



**HARRIS COUNTY
HOSPITAL DISTRICT**

**PATIENT ELIGIBILITY
SERVICES
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

Policy No: 1.10
Page Number: 1 of 2

Effective Date: 08/01/02
Approved By:

[Handwritten Signature] 8/15/02

TITLE: CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLIENT INFORMATION

PURPOSE: To set forth expectations for staff regarding confidentiality of client information. This policy supplements the HCHD 1997 Employee Handbook, Section 10: Employee Conduct.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Clients applying for financial assistance are required to provide personal information to eligibility staff for evaluation. Eligibility staff should be mindful of the sensitive nature of this information, and are expected to keep all client information confidential.

POLICY ELABORATION:

I. RELEASE OF CLIENT INFORMATION

- A. Clients are entitled to a copy of any and all documents used to determine their financial assistance classification. This includes a copy of the face sheet. Staff may issue such copies to clients without seeking management approval.
- B. Client information cannot be released to any individual outside the Patient Eligibility Services department, and should only be provided to department staff with a legitimate business need for the information.
- C. Any requests for client information that come from sources other than department management or the client should be referred to Patient Eligibility Services Administration. Staff may not release copies of documents to any other individuals,



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even if a subpoena is presented. The person requesting the information should be referred to Patient Eligibility Services Administration. The Director of Patient Eligibility Services is the only department member who may accept subpoenas for eligibility-related information.

- D. The Director is responsible for conferring with the County Attorney's office and the District's Public Information Officer to determine both the legitimacy of the information request, and who will respond to that request.
- E. Staff should not discuss client information with other coworkers unless there is a legitimate business need. Discussing client information in public places (i.e., an elevator) or in front of another client is considered a violation of this policy.
- F. Confidentiality extends to electronic eligibility records. Staff are not allowed to make modifications to existing eligibility records unless there is a legitimate business need.
- G. Any staff member found in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action according to District policy, up to and including termination.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1997 HCHD Employee Handbook, Section 10: Employee Conduct

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Patient Eligibility Services
Administration