

VAN BUREN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Title: Ethical Standards & Compliance
Originated: 02-27-25

Number: I.06.17
Approved By: Executive Team

PURPOSE:

Van Buren Community Mental Health Authority (VBCMh) has adopted a Corporate Compliance Program to ensure that the agency operates in full compliance with applicable laws. An important component of the program is a Code of Conduct, setting forth basic principles, which all of VBCMh and VBCMh's providers, directors, officers, and employees (referred to as "personnel") must follow. The Code of Conduct describes the ethical standards applicable to all facets of VBCMh operations. Specific procedures operationalizing the Code of Conduct appear in the Corporate Compliance Plan, which applies to all personnel. Non-personnel representatives of VBCMh, such as sales agents and consultants, should also be directed to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct when they are acting on behalf of VBCMh. If you have any questions about the Code of Conduct or its applicability to a particular situation, please contact your supervisor or the Corporate Compliance Officer. The Code of Conduct is attached to this procedure.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT SUMMARY:

1. Integrity – One of VBCMh's strongest assets is a reputation for integrity and honesty. A fundamental principle on which VBCMh operates its business is full compliance with applicable laws. VBCMh will also conduct its business in conformance with sound ethical standards. All personnel shall act in compliance with the requirements of applicable laws and the Code of Conduct in a sound ethical manner when conducting business and operations
2. Honesty – Personnel shall be completely honest in all dealings with government agencies and representatives and commercial insurance carriers. No misrepresentations shall be made, and no false bills or request for payment or other documents shall be submitted to government agencies or representatives or commercial insurance carriers. Personnel certifying the correctness of records submitted to government agencies and commercial insurance carriers, including invoices or requests for payment, shall have knowledge that the information is accurate and complete before giving such certification.
3. Leadership – Each supervisor and manager is responsible for ensuring that the personnel under their supervision are acting ethically and in compliance with applicable laws and the Code of Conduct. All personnel are responsible for acquiring sufficient knowledge to recognize potential compliance issues applicable to their duties and for appropriately seeking advise regarding such issues.
4. Bribes – Personnel shall not offer, give, or accept any bribe, payment, gift, or thing of value to any person or entity with whom VBCMh has or is seeking any business or regulatory relationship except for gifts of nominal value which are legal and given in the ordinary course of business. Personnel must promptly report the offering or receipt of gifts above nominal value to their supervisor and the Corporate Compliance Officer.

5. Political Influence – Personnel shall not directly or indirectly authorize, pay, promise, deliver, or solicit any payment, gratuity, or favor for the purpose of influencing any political official or government employee in the discharge of that person's responsibilities.
6. Political Activities - All political activities relating to VBCMh shall be conducted in full compliance with applicable law. No VBCMh funds or property shall be used for any political contribution or purpose unless first approved by the CEO. Personnel may make direct contributions of their own money to political candidates and activities, but these contributions will not be reimbursed.
7. Conflict of Interest – Other than compensation from VBCMh, personnel shall not have a financial or other personal interest in a transaction between VBCMh or any of its business units, a vendor, supplier, provider, or customer, unless advance approval is granted with appropriate safeguards in place.
8. Duty of Loyalty and non-Interference – Personnel shall not engage in any financial business, or other activity which competes with VBCMh's business, which may interfere or appear to interfere with the performance of their duties, or that involves the use of VBCMh property, facilities, or resources, except to the extent consistent with the conflict of interest statement.
9. Accuracy – All of VBCMh's business transactions shall be carried out in accordance with management's general or specific directives. All of the books and records shall be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or other applicable standards. All transactions, payments, receipts, accounts, and assets shall be completely and accurately recorded on VBCMh's books and records on a consistent basis. No payment shall be approved or made with the intentional understanding that it will be used for any purpose other than that described in the supporting documentation for the payment. All information recorded and submitted to other persons must not be used to mislead those who receive the information or conceal anything that is improper.
10. Record Management – Books and records shall be created, maintained, retained, and destroyed in accordance with VBCMh's records management procedure.
11. Antitrust law – Personnel shall comply with applicable antitrust laws. There shall be no discussion or agreements with competitors regarding price or other terms for services, prices paid or supplier or providers, dividing up customers or geographic markets, or joint action to boycott or coerce certain customers, suppliers, or providers.
12. Unfair Competition - VBCMh and its personnel shall not engage in unfair competition or deceptive trade practices, including misrepresentation of VBCMh's products or operation. Personnel shall not make false or disparaging statements about competitors or their products or attempt to coerce suppliers or providers into purchasing products or services.
13. Confidentiality – All personnel shall maintain the confidentiality of VBCMh's business information and of information relating to VBCMh's vendors, suppliers, providers, customers, and customers. Personnel shall not use any such confidential or proprietary information except as is appropriate for VBCMh business. Personnel shall not seek to improperly obtain or misuse confidential information of VBCMh's competitors.

14. The Code of Conduct shall be distributed to all employees. Staff are instructed, at hire and annually during compliance training, that the written Code of Conduct is also accessible on the VBCMh computer network.

PROCEDURES:

A. REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS

1. Illegal acts or improper conduct may subject VBCMh to severe civil and criminal penalties, including large fines and being barred from certain types of business. It is, therefore, very important that any illegal activities or violations of the Code of Conduct be promptly brought to Van Buren CMHA's attention. In any case, if VBCMh discovers and reports illegal acts to the appropriate governmental authorities, VBCMh may be subject to lesser penalties.
2. Any director, officer, or employee who believes or becomes aware of any violation of the Code of Conduct or any illegal activity by a director, officer, or employee or another person acting on VBCMh's behalf shall promptly report the violation or illegal activity in person, by phone, or in writing, to one of the following persons:
 - Corporate Compliance Officer
 - Chief Executive Officer
3. It is a violation of the Code of Conduct for personnel not to report a violation of the Code of Conduct or any illegal activity. If you have a question about whether particular acts or conduct may be illegal or violate the Code of Conduct, you should contact the Corporate Compliance Officer. It is a violation of the Code of Conduct for personnel to whom a potential illegal act or violation of the Code of Conduct is reported to not ensure that the illegal act or violation of the Code of Conduct comes to the attention of those responsible for investigating such reports.

If the illegal act or conduct that is in violation of the Code of Conduct involves a person to whom such illegal acts or violations might otherwise be reported, the illegal acts or violations should be reported to another person to whom reporting is appropriate.

4. Within 30 days of receiving any reports of alleged illegal activity or violations of the Code of Conduct, appropriate personnel will begin a thorough and timely investigation. All personnel must cooperate with these investigations and must not take any actions to prevent, hinder, or delay discovery and full investigation of illegal acts or violations of the Code of Conduct. It is a violation of the Code of Conduct for personnel to prevent, hinder, or delay discovery and full investigation of illegal acts or violations of the Code of Conduct. The CEO will receive appropriate updates as to the status of recommended resolutions throughout the investigation and final reports of investigation findings will be in accordance with all regulatory guidelines for timeliness.
5. Personnel may report illegal acts or violations of the Code of Conduct anonymously. To the extent permitted by law, VBCMh will take reasonable precautions to maintain the confidentiality of those individuals who report illegal activity or violations of the Code of Conduct and of any individual involved in the alleged improper activity, whether or not it turns out that improper acts occurred. Failure to abide by this confidentiality obligation is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

6. No reprisals or disciplinary action will be taken or permitted against personnel for good faith reporting of, or cooperating in the investigation of, illegal acts or violations of the Code of Conduct. It is a violation of the Code of Conduct for personnel to punish or conduct reprisals in regard to personnel who have made a good faith report of, or cooperated in the investigation of, illegal acts or violations of the Code of Conduct.
7. Personnel who violate the Code of Conduct or commit illegal acts are subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Personnel who report their own illegal acts or improper conduct, however, will have such self-reporting taken into account in determining the appropriate disciplinary action.

B. GOVERNMENT INTERVIEWS OR INVESTIGATIONS

1. VBCMh and its personnel shall cooperate fully and promptly with appropriate government investigations into possible civil and criminal violations of the law. It is important, however, that in this process VBCMh is able to protect the legal rights of the agency and its personnel. To accomplish these objectives, any governmental inquiries or requests for information, documents, or interviews should be promptly referred to the Corporate Compliance Officer.
2. Personnel who participate in governmental interviews shall give answers that are truthful, complete, and unambiguous.

Attachment: Code of Conduct, I.06.17.01