

1.1-4 Code of Conduct

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Organization or employer when used in this document refers to Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO).

Charter for Hospice Palliative Care in Ontario

How we treat those who are dying in our community reflects who we are as a society. All Ontarians have the right to die with dignity, to have access to physical, psychological, bereavement and spiritual care, and to be granted the respect consistent with other phases of life.

As professional, volunteer and family representatives of Ontario's hospice palliative care community, we are committed to providing the best possible quality hospice palliative care to Ontario residents and their families. Our goal is to optimize their quality of life and to minimize the physical and emotional suffering associated with this phase of life.

We endorse an integrated approach focused on the individual and their family and caregivers, accessible through hospice palliative care services in the local community and tailored to individual needs.

Our efforts to increase awareness and availability of quality and integrated hospice palliative care run parallel to our collaboration with government, social agencies and other decision makers to develop innovative clinical, community and public policy strategies.

On behalf of the residents of Ontario whom we serve, we speak with a unified and cohesive voice, share information and resources and work through a coordinated network of partners from the voluntary, public and professional sectors.

The Mission for HPCO

Through the provision of support, services, and leadership to the wide network of individual and local hospice associations and through public education and advocacy, HPCO ensures that members consistently deliver the finest end-of-life care possible to individuals with life-threatening conditions, their families and friends.

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code applies to all employees/volunteers, including Board members (permanent full-time, hourly, fixed term contract, permanent part-time), and any third party service provider in face-to-face contact with our clients.

This Code covers a wide range of business practices and procedures. It does not cover every issue that may arise, but it sets out basic principles to guide all employees/volunteers of HPCO (HPCO). All HPCO employees and volunteers must conduct themselves accordingly and seek to avoid even the appearance of improper behavior. The Code should also be provided to and followed by HPCO's third party client service providers.

If a law conflicts with any part of this Code, you must comply with the law. If questions arise pertaining to conflicts between the law and this code, employees/volunteers should consult their supervisor to resolve the situation. Employees and volunteers are responsible for understanding the legal and policy requirements that apply to their jobs and reporting any suspected violations of law, this Code or HPCO policy.

Those who violate the standards in this Code will be subject to disciplinary action, *including possible dismissal*. Furthermore, violations of this Code may also be violations of the law and may result in civil or criminal penalties for you, your supervisors and/or HPCO. *If you are in a situation which you believe may violate or lead to a violation of this Code, follow the procedures set out in the HPCO's Complaints Policy.*

The Code is organized into categories, as follows:

Service:

1. Always act with fairness, honesty, integrity and openness; respect the opinions of others and treat everyone with equality and dignity without regard to gender, race, color, creed, and ancestry, place of origin, political beliefs, religion, marital status, disability, age, or sexual orientation.
2. Promote the mission and objectives of the HPCO in all dealings with the public on behalf of the HPCO.
3. Provide a positive and valued experience for those receiving service within and outside HPCO.

Accountability:

1. Act with honesty and integrity and in accordance with any professional standards and/or governing laws and legislation that have application to the responsibilities you perform for or on behalf of the HPCO.
2. Comply with both the letter and the spirit of any training or orientation provided to you by the HPCO in connection with those responsibilities.
3. Adhere to the policies and procedures of the HPCO and support the decisions and directions of the Board and its delegated authority.
4. Take responsibility for your actions and decisions. Follow reporting lines to facilitate the effective resolution of problems. Ensure that you do not exceed the authority of your position.

Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest exists when a person's private interest interferes in any way - or even appears to interfere - with the interests of HPCO. A conflict situation can arise when an employee or officer takes actions or has interests that may make it difficult to perform his or her work on behalf of HPCO objectively and effectively. Conflicts of interest may also arise when an employee or officer, or a member of his or her family, receives improper personal benefits as a result of his or her position in the organization. Loans to, or guarantees of obligations of, employees and officers and their family members by the organization may create conflicts of interest and in certain instances are prohibited by law.

Conflicts of interest are prohibited as a matter of organization policy, except as approved by the CEO for situations involving staff or non-board volunteers, or the Board of Directors for situations involving the CEO or Board Members. It is the duty of any person taking part in the operations of HPCO to adhere to the Conflict of Interest Policy at all times. In the event that such a matter arises, the person shall formally disclose the interest, refrain from attempting to persuade or influence other persons participating in the decision, and shall not cast any vote on the matter.

Conflicts of interest may not always be clear-cut; hence, where potential conflicts arise, employees and volunteers should consult their immediate supervisor. Any employee or officer who becomes aware of a conflict or potential conflict should bring it to the attention of a supervisor.

Employment Opportunities:

Employees are prohibited from taking for themselves opportunities that are discovered through the use of HPCO property, information or position without the consent of the CEO for situations involving staff or non-board volunteers, or the Board of Directors for situations involving the CEO or Board Members. No employee may use Organization property, information, or position for personal gain, and no employee may compete with the Organization directly or indirectly. Employees and officers owe a duty to HPCO to advance the Organization's interests when the opportunity to do so arises.

Confidentiality

HPCO is a publicly-funded organization and as such, formal proceedings, documents and written information, including but not limited to annual budget, financial statements, board minutes, and all information on HPCO membership and related services and personnel, are available to the general public only through its funders and through the agency itself. In other words, all functions of the agency are deemed confidential and will be treated as such, except where law dictates otherwise.

In keeping with the beliefs and aims of HPCO, all staff, board members, and volunteers/interns will sign a Confidentiality Agreement. All staff, board members and volunteers/interns shall be expected to maintain confidentiality as per this policy.

It is to be understood that any service related information is the property of HPCO, not the property of individual staff, board members or volunteers/interns. Such information cannot be released to the press or others without approval of the organization. It will be treated as confidential and not released without the explicit permission of the parties involved and/or unless directed to do so by the Board of Directors or required to do so by law.

Information which should be identified as confidential would include, but may not necessarily be limited to:

- Membership information
- Personnel information, including any and all information relating to applicants, hiring procedures, supervision, evaluations, disciplinary actions, terminations, etc.
- Proceedings and minutes of “in Camera” Board and Committee meetings.
- Purchase of property, tendering applications, all legal matters.
- Any other information relating to and/or generated through the day-to-day operations of the corporation identified as confidential by the Board of Directors.

Non-Compliance with this policy constitutes a breach of confidentiality.

- A breach of confidentiality may result in termination of a volunteer relationship or termination of employment.
- In some instances, and depending upon the severity and frequency of the non-compliance, alternate actions such as providing reminders and/or formal disciplinary action may be implemented instead of, or prior to, termination of association with HPCO.
- A confidentiality agreement form shall be signed by every staff, board member and volunteer/intern [client, office and those deemed necessary by the CEO] at the beginning of employment or volunteer/intern placement with the agency, and annually thereafter.
- All information received while employed by HPCO will remain confidential when the staff member is no longer involved with agency.

Copyright:

HPCO is the owner of the copyright and of all copyrighted works produced by staff members who have been engaged by HPCO to prepare such works for HPCO, or part of whose normal responsibilities to the Organization is the preparation of such works.

Electronic Equipment

The use of Internet and e-mails is subject to monitoring at any time. Employees and volunteers may only use an organization-provided email address for HPCO purposes.

Record-Keeping, Financial Controls and Disclosures

HPCO requires honest, accurate and timely recording and reporting of information in order to make responsible business decisions.

All business expense accounts must be documented and recorded accurately in a timely manner in accordance with HPCO policy. An immediate supervisor or officer should be consulted regarding the legitimacy of an expense where uncertainty exists.

All of the Organization’s books, records, accounts and financial statements must be maintained in reasonable detail, must appropriately reflect HPCO’s transactions, must be promptly disclosed in

accordance with any applicable laws or regulations and must conform both to applicable legal requirements and to the Organization's system of internal controls.

Business records and communications often become public, and we should avoid exaggeration, derogatory remarks, guesswork, or inappropriate characterizations of people and companies that may be misunderstood. This applies equally to email, internal memos, and formal reports. Records should always be retained or destroyed according to HPCO's record retention policies.

Improper Influence on Conduct of Auditors

Employees are prohibited from directly or indirectly taking any action to coerce, manipulate, mislead or fraudulently influence HPCO's independent auditors for the purpose of rendering the financial statements of the Organization materially misleading. Prohibited actions include but are not limited to those actions taken to coerce, manipulate, mislead or fraudulently influence an auditor: (1) to issue or reissue a report on the HPCO's financial statements that is not warranted in the circumstances (due to material violations of generally accepted accounting principles, generally accepted auditing standards or other professional or regulatory standards); (2) not to perform audit, review or other procedures required by generally accepted auditing standards or other professional standards; (3) not to withdraw an issued report; or (4) not to communicate matters to the HPCO's Audit Committee.

Corrupt Practices

Most countries have laws prohibiting making offers or payments and giving gifts or other things of value to government officials to influence their actions. Many countries have laws that prohibit people and companies subject to their laws from engaging in corrupt conduct even when it is committed outside the country. Many countries also extend these prohibitions to cover bribes to private parties, as well as bribes to government officials.

HPCO prohibits giving or authorizing directly or indirectly any illegal payments to Canadian government officials and officials of other countries.

Protection and Proper Use of Organization Assets

All employees and officers should protect HPCO's assets and ensure their efficient use. Theft, carelessness, and waste have a direct impact on the Organization. All HPCO assets are to be used for legitimate business purposes. Any suspected incident of fraud or theft should be immediately reported for investigation.

Personal/Sexual Harassment:

HPCO has a zero tolerance policy with respect to Personal/Sexual Harassment. Personal/Sexual Harassment in any form is strictly prohibited and may be grounds for termination as a volunteer, or, in the case of an employee, immediate dismissal for just cause without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Procedures for interacting with people who may be vulnerable because of age or disability:

In the course of providing HPCO services, our volunteers, employees, and third party service providers may come into contact with vulnerable individuals. These individuals are those who may be at risk of harm or harassment because of their age or disability.

When this occurs, the following procedures should be followed, with a third party present:



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Board Governance & Operational

Where practical to do so, HPCO will conduct one-on-one meetings with those who may be vulnerable in a business-like setting, public location or in an area that is private but visible to others.

Diversity Management

In keeping with its fundamental principles, HPCO is committed to social justice in the elimination of organizational structures and actions that oppress, exclude, limit or discriminate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, financial ability, sexual orientation, religion, disability or age.

Health and Safety

HPCO strives to provide each employee and volunteer with a safe and healthy work environment. Each employee and volunteer has responsibility for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace by following environmental, safety and health rules and practices and reporting accidents, injuries and unsafe equipment, practices or conditions. Violence and threatening behavior are not permitted.

Employees and volunteers are expected to perform their Organization related work in a safe manner, free of the influences of alcohol, illegal drugs or controlled substances. The use of illegal drugs in the workplace will not be tolerated.

Implementation

Strict observance of the Code is fundamental to the activity and reputation of HPCO. It is essential that all employees/volunteers (permanent full-time, hourly, fixed term contract, permanent part-time), and any other third party service provider in face-to-face contact with our clients adhere to this Code. They will certify this by signing an annual declaration that they have read and will abide by this Code.

Management has the responsibility of ensuring compliance with all codes and policies of HPCO.

Compliance Procedures

We must all work to ensure prompt and consistent action against violations of this Code. However, in some situations it is difficult to know right from wrong. Since we cannot anticipate every situation that will arise, it is important that we have a way to approach a new question or problem. These are the steps to keep in mind:

- (a) *Make sure you have all the facts.* In order to reach the right solutions, we must be as fully informed as possible.
- (b) *Ask yourself: What specifically am I being asked to do? Does it seem unethical or improper?* This will enable you to focus on the specific question you are faced with, and the alternatives you have. Use your judgment and common sense; if something seems unethical or improper, it probably is.
- (c) *Discuss the problem with your supervisor.* This is the basic guidance for all situations. In many cases, your supervisor will be more knowledgeable about the question, and will appreciate being brought into the decision-making process. Remember that it is your supervisor's responsibility to help solve problems.
- (d) *Seek help from Organization resources.* In a case where it may not be appropriate to discuss an issue with an immediate supervisor, or local management, the Chairman of HPCO Board of Directors should be contacted via phone or e-mail.

(e) *You may report violations in confidence and without fear of retaliation.* If your situation requires that your identity be kept secret, your anonymity will be protected. The Organization does not permit retaliation of any kind against employees or officers for good faith reports of suspected violations.

(f) *Always ask first, act later:* If you are unsure of what to do in any situation, seek guidance *before you act.*

(g) *All employees and volunteers are subject to this Code,* which describes procedures for the internal reporting of violations of the Code. All employees and volunteers must comply with those reporting requirements and promote compliance with them by others. Failure to adhere to this Code by any employee or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO)

Annual Code of Conduct Declaration

I, _____, have read, understand and agree to abide by the Code of
(Employee/Board Member/Volunteer – please print)

Conduct of HPCO and I understand that such adherence is a condition of my employment or volunteer work.

I understand that a violation of the Code of Conduct may be grounds for disciplinary action including termination.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20 _____.

Employee/Board Member/Volunteer _____
(Signature)

HPCO Representative _____
(Signature Name)