment Law."*

For questions you can contact the Integrity Line by phone at (866) 264-6121 or by email [at compliance@multicare.org](mailto:compliance@multicare.org).

Special Instructions:

Any person who believes they or any specific class of individuals have been subjected to prohibited discrimination may file a complaint with the Privacy & Civil Rights Office through the Integrity Line.

All reports will receive a written response within fourteen (14) days.

A person may also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue, SW

Room 509F, HHH Building

Washington, D.C. 20201

1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD)

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>

No person will suffer retaliation for reporting discrimination, filing a complaint, or cooperating in an investigation of a discrimination complaint.

Procedure:

MHS Personnel will:

1. Nondiscrimination – MHS will treat all patients and visitors receiving or participating in services with equality and in a welcoming manner that is consistent with Multicare’s nondiscrimination policy. Specifically, MultiCare does not discriminate or exclude people or treat them differently because of age, race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, citizenship, medical condition, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.
2. Notice – MHS will provide notices to patients regarding this policy and its commitment to providing access to and the provision of services in a nondiscriminatory manner pursuant to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
3. Reasonable Accommodation/Effective Communication – MHS will inform patients, companions and visitors of the availability of and make reasonable accommodations for patients consistent with Federal and State requirements. This includes, for example, informing patients of their right to appropriate auxiliary aids and services such as qualified language interpreters for limited English-speaking patients and sign language interpreters for hearing-

impaired patients and how to obtain these aids and services. Aids and services will be provided free of charge to the patient and the patient companion and in a timely manner when such aids and services are necessary to ensure an equal opportunity to participate to individuals with disabilities or to provide meaningful access to individuals with limited English proficiency.

4. Visitation Rights – MHS will afford visitation rights to patients free from discrimination and will ensure that visitors receive equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.
5. Accessibility – MHS will ensure compliance with regulations established by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 with respect to accessibility to MHS facilities. MHS will perform continual monitoring of facilities for location identification, and condition of signage, door operation, parking, ramps, and restrooms. Access features will include:
 - Convenient off-street parking designated specifically for disabled persons.
 - Curb cuts and ramps between parking areas and buildings.
 - Level access into first floor level with elevator access to all other floors.
 - Fully accessible offices, meeting rooms, restrooms, public waiting areas, cafeteria, patient treatment areas, including examining rooms and patient wards.
 - A full range of assistive and communication aids provided to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind, or with other sensory impairments. There is no additional charge for such aids.
6. Provision of Services – MHS workforce will determine eligibility for and provide services, financial aid, and other benefits to all patients in a similar manner, without subjecting any individual to separate or different treatment on the basis of age, race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, citizenship, medical condition, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

If any MHS workforce member recognizes or has any reason to believe that a patient or a relative, close friend, or companion of a patient is deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing, the workforce member must advise the person that appropriate auxiliary aids and services will be provided free of charge to the Patient or Companion. Examples of auxiliary aids and services include, but are not limited to, qualified sign language interpreters, notetakers, real-time computer-aided transcription services, written materials, exchange of written notes, assistive listening devices, assistive listening systems, closed caption decoders, voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs), videophones, and captioned telephones, or equally effective telecommunications devices, videotext displays; accessible electronic and information technology, Brailled materials and displays; and large print materials. The type of auxiliary aid or service necessary to ensure effective communication will vary in accordance with the method of communication used by the individual; the nature, length, and complexity of the communication involved; and the context in which the communication is taking place. If the MHS workforce member is the responsible health care provider, the provider must ensure that such aids and services are provided when appropriate. All other personnel should direct that person to the appropriate ADA Administrator(s) reachable at 1-888-210-3396 for Puget Sound Region, 1-855-593-0325 for Inland Northwest and 1-833-677-5786 for Yakima.

7. A person may also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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8. Compliance – MHS’s Chief Compliance Officer, Privacy/Civil Rights Director or designee is responsible for coordinating compliance with this Policy. MHS has designated its Director, Privacy/Civil Rights to coordinate efforts under 1557 of the Affordable Care Act and Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Related Policies:

Policy on Compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Facing)

Compliance and Ethics Program, Reporting, and Investigating Concerns of Violations Patient Grievances

Patient Grievances

Equal Employment Opportunity and Employment Law

Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor (EMTALA), Compliance with Employee Complaint Grievance Procedure

References:

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 42 USC §§ 12101 et seq.

Washington Law Against Discrimination, Ch. RCW 49.60.030

Washington State Human Rights Commission regulations, Ch. 16226 WAC

ADA Title III regulations, 28 CFR §§36.301 et seq.

Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18116)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Age Discrimination Act of 1975

45 C.F.R. § 80 (2012) – Nondiscrimination under programs receiving Federal assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

45 C.F.R. § 84 (2012) – Enforcement of nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap in programs or activities conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services.

45 C.F.R. § 91 (2012) – Nondiscrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from HHS.

RCW 49.60 – Discrimination – Human Rights Commission

Idaho Title 67, Chapter 59 – Idaho Human Rights Act

29 U.S.C. § 794 – Nondiscrimination under Federal grants and programs.

RCW 49.60

I.C. § 67-5909

WAC 246-341-0420(4), WAC 246-341-0420(5), WAC 246-341-0420(6)

Notes:

Approved at SKRB 4/12/2018 and MHS QSSC e-vote 4/18/2018 to apply to Covington Medical Center

Approved at MHS QSSC September 2019 to apply to Home Health and Hospice

Update scope to include Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) as well as Community-based locations – November, 2020

Approved by MHS QSSC e-vote 8/15/2021 to apply to Capital Medical Center

Paper copies of this document may not be current and should not be relied on for official purposes. The current version is on the organization intranet.

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Privacy and Civil Rights Leadership	Michelle Bowers: QM System Project Analyst Sr	04/2024
	Tracy Lightfoot: Dir Privacy Civil Rights	03/2024

Older Version Approval Signatures

Privacy and Civil Rights Leadership	Michelle Bowers: QM System Project Analyst Sr	01/2024
	Tracy Lightfoot: Dir Privacy Civil Rights [MB]	01/2024
Privacy and Civil Rights Leadership	Michelle Bowers: QM System Project Analyst Sr	01/2024
	Tracy Lightfoot: Dir Privacy Civil Rights	12/2023
Privacy and Civil Rights Leadership	Michelle Bowers: QM System Project Analyst Sr	09/2023
	Tracy Lightfoot: Dir Privacy Civil Rights	08/2023

Applicability

MultiCare All Policies Site-View Only, MultiCare Ambulatory, MultiCare Auburn Medical Center, MultiCare Behavioral Health Network, MultiCare Capital Medical Center, MultiCare Covington Medical Center, MultiCare Deaconess Hospital, MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital, MultiCare Laboratories, MultiCare Mary Bridge Childrens Hospital, MultiCare Tacoma Gen/Allenmore (System-wide), MultiCare Valley Hospital, MultiCare Yakima Memorial Hospital

Standards

No standards are associated with this document