



# Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

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STANDARDS OF CONDUCT



## Dear Children's Employee,

We know that, for most of us at Children's, "doing the right thing" comes as second nature. We are committed to conducting ourselves with the highest level of integrity, ethical and legal standards. The Children's Compliance Program was created as a resource to focus on the prevention of fraud and abuse in federal, state and private healthcare plans, and it conveys the Children's commitment to integrity and excellence.

The program includes the enclosed Standards of Conduct. The Standards, along with Children's policies and procedures, provide direction on how to protect the integrity of our organization and support our System values through our day-to-day actions. They also reflect our commitment to excellence in all aspects of pediatric care. While the Standards, policies, and procedures don't cover every situation, they do provide guidelines you can follow and apply.

As a Children's employee, you have an active role in Compliance. This includes becoming familiar with the Standards, upholding them, and reporting any instances of potential wrongdoing, including unethical or illegal behavior. You can report these to your supervisor, a Human Resources representative or the Compliance Office. You also can make an anonymous report through our toll-free Compliance Hotline at 877-373-0126, or online at [choa.ethicspoint.com](http://choa.ethicspoint.com).

Children's is committed to fostering an environment of support for all employees, so you can thrive. By following our Standards of Conduct, we are upholding our commitments to Children's, our patients and families, our community, and each other. Thank you for all you do to make Children's such an extraordinary place.

Sincerely,



Donna Hyland  
President and CEO  
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta





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Employees are expected to follow the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Inc. (hereinafter “Children’s”) values, Standards of Conduct, and policies and procedures, as well as federal and state laws and regulations. Anyone with knowledge of a violation of these values, Standards of Conduct, policies and procedures, or laws and regulations must report this information as promptly as possible. Violations of policy, including failure to report a known violation, shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## Mission

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To make kids better today and healthier tomorrow

## Vision

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Best Care ... Healthier Kids

## Values

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Care about People, Passionate about Kids  
and Dedicated to Better

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# Children's **Standards of Conduct** at a glance

## **Our Responsibility to Our Patients:**

We are a safe, respectful and caring environment for patients and their parents or legal guardians, and we follow all applicable laws when providing care.

## **Our Responsibility to Our Employees:**

We treat every employee equitably and with mutual respect, and we are an inclusive environment.

## **Our Responsibility to Our Physicians:**

We maintain honest and ethical relationships with physicians, complying with all federal and state laws governing such relationships.

## **Our Responsibility to Other Parties:**

We comply with federal and state laws governing relationships between hospitals and other parties for securing goods and services.

## **Our Responsibility to Our Competitors:**

We conduct ourselves ethically at all times, only participating in fair business practices.

## **Our Responsibility to Government Agencies:**

We follow all laws relating to government relations and political activities.

## **Our Responsibility to Payers:**

We bill government and private insurance payers accurately and ethically, following all appropriate laws and regulations.

## **Our Responsibility to Protect Children's Assets:**

We protect the assets entrusted to us, including our property, funds and any proprietary information, against loss, theft or misuse.

## **Our Responsibility to Avoid Conflicts of Interest:**

We will be free of influence from personal considerations when representing Children's interactions with others.

## **Our Responsibility to Prohibit Retaliation:**

We prohibit retaliation against any employee for reporting an issue, problem, concern or violation.

## **Our Responsibility to Report Compliance Concerns:**

We encourage employees to report any issues, problems, concerns or violations in good faith.

## **Our Responsibility to Our Professional Staff:**

We expect members of our professional staff to comply with our applicable bylaws, rules and regulations, policies and procedures.



# Our Responsibility to Our Patients



Children's provides a safe, respectful and caring environment for the treatment of our patients and their parents or legal guardians in compliance with applicable laws.

## Patient care

- We treat our patients with dignity, respect, compassion and courtesy while maintaining boundaries, and without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender or disability.
- We document the care rendered, and maintain an accurate and complete patient medical record consistent with applicable laws.
- We make reasonable accommodations for individuals seeking services with special communication needs, including impaired sight and hearing, and limited English proficiency.

## Patient rights

- We provide each patient and their parents or legal guardians with a copy of our Patient Rights and Responsibility document.
- We employ or contract appropriately licensed or credentialed providers, with relevant training and understanding of the scope of their practice, to care for our patients.
- We provide information and assistance to patients or legal guardians seeking to understand the charges for services provided.
- We do not credential or employ individuals who are or have been excluded from participating in a federally funded healthcare program, or who are not licensed to perform within their scope of practice.

## Informed consent

- We inform patients and their parents or legal guardians, as required by law, regarding treatment recommendations, alternatives and the risks associated with the care they are seeking, and we provide medically necessary care.

## Research

- We seek to protect the rights, health and safety of patients participating in clinical research investigations by supporting and monitoring valid and appropriate research, and complying with applicable consent and human subject research laws.

## Emergency treatment

- We provide an emergency medical exam by an appropriately qualified individual when a patient presents to the Emergency Department with a potential emergency medical condition.
- We do not refuse to provide emergency care to stabilize a patient based on the patient's ability to pay or based on the type of insurance coverage.

## Confidentiality

- We limit access of protected health information to people who need to know in order to perform their work.
- We only permit taking photographs, video or other images of patients in accordance with Children's policies as needed for treatment or quality improvement, or as specifically consented to for other purposes, such as research.
- We comply with state and federal laws, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), in protecting the privacy and security of the personal and health information of our patients and their parents or legal guardians.



# Our Responsibility to Our Employees

Children's is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of employees and encourages employees to develop their potential. Children's values treating fellow employees with consideration and respect, regardless of status or position.



## Harassment

- We do not permit harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability or any other status protected by law. Each allegation of harassment or discrimination is promptly investigated in accordance with applicable laws and human resources policies.
- We do not tolerate unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- We do not permit supervisors to place or seem to place pressure on subordinates that could cause them to deviate from acceptable Standards of Conduct.

## Nondiscrimination and diversity

- Diversity at Children's describes an environment of mutual respect that values and promotes the greatness within every individual and embraces differences for the collective strength of the organization. In our inclusive environment, we appreciate and welcome everyone, regardless of gender or gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, religion, health status or family composition, for a better workforce to serve our diverse patients, families and surrounding communities.
- We comply with applicable federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate, treat people differently or make employment decisions on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability or any other status protected by law.

## Safe work environment

- We provide a work environment free of drug or alcohol usage. This prohibition does not apply to employees taking over-the-counter and physician-prescribed medication according to direction.
- We provide a smoke-free environment for employees and patients.
- We strive to provide a safe work environment in which employees are free from harassment, violence, discrimination and intimidation. Weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited in the workplace.

## Worker injury

- We promptly report any injuries to a Children's supervisor in accordance with applicable policies, and any applicable laws and regulations.

## Confidential information

- We maintain the confidentiality of salary, benefit and other personal information relating to employees.
- We maintain employee files, payroll information, disciplinary matters and similar sensitive information in a manner designed to promote confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws.



# Our Responsibility to Our Physicians



Children's complies with federal and state laws governing relationships between hospitals and physicians who are in a position to refer patients to us. Laws include the federal Anti-Kickback Law and the Stark Law, as well as the Georgia self-referral statute. The Stark Law addresses financial relationships between physicians and Children's.

## Contracts

- We require that contracts with non-employed physicians have a commercially reasonable purpose in furtherance of Children's charitable mission, and that all such contracts meet criteria required by applicable laws. We require that all compensation paid to a physician meets regulatory requirements, such as being consistent with fair market value and commercially reasonable.
- We do not consider the volume or value of referrals by physicians when contemplating a business relationship with a physician.

## Remuneration

- We do not pay physicians or physician groups for referrals.
- We do not accept payment for referrals we make.

## Fair market value

- We require all physician compensation policies to be approved by the Children's Board of Trustees (the Board) or a committee approved by the Board as to commercial reasonableness and fair market value.
- We do not provide office space, equipment, services or supplies for free or for less than fair market value to non-employed physician practices.

## Gifts

- We track the value of all gifts to non-employed physicians to make sure the value does not exceed the exception under the Stark Law.

## Use of advanced practice providers

- We make sure that a non-employed physician's use of Children's employed advanced practice providers is consistent with applicable laws to help ensure proper utilization and delegation of medical tasks, and proper billing and collecting for the provided services.

## Proper coding and billing

- We require that our facilities and physicians providing services to Children's properly code based on documented services and the use of the proper site of service.
- We review claims submitted to the government and private insurance payers to verify alignment with all federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- We comply with state and federal laws relating to the accuracy and completeness of all records.
- We create records based on accurate documentation that supports each claim.
- We require any known or suspected errors to be immediately addressed, reported and remedied.
- We are honest, objective and accurate in our recordkeeping, and retain records according to governing legal requirements.



# Our Responsibility to **Other Parties**



Children's complies with federal and state laws governing relationships between hospitals and other parties for securing goods and services, including the Anti-Kickback Law. The Anti-Kickback Law prohibits anyone from knowingly giving or receiving anything of value in exchange for patient referrals or for purchasing, leasing, ordering, arranging for, or recommending any item paid for by Medicare or Medicaid.

## **Excluded vendors**

- We only do business with parties that do not appear on any of the government watch lists.

## **Vendor gifts**

- We maintain appropriate business boundaries with other parties by not accepting monetary gifts, entertainment, services or other benefits that are not approved by Children's policies.
- We do not accept donations, rebates, bribes or other forms of inducement in exchange for the other party having the opportunity to gain Children's business.

## **Fair business dealings**

- We base decisions with third parties on sound business principles, such as cost and quality.
- We strive to communicate our business ethics, as reflected in these Standards of Conduct, to vendors with whom we conduct significant business.
- We do not make payments to vendors in exchange for patient referrals or business that may be paid for by government or other third-party payers.
- We do not enter into purchase arrangements in which the price of one product or service is tied to or dependent on another purchase.
- We do not make direct purchases for personal use from a Children's contractor.





# Our Responsibility to **Our Competitors**

Children's is committed to truthful and fair business practices in compliance with applicable laws, including antitrust and intellectual property laws.



## **Property rights of others**

- We respect the intellectual property rights of others.
- We do not misuse or misappropriate confidential or proprietary information belonging to another individual or entity.

## **Dealing fairly with competitors**

- We display and distribute marketing materials that are truthful, informative and nondeceptive.
- We comply with antitrust laws that prohibit agreements or practices “in restraint of trade,” such as price fixing, boycotting suppliers or customers, market allocation, pricing intended to run a competitor out of business, stealing trade secrets, bribing or providing kickbacks.
- We do not try to obtain competitors' reimbursement rates or share Children's reimbursement rates with competitors unless permitted by law.
- We do not discuss sensitive or proprietary Children's information with competitors, including specific pricing, compensation or expenses, unless permitted by law.
- We do not share trade secrets except as may be permitted by contract or by law.



# Our Responsibility to **Government Agencies**



Children's complies with all federal, state and local laws governing participation in government relations and political activities.

## **Lobbying**

- We are honest in all our dealings with government officials.
- We utilize Children's-designated individuals to approach federal, state and local political representatives regarding Children's business operations to promote compliance with all laws regarding political contributions and gifts to government officials.

## **Cooperation**

- We cooperate with government agencies in audits and other types of investigations.

## **Political activity**

- We do not directly contribute on Children's behalf to any individual political campaigns, political parties or other organizations that intend to use the funds primarily for political campaign objectives.
- We do not permit the use of Children's email or other corporate resources to engage in political activity.
- We do not reimburse individuals for any personal contributions to a political campaign.

## **Licensure and accreditation**

- We maintain all licenses, certifications, approvals and accreditations necessary for the operation of each healthcare facility, service or department of Children's.

## **Document retention**

- We store all records in a secure location for a period of time as required by law. The premature destruction or alteration of any document in response to or in anticipation of a request for those documents by any government agency or court is prohibited.

## **Hazardous waste**

- We dispose of hazardous waste material in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures.



# Our Responsibility to Payers



Children's maintains processes and systems that promote and allow coding and billing of Children's claims submitted to government and private insurance payers that are accurate and medically necessary, and that conform to federal, state and local laws and regulations. Mistakes in coding and billing, even if unintentional, can have serious consequences, including fines, penalties, criminal prosecution and exclusion from participation in any federally funded healthcare program.

## Fraud and abuse

- We submit claims for payment and cost reports to Medicare, Medicaid and other federal health programs in accordance with current reimbursement rules, policies and procedures promulgated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the state Medicaid agency and any applicable fiscal intermediary or carrier of another agency with responsibility for the program in question.
- We do not knowingly submit for payment or reimbursement a claim, invoice, bid proposal or other document that is false, fraudulent or fictitious.
- We do not knowingly assign billing codes that inaccurately reflect the services and products that were provided.
- We do not provide compensation or financial incentives for billing department personnel, including coders, or billing consultants to submit improper claims or codes.
- We do not routinely waive insurance copayments or deductibles.

## Medical necessity and accurate coding

- We only bill for services that are medically necessary, actually provided and documented in a patient's medical records.
- We do not unnecessarily admit a patient.
- We do not up code, unbundle or misrepresent services or other facts on claims.
- We repay overpayments identified within time periods specified by law or contracts.



# Our Responsibility to **Protect Children's Assets**

Children's has many valuable assets, including employees, property, confidential information, funds, computer technology and intellectual property. Children's is committed to protecting its property and the property entrusted to it against loss, theft or misuse.



## **Asset protection**

- We care for Children's property entrusted to us, and we utilize it properly.
  - We dispose of all surplus or obsolete property and equipment according to established procedures.
  - We refrain from engaging in activities that may jeopardize Children's tax-exempt status.
  - We utilize the Children's travel and expense policy when reimbursing for expenses incurred to further Children's business.
  - We protect projects, discoveries, inventions, strategic plans, logos, phrases, trademarks, symbols, photographs, videos, books and software resulting from employee activities or created by Children's as intellectual property.
  - We engage in activities in furtherance of our charitable purpose and use our resources to further the public good rather than private or personal interests of any individual.
- We do not permit making copies of our computer software or the use of unauthorized software on Children's computer equipment.
  - We do not enter into situations in which personal interests would be in conflict with Children's (e.g., a personal, financial or other relationship, or interest that could interfere or compete with Children's interests, or a position within Children's that is used for personal gain).
  - We do not enter into compensation arrangements in excess of fair market value.



# Our Responsibility to Avoid Conflicts of Interest

The board members of Children's and its controlled affiliates, together with its physicians and employees, are expected to avoid conflicts or the appearance of conflicts between their private interests and those of the organization.



## Employees

- We avoid any activity that might conflict or appear to conflict with the interests of Children's.
- We report or disclose any potential conflict related to our workplace responsibilities and avoid doing business with vendors we manage.
- We exercise good faith and fair dealing in all transactions that involve our responsibilities to the organization.
- We do not accept or provide money or gifts other than those permitted by Children's policies.
- We do not allow an employee to be supervised by a relative unless properly disclosed and approved according to our applicable policies.
- We only accept or extend business courtesies that are in accordance with the law and Children's policies.

## Board and committee members, officers and key management employees ("covered persons")

- We educate covered persons on their fiduciary duties to Children's and its affiliated entities.
- We require covered persons to disclose potential conflicts of interest to Children's pursuant to applicable policies.



## Our Responsibility to **Prohibit Retaliation**

- We prohibit disciplinary action or other forms of retaliation taken against any employee for reporting an issue, problem, concern or violation to management, human resources, the Office of the General Counsel, Compliance Office, Chief Compliance Officer, Compliance Hotline or online at **[choa.ethicspoint.com](http://choa.ethicspoint.com)**.
- We protect employees who report directly to the federal or state government under our non-retaliation policy, provided that the employee's actions do not create a noncompliant situation or event.





## Our Responsibility to Report Compliance Concerns



- We encourage employees who wish to report a concern, issue, problem or violation to communicate such concerns to:
  - The employee's supervisor or other member of the management team.
  - A human resources representative.
  - The Office of the General Counsel.
  - The Compliance Office.
  - The Chief Compliance Officer.
- Children's recognizes that there may be times when concerns cannot be properly addressed through the normal chain of command or other avenues. When such situations arise, employees are encouraged to contact the Compliance Office or Compliance Hotline, or to report concerns online at **choa.ethicspoint.com**.
- The Children's Compliance Hotline may be reached 24/7 at **877-373-0126**. Anonymous reporting is available.



## Our Responsibility to **Our Professional Staff**



- Professional staff members are expected to comply with all provisions of the professional staff bylaws; professional staff policies on appointment, reappointment and granting clinical privileges; the professional staff rules and regulations; as well as hospital bylaws, applicable hospital policies and procedures, The Joint Commission Standards and Children's Standards of Conduct.
- Any professional staff member with knowledge of a violation of these provisions should report this information to their service chief or medical director; a human resources representative, the Office of the General Counsel, Chief Medical Officer, Compliance Office, Chief Compliance Officer, the Compliance Hotline or online at **[choa.ethicspoint.com](https://choa.ethicspoint.com)**.





# Standards of Conduct: **Acknowledgment Form**

I certify that I have reviewed the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Standards of Conduct and agree to adhere to the Children's values and standards, and any revisions. I understand that I have the right to report any good faith concerns of fraud or abuse directly to a governmental agency without fear of retaliation. I pledge to report any known violation through the established reporting processes at Children's.

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Signature

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Position

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Printed name

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Employee ID number/vendor/contractor/volunteer

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Date

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Department

