

# Welcome to Circle Home!



## Employee Handbook

REVISED & REISSUED June 2017

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# WELCOME

Welcome to Circle Home, Inc., (The \**“Agency”*). As a new employee you undoubtedly have questions about our organization, our policies, and our benefits. This handbook will answer as many of them as possible and assist with your introduction to our organization.

Circle Home, Inc. has established a reputation for superior patient care and service to the community and is considered an unusually good place in which to work. Each of us, no matter what our particular job may be shares the pride of service, as well as the responsibility and opportunity to maintain this reputation.

This handbook is intended to be a general reference guide. It contains brief descriptions of our personnel policies, procedures, and benefits. If anything in it is not clear, please follow up with your supervisor or the Human Resources Department for assistance. Employment with Circle Home, Inc. is *“at-will,”* which means that employment with Circle Home, Inc. is not for a fixed term or definite period and either the employee or Circle Home, Inc. may end that relationship at any time, with or without notice or cause.

Of course, changes in policies, procedures and benefits will occur from time to time and changes could occur with or without notice. However, such changes are made to build a stronger organization and we will make every effort to keep you informed.

Again, we welcome you to the Agency and we hope our association will be mutually beneficial and rewarding.

\*The words Circle Home, Inc. and Agency are used interchangeably.



# MISSION

Circle Home enables individuals to remain safely in their homes by providing the highest quality and value based care in home and community settings.

# VISION

To become the premier provider of home based services in America by:

- Providing every person individualized, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate healthcare.
- Valuing and recognizing our workforce for their dedication, motivation, competence, and caring.
- Collaborating with others to positively impact the health and well-being of our community.
- Committing to flexibility, innovation, and continuous learning, ensuring responsiveness to the changing needs of our community and health care system.

# VALUES

Compassion

Respect

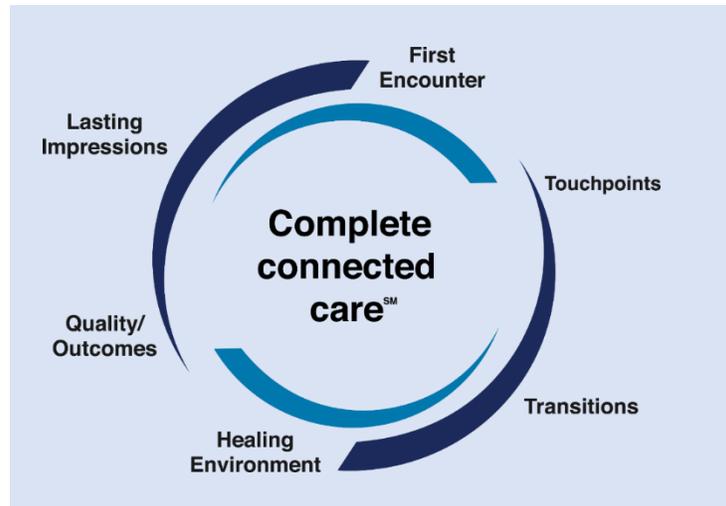
Enhancement of Practice

Accountability & Integrity

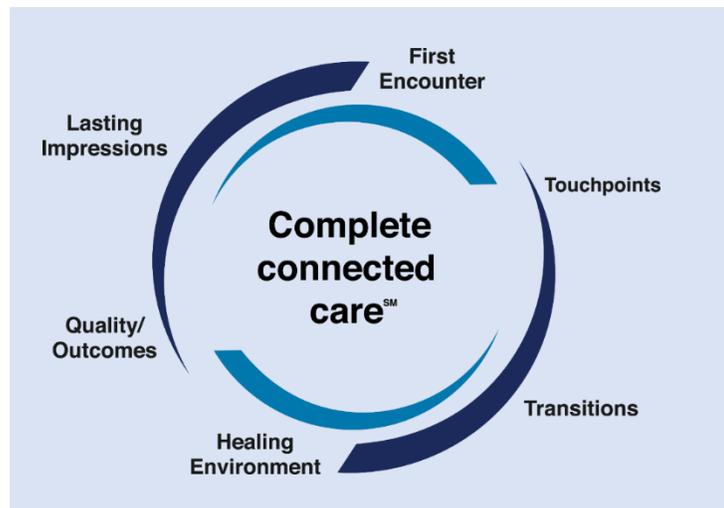
Teamwork

Excellence

# OUR PROMISE – COMPLETE CONNECTED CARE



<b>Staff Expectations for Completed Connected Care</b>	
<b>First Encounter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce yourself &amp; your role</li> <li>- Smile</li> <li>- Clarify the purpose of interaction</li> <li>- Eye contact, hand shake when appropriate, proper appearance, professional demeanor</li> <li>- Explain coverage if not able to visit and stress strengths of the team</li> </ul>	<b>Healing Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep office clean/ uncluttered</li> <li>- Promote positive, professional and respectful work environment</li> <li>- Evaluate safety of the environment (office and homes) and make recommendations</li> <li>- Elevate safety concerns to management</li> <li>- Be non-judgmental when in patient’s home regarding their living situation. Be sensitive to the fact, these are people’s homes.</li> </ul>
<b>Touchpoints/ Meaningful Encounters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarification of patient/ family goals &amp; needs</li> <li>- Ask is there anything more I can do for you? And do it.</li> <li>- Be flexible</li> <li>- Be there, be present</li> <li>- Actively listen</li> </ul>	<b>Quality / Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Always strive for excellence &amp; continued improvement</li> <li>- Work to continually grow &amp; enhance your knowledge</li> <li>- Participate in identifying solutions</li> <li>- Take care of yourself</li> </ul>
<b>Transitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charting up-to-date</li> <li>- Communicating &amp; receiving report to &amp; from transitioning person/ entity</li> <li>- Case conferences</li> <li>- Ensure visitors are escorted to where they are going and calls transferred/ picked-up</li> </ul>	<b>Lasting Impressions – will they tell a great story about us?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask if you can do anything else for them prior to discharge?</li> <li>- Thank them for the opportunity to care/ serve them</li> <li>- Recognize and address their concerns</li> <li>- Tell them how to reach us with questions/ further help</li> </ul>
<b>When clients are not happy remember to REACT: Recognize/ Empathize/ Apologize/ Compensate/ Trend</b>	



<b>Leadership Expectations for Completed Connected Care</b>	
<b>First Encounter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviewing</li> <li>- Onboarding</li> <li>- Communicating Expectations</li> <li>- Share Your Vision</li> </ul>	<b>Healing Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Model the Way!</li> <li>- Quiet</li> <li>- Safe and Secure</li> <li>- Clean</li> <li>- Infection Prevention</li> </ul>
<b>Touchpoints/ Meaningful Encounters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purposeful, day to day interactions</li> <li>- Be Present – Really Listen</li> <li>- Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!</li> <li>- Always ask: “Is there anything I can do for you?” and Do It!</li> </ul>	<b>Quality / Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create culture of learning and engage in own Professional Development</li> <li>- Encourage excellence</li> <li>- Engage your staff in the development of department goals that align with organizational goals. Create “Leader-ful” culture</li> <li>- Enable others to do good – when your staff is successful – you are too!</li> <li>- Remember our Quality Caring Model – Care for yourself to care for others</li> </ul>
<b>Transitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seek out change challenges, don’t avoid them</li> <li>- Recognize the early adopters</li> <li>- Be open to learn from our challenges – they are opportunities</li> <li>- Look to staff for innovative ways to resolve the challenges</li> <li>- Break out of the silos – support interdepartmental effectiveness</li> </ul>	<b>Lasting Impressions – will they tell a great story about us?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage the Heart by appreciating your team’s commitment and contributions</li> <li>- Reward and Recognize</li> <li>- Say Thank You!</li> </ul>

# STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE



## **Circle Home, Inc. Commonwealth Nursing Services**

The greatest asset of the Circle Home, Inc. and Commonwealth Nursing Services is our workforce. Our workforce consists of employees and volunteers. As such, it is important for us to share common expectations and standards related to how we perform our work and represent the organization. The standards of performance as identified below are critical to our success as they impact the ability of the organization to fulfill our mission, recognize our vision and live our values. It is only through our collaborative, consistent efforts that we will excel as an organization and be recognized as a leader in the homecare and hospice industry.

### **Compassion/Appreciation/Communication/Respect**

**I participate in creating and maintaining a culture that treats all people compassionately and makes people feel appreciated, part of the team/organization and valued.**

As an employee or volunteer of the Agency:

- I interact with all people in a caring manner by demonstrating empathy, respect, openness to diversity, differing opinions, and actively listening during conversations.
- I recognize that communication may be verbal and non-verbal and am cognizant of how I communicate with others ensuring my tone, the words I use, my eye contact and body language are consistent with promoting a positive interaction and mutual understanding.
- I utilize existing communication mechanisms and attend meetings to stay informed regarding the organization.
- I acknowledge and appreciate others strengths, contributions, and positive outcomes of people's work by saying thank you and acknowledging their work to others.

In addition as a member of the leadership team:

- I acknowledge staff's accomplishments.
- I provide constructive feedback in a sensitive manner.
- I provide support for other leaders and employees by communicating privately and directly with the individual when differences occur.
- I am non-judgmental, flexible, and responsive.
- I consider the impact of my decisions on the individuals, the team, organization, and mission.
- I hold regular staff meetings and keep my team aware of key departmental and organizational goals, changes and updates.

## **Accountability/Timeliness**

***I am accountable and responsible for the actions and choices I make in my work. I am responsible for managing my time efficiently and effectively so I can meet the needs of my customers and the organization.***

As an employee or volunteer of the Agency:

- I take responsibility for my work recognizing my impact on the organization, patients and our outcomes.
- I acknowledge and learn from my mistakes.
- I keep my commitments, (I do what I said I would do.) I notify others in advance if I foresee an issue with keeping my commitments.
- I am respectful of other people's time.
- I am willing to ask for and accept help when needed.
- I communicate in a timely manner responding to email/voice mail within one business day, notifying others in advance regarding attendance at meetings, communicating with patients regarding planned visits, and returning patient/health care provider calls the same day.

In addition, as member of the leadership team:

- I assume accountability for ensuring organizational standards are met.
- I clarify expectations, offer positive reinforcement, and identify opportunities for individual/organizational improvement.
- I am consistent and fair in setting expectations and standards.

## **Commitment and Excellence**

***I recognize that my commitment to the organization is essential in order for our organization to successfully carry out our mission, achieve our goals and attain our quest for excellence.***

As an employee or volunteer of the Agency:

- I am open to identifying and incorporating processes both collectively and individually that will advance our efforts toward improved outcomes.
- I strive to continually improve my competency and share my expertise/knowledge with others.
- I am willing to be flexible so as to accommodate the needs of my customers.
- I provide the highest quality of care by incorporating evidence based practices into my work, ensuring patients' and organizational needs are addressed, and ensuring documentation is complete and accessible to others in the agency for provision of care.

In addition, as member of the leadership team:

- I encourage and support staff development, serve as a mentor to staff and assume responsibility for coaching and further development of personnel.
- I communicate with honesty, openness, and passion for our work.
- I identify opportunities for continuous improvement and embrace and promote a culture that supports excellence.
- I support employee empowerment by actively listening, moving activities forward, and by leading and ensuring follow-through.

## **Presentation/Attitude**

*I help create and maintain a positive, clean, safe work environment. I project a genuine, friendly and positive attitude in all that I do.*

As an employee or volunteer of the Agency:

- I positively reflect the agency by being well groomed; exhibiting a positive outlook and attitude, establishing culturally appropriate eye contact with those I am communicating with and smiling.
- I treat staff, patients, customers, and members of the community with courtesy and respect by presenting myself in a calm, unhurried manner. I attend to their needs.

In addition, as member of the leadership team:

- I acknowledge issues and conflict with honesty and a willingness to use my energy and position to neutralize negativity, address concerns and work toward positive outcomes.
- I inspire staff by projecting competency as well as hopefulness.
- I lead by example, modeling behavioral expectations.

## **Safety**

*I am responsible for maintaining a safe and secure environment.*

As an employee or volunteer of the Agency:

- I wear my ID badge at all times.
- I identify safety concerns in the work place and am proactive in addressing and communicating unsafe situations.
- I treat others in a non-intimidating, non-coercive manner.
- I assess the safety of patient's home environment while remaining sensitive and respectful of the patients view related to the safety of their homes.

In addition, as member of the leadership team:

- I take safety concerns seriously and work to ensure a safe work environment.
- I ensure a harassment free work environment.

## **Privacy/Confidentiality**

*I respect the privacy of my patients, colleagues, customers, and the organization.*

As an employee or volunteer of the Agency:

- I respect the confidentiality of patients, families, colleagues, staff members and the organization.
- I create and maintain a secure and trusting environment.
- I only access information that I need to do my job.

In addition, as member of the leadership team:

- I respect my employees' privacy by keeping individual conversations private.
- I ensure privacy and confidentiality is maintained.

## **Teamwork**

*I value the diverse strengths of those on my work team as well as those in other departments and work collaboratively with others.*

As an employee or volunteer of the Agency:

- I understand the impact my work has in meeting the needs of other people/departments.
- I share a common vision that works to break down silos in favor of a team and cross departmental approach.
- I understand, acknowledge, and respect differing approaches to meet desired outcomes.

In addition, as member of the leadership team:

- I foster and nurture the work of the team by being solution focused versus blame focused.
- I am aware of different learning styles.
- I ensure decisions are made that take into consideration the impact of my team or departments decisions on other areas within the organization and external to the organization.
- I facilitate collaboration among members of the team and interdepartmentally.
- I demonstrate equal respect and value for the members of the team and identify ways to utilize their unique strengths.

## **Wellforce and Circle Health**

Wellforce was created to provide Massachusetts hospitals and physicians with a new option for collaboration. Historically, academic medical centers had “taken over” community hospitals, but Wellforce brings together the strengths of academic medicine and community care in a model that respects both equally.

Wellforce was formed in 2014 by Circle Health (including Lowell General Hospital and Circle Home) and Tufts Medical Center as well as the physicians of New England Quality Care Alliance and the Lowell General Physician Hospital Organization. On January 1, 2017, Hallmark Health, including Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, Lawrence Memorial Hospital and the Hallmark Physician Hospital Organization, joined Wellforce as an equal, founding member.

Circle Health is the parent organization of Home, and embodies the promise to deliver an experience of Complete Connected Care to ensure that no matter where an individual is in the continuum of health, he or she will realize the benefit that derives from a truly seamless, coordinated and personal experience.

The Circle Health organization includes:

- Lowell General Hospital (Main and Saints campus)
- Lowell Community Health Center
- Circle Home Greater Lowell Health Alliance
- Circle Health Physicians
- Circle Health Alliance (Medicare shared Savings Program)

# **EMPLOYMENT**

## **DEFINITIONS**

Regular Full-Time Staff: An employee whose employment is without defined term, and are scheduled to work a minimum of 40 hours per week on a regularly scheduled basis. Full-time staff qualify for employment benefits.

Regular Part-Time Staff: An employee scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week on a regularly scheduled basis. Regular part-time staff working 20 hours and less than 40 hours received prorated benefits.

Temporary Staff: An employee with a limited duration work assignment. Temporary staff are not, however, guaranteed employment for the duration of work assignments; employment is for an indefinite term, not to exceed the duration of the work assignment(s). If staff are in a “temporary acting” position for 90 days, the status of the position and the staff will be reviewed. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits.

Per Diem Staff: An employee whose employment is without defined term, and are scheduled to work on an “as needed” basis based on his/her availability and agency needs.

Per Visit Staff: An employee who is paid based on the number of visits and assigned activities performed.

Non-Exempt Staff: An employee who is not exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1939, as amended. Non-exempt personnel will receive overtime pay for overtime work in accordance with applicable organization policy and federal and state labor regulations.

Exempt Staff: An employee who is exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1939, as amended. Exempt personnel (i.e., executive, administrative and supervisory) do not receive overtime pay.

Contract Staff: Individuals or groups of individuals who perform organization services as directed in a written agreement. Contract staff are not considered employees of Circle Home, Inc. Contract staff are subject to all personnel qualifications and competency requirements.

Volunteers: Volunteers donate personal time to provide care and service to the organizations patients and staff. Volunteers do not receive monetary compensation for services.

Spouse: Circle Home, Inc. complies with the provisions of federal laws, as well as with those of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in the recognition of the term “spouse”. Federal and Massachusetts law recognizes same sex marriage. The other states may not.

Massachusetts insurance laws which extend rights of health insurance coverage to spouses, extend coverage to same-sex couples in the same manner as to opposite-sex couples, for the purpose of dependent eligibility, if the union is legally valid.

As a result of recent changes in Federal law a spouse of the same sex who is covered under the Agency’s health insurance plan, will be also considered a “spouse” for federal income tax purposes. Going forward, the value of the coverage provided to an employee’s same-sex spouse will not be included in the employee’s gross income for federal income tax purposes and will not be treated as wages for federal tax purposes.

## INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

The first 90 calendar days of employment is the period of time that enables you to adjust to your new position and gives your supervisor the opportunity to evaluate your performance. Please note: this period is also a good time to further determine employer and employee match. It does not alter the at-will nature of the employment relationship between you and Lowell General Hospital.

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Your job description outlines the major duties and responsibilities of your position. It is, of course impossible to list all of the duties of a particular job. From time to time modifications will occur, reflecting temporary or long-term changes in staffing, or the operational needs of your department or the Agency. Please keep in mind that you may be assigned duties and responsibilities which may not have been yours in the past, or are not specifically mentioned in your job description.

## WORK SCHEDULES

The Agency provides services seven days a week, usually from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. In general, the work week for full time employees is 40 hours and the normal work day is 8 hours. Coverage may be extended as required by program needs.

Work schedules may vary from one department to another. **Your work schedule will be determined by your manager.** Requests for changes or modifications must be made to your manager.

## BREAKS AND MEAL PERIODS

Lunch break is normally 30 minutes. All employees who work a minimum of six (6) hours per shift are eligible. The lunch period is **unpaid** and is not to be included in the employee's documentation of hours worked. During lunch periods, employees are relieved of all duties and are free to leave the Agency premises. If for any reason a non-exempt employee is not freed from all duties or allowed to leave the premises, or is otherwise not permitted to take a lunch period, the employee must advise his or her manager in writing within the same or next payroll period. The employee should sign off on their timecard that they chose not to take a lunch period and manager must sign the timecard

One rest break during each work day is authorized for employees who work over four hours. In some circumstances, an additional break may be granted by the employee's manager.

Your rest break is paid time and must not exceed fifteen minutes. **Employees should use good judgment and consider others when scheduling their break time.**

## COMPENSATION

The Agency strives to offer equitable and competitive wages and salaries, commensurate with sound policy and within its financial resources. Your starting hourly wage or salary reflects the amount of relevant training and experience you have with respect to the requirements of your position. Increases are not automatic, but depend on merit, utilizing such factors as job performance, attitude, dependability and record of attendance. Wages are surveyed and reviewed periodically.

## **DIFFERENTIALS**

Differentials are paid to employees working on scheduled and approved evening, night and/or weekend shifts. Differential amounts are determined by Human Resources and may adjust based upon market data and business need.

## **NON-MANAGEMENT ON-CALL**

In order to provide essential services, certain regularly scheduled and/or authorized employees may be asked to be available beyond their regular working hours and **if called**, report for duty in a very short time, i.e. On-Call.

Non-management employee who is On-Call and also required to manage the beeper will be compensated for every hour of beeper management. Employees called in to work while "On-Call" will be compensated at the appropriate per visit rate for the Call-In.

## **OVERTIME**

At times, operating needs may make it necessary for you to work hours beyond your normally scheduled work week. At times this may result in overtime (more than 40 hours/week). Your manager will make every effort to give you advance notice and to distribute extra hours or overtime equitably.

Non-exempt employees will receive overtime pay at the rate of 1½ times their regular hourly rate for all time worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a week.

Overtime wages apply only to time actually worked. Time paid for, but not worked, i.e. sick, vacation, etc., is not computable towards payment of overtime. Overtime hours must be authorized in advance by the employee's manager.

## **TIME RECORDS**

The Agency is required, by law to maintain accurate time records. Likewise, you are required to account for daily attendance and verify the accuracy of the information on your time records for submission to Payroll. Your daily record of time worked is a legal document. Alterations to Payroll records are not permissible. Payroll records should be recorded in ink, with no white out.

Each employee is expected to complete a time sheet on a weekly basis. The weekly sheet should be signed and dated by the employee and signed off by Office Manager and direct Manager. Final timesheet should be provided to Manager or Director and submitted by Monday at 10:00 a.m.

## **PAY PERIODS**

The payroll period begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday. Employees are paid every other week on Friday, for work performed during the prior two weeks, ending at midnight on the Saturday before. Paychecks are available in the Payroll Office on payday beginning at 8:00 a.m. During your orientation, you will learn about payroll requirements and the particular details of our pay check distribution process.

## **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

Accompanying your check or advice of deposit is a pay stub indicating your various deductions. In most cases the Agency is required by law to deduct federal and state withholding taxes as well as Social Security (F.I.C.A.).

You may change the number of exemptions for your Federal and State taxes by completing the appropriate form (Form W-4)\*. Various other deductions may be taken, with your written consent or by legal mandates.

**Please verify the amount of your pay check and deductions promptly, and if there is a discrepancy, earned time or extended illness bank discrepancy or question, notify the payroll department.**

Keep your pay stubs for reference when preparing your income tax returns. During the month of January you will receive a Statement of Earnings and Deductions, Form W-2, to file with your Federal and State tax returns.

**\*A variety of payroll forms, including “Form W-4” are available in the Human Resources Office.**

## **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Direct deposit to your checking or savings account is available for your convenience. Forms are available in the Human Resources office. The Agency complies with its responsibility for the transfer of funds to the designated bank. Generally there is no inconvenience and deposits are credited in a timely manner, but electronic transfer is not a guarantee and there may be occasions when there is a delay.

## **ORIENTATION FOR NEW EMPLOYEES**

Circle Home, Inc. takes pride in the skill of its workforce and is therefore, committed to providing a meaningful, comprehensive orientation for each new employee. Throughout orientation and thereafter, managers and preceptors provide supervision and mentoring.

Orientation is designed to assist the new employee in understanding overall operations, the interrelationships between the various departments, and the relationship of the new employee's role to those of others within the Agency.

A variety of methods are used to assess competency. Individual achievements, goals, needs, and learning styles are recognized. Each new employee is given many opportunities to learn and achieve new competencies, as well as, to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in skills appropriate to assigned responsibilities.

## **HIRING OF RELATIVES**

It is the policy of this Agency that employment decisions be made on the basis of merit. Accordingly, it is recommended that relatives or persons living within the same household should not be employed within the same department. Under no circumstances will relatives be allowed to work for relatives.

## **PERSONNEL FILE**

The Agency maintains a confidential personnel file for each employee. It is your responsibility to ensure that the Agency has accurate and up to date information on your name, address, telephone number, beneficiary designation and withholding information. Clinicians and para-professionals have an additional responsibility to ensure that all licenses, certifications and fitness for duty documents are up to date and on file.

The confidentiality of all Human Resources records is carefully protected and the information contained therein is utilized only for appropriate purposes. Access to personal information is limited to authorized persons and only on a "need to know" basis. You may review and/or receive a photocopy of the contents of your own personnel file up to two times in a calendar year, and at other such times when information is placed in your file that may negatively affect your qualification for employment, promotion, transfer, additional compensation or the possibility that you will be subject to discipline. The Agency will notify you within 10 days of placing any such information in your file. You may request to review and/or receive a photocopy of your personnel file by making an appointment with the Human Resources Director, or designee.

All requests for information on employees and former employees are processed by the Human Resources Department and are normally released only after obtaining the written consent of the employee. Exceptions may only be made as required by law or recognized authority.

## **PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS & EVALUATIONS**

Our employment relationship should be based upon mutual satisfaction and respect. We believe that feedback and open communication are essential to maintaining our high standards, as well as employee trust and morale.

During orientation, or throughout your employment, there will be numerous opportunities for you to meet with your preceptors, and your manager to evaluate your adjustment to the position and your performance; your progress, the achievement of competencies, and mutual goals.

A formal performance evaluation process is in place to provide more formal opportunities for coaching and mentoring as you develop in your role and provide an opportunity for you and your manager to communicate about performance and work issues.

A process is also in place to measure and reward individual performance. This is normally in conjunction with your salary anniversary date.

You will be given the opportunity to read, sign, and comment upon any documents associated with performance evaluation activities. Your evaluations are retained in your personnel file.

## **PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS**

It is the policy of Circle Home to encourage its employees to seek other job opportunities within the Agency. Transfers and changes in status can be mutually beneficial to both the Agency and the employee. They promote individual growth and job satisfaction for the employee, allow the Agency to fully utilize the training and skills of its employees, and help retain employees.

All employees are eligible to apply for another position within the Agency after the first six months of employment. An employee who has successfully transferred into a new position will be eligible to apply for another position after six months.

- All permanent vacant positions will be posted on the Lowell General website under "Careers".

- Any employee seeking a transfer or information concerning a particular position is encouraged to speak with a Human Resources representative. All such conversations will remain confidential.
- If any employee would like to apply for an available position, the Internal Transfer Form needs to be completed. This is signed by the employee, the employee's Manager, the employee's Director, and then returned to Human Resources.

**CIRCLE HOME, INC.  
HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY  
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY  
ANTI HARASSMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

Circle Home, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer. It is the Agency's goal to provide equal employment opportunities for all employees, to prevent any unlawful discrimination or harassment of any individual working at or with Circle Home, Inc., and to provide a mechanism by which individuals can bring any concerns about discrimination or harassment to the attention of the Agency's management ("Administration").

Circle Home, Inc. expects all individuals to treat each other with dignity and respect. We are committed to maintaining an environment in which employees, clients, vendors, visitors, and others are not subjected to different treatment because of legally protected characteristics. Therefore, the Agency will not accept or tolerate any unlawful discrimination, or different treatment, of or among employees, clients, suppliers, visitors, or others based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, military service, sexual orientation, genetic testing, disability, and/or any other category protected by law.

**HARASSMENT**

Harassment in the workplace is unlawful. Harassment includes verbal or physical conduct which may or does offend, denigrate or belittle any individual because of, or due to, any of the characteristics described above. Such conduct includes pictures, jokes, comments, innuendoes, or any other behavior which creates an environment which is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to anyone.

While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, jokes, explicit or offensive pictures, offensive physical contact, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature under any of the following conditions:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an employee's employment.
2. The employee's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting that employee.
3. Such conduct interferes with an employee's work performance.
4. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden.** This includes harassment of a subordinate by a manager, among employees, or between employees and visitors, clients, customers, or others. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **REPORTING HARASSMENT/INVESTIGATION**

If you believe you may have been harassed, or if you witness or learn about the harassment of another individual, you should inform your manager immediately. If you do not wish to discuss the issue with him/her, or if s/he does not address the problem, you should inform the HR Business Partner at extension 52656.

The HR Business Partner will promptly investigate every complaint of harassment, ensuring confidentiality to the maximum extent possible. Such investigation may include discussions with all involved parties, identification and questioning of witnesses, and other appropriate actions.

If Administration determines that harassment has occurred, it will take action to end the harassment and ensure that it is not repeated. Steps which are taken may include, among others, warnings, transfers, suspension, and discharge.

Circle Home, Inc. will not tolerate any retaliation against any employee who files a complaint of harassment or who cooperates in an investigation into possible harassment and will take disciplinary action against any employee who engages in unlawful retaliation, up to and including termination of employment.

All employees are urged to bring any concerns or complaints of harassment to our attention so we can resolve the issue promptly.

Any individual who is dissatisfied with the results or progress of an investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment may discuss his/her dissatisfaction directly with the Executive Director at extension 52651 or with a representative from Human Resources.

In addition to filing an internal complaint of sexual harassment, an employee may also choose to contact a federal or state agency. The agency responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting harassment is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"). The EEOC is located at the JFK Building, 475 Government Center in Boston, Massachusetts. The state agency responsible for enforcing the laws prohibiting sexual harassment is the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ("MCAD"). The MCAD is located at One Ashburton Place Suite #601 in Boston, Massachusetts or at 484 Main Street Room #320 in Worcester, MA.

# **TIME ALLOWANCES**

## **EARNED TIME & EXTENDED ILLNESS PROGRAM**

The Agency provides paid time off for employees scheduled to work for the purpose of rest, relaxation, illness, holidays, personal and family needs. The Earned Time Program gives employees more flexibility in scheduling time off to meet personal needs and balance work and family life. Instead of dividing benefits into a specified number of days for vacation, holidays, sick and personal days, the Earned Time Program combines these days in one bank from which you can withdraw the time you need. Contact HR for more information.

Your Earned Time is paid out based on a formula on your scheduled days/hours. Your Earned Time Bank can hold up to the equivalent of one year of Earned Time Hours. Maximum accrual equals one time your annual Earned Time accrual. Accruals stop once the maximum is reached. You are eligible to draw upon your Earned Time after 90 days of employment.

A second bank, Extended Illness, is also available for you to use for your own extended illness in the event that you are on an approved leave of absence due to your own illness. This is a monetary benefit and does not serve as a leave entitlement. For more information, please contact HR.

The number of Earned Time days and Extended Illness Bank days available to you each year will depend on your years of service and number of hours worked.

Employees wishing to have time off for any reason should submit a request for Earned Time to their manager, who will then work with the employee to schedule the time. Employees are limited to using two consecutive weeks of Earned Time for non-illness related reasons during the summer months (June 15<sup>th</sup> through Labor Day). The responsibility for scheduling, approving or denying rests with Management, in its sole discretion, consistent with applicable federal, state and local law. In the event of your own serious illness occurring just prior to or during the scheduled vacation period, vacation may be rescheduled. In such cases, appropriate medical documentation is required.

Employees may carry over accrued unused Earned Time to the following calendar year provided they are under their maximum accrual. Upon termination of employment, all employees will be paid for all accrued, unused Earned Time.

Employees who reach their maximum accrual will not earn any more Earned Time until the accrual is brought below the maximum.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The Agency observes the following six (6) holidays.

**New Years Day**  
**Labor Day**

**Memorial Day**  
**Thanksgiving Day**

**Independence Day**  
**Christmas Day**

Agency holidays are paid from employee's Earned Time account based on normally scheduled hours of work for that day. Employees in clinical areas rotate holiday coverage. If you are scheduled to work on a holiday you will be paid a holiday premium of time and one half.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

The responsibility of the Agency, in caring for patients, continues despite inclement weather. However, there will be times when, based upon extreme weather conditions and a personal risk assessment, an employee will make a personal decision, either to reduce the work day or to remain at home. Employees who do not report to work due to inclement weather will use earned time.

**It is imperative** that an employee who makes this determination communicate with his/her manager.

In a Declared State of Emergency, all employees are expected to follow the Agency Emergency management Plan. In the event the Executive Director or designee closes the agency early, all employees who reported to work will be paid for their scheduled work day.

## JURY DUTY

If you are required to serve on a jury, the Agency will pay your wages for the first three days of juror service, **provided that you are scheduled to work on those days of service.** After three days you will receive a stipend from the court and the Agency will compensate you for the difference between your normal pay for scheduled time and jury pay.

To receive payment from the Agency while on jury duty, you must submit a copy of the certificate of your juror service which will be provided by the Office of Jury Commissioner.

Please notify your manager immediately when you are called for jury service.

**You are expected to report for work on any day(s) or part thereof when you are excused from juror service.**

## BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

In the event of a death in the immediate family, a regular full time employee will be granted up to three (3) days leave following the death, to attend the funeral and take care of matters necessarily attendant to the death.

Immediate family is generally defined as the employee's mother, father, spouse, sister, brother, child, child's spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchild, and grandparents. In the event of the death of an aunt, uncle, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, one day will be given.

Regular part time employees who are scheduled and work 20 or more hours per week are eligible for bereavement leave on a pro-rated basis.

Requests for unpaid time off or to use available benefit time for additional bereavement needs, should be directed to your manager. Questions regarding your eligibility for bereavement leave should be directed to the HR Business Partner.

## LEAVES OF ABSENCE

If you require a leave of absence, it is your responsibility to consult with your Manager and meet with Human Resources prior to the leave. When the need for a leave of absence is foreseeable, the employee must provide reasonable notice (30 days). Otherwise, notice must be as soon as practicable.

Human Resources will provide information about the type of leave which applies to your situation, as well as any job protection which may be associated with your particular leave. Request forms will be provided to you along with information about any additional responsibilities you may have relative to the leave.

### FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE (FMLA)

Circle Home, Inc. is in full compliance with the provisions of the Federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. To qualify you must have completed at least one year of employment and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months. FMLA provides for up to 12 weeks of leave during a 12 month period for the following reasons.

- your own serious health condition;
- the serious health condition of your spouse, child, or parent;
- the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child, provided any such leave concludes within 12 months of the birth, adoption or foster care placement of the child; and/or
- Any “qualifying exigency” because your spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation. In accordance with applicable federal regulations, a qualifying exigency may include (1) short-notice deployment; (2) attending certain military events and related activities; (3) arranging for alternative childcare or school or daycare enrollment, or attending certain school or daycare-related meetings; (4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; (5) attending certain counseling sessions; (6) spending time with a covered military member who is on a short-term temporary rest and recuperation leave; (7) attending certain post-deployment activities; or (8) additional activities which arise out of the covered military member’s active duty or call to duty status, provided that Circle Home, Inc. and you agree that such leave shall qualify as a qualifying exigency and agree to the timing and duration of the leave.
- Military Caregiver Leave is also available for up to 26 weeks during a 12 month period to an FMLA eligible employee who is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of a Covered Service member, in order for the employee to care for the Covered Service member. “Covered Service member” is a current member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) or a member of the Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserves who is on the temporary retired list, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty status and as a result is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or otherwise in outpatient status; or otherwise on the temporary disability retired list.

**Notice of Leave:** if your need for family/ medical leave is foreseeable, you must give the agency at least 30 days prior written notice. If this is not possible, you must at least give notice as soon as practicable (within one or two business days of learning of your need for leave). Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for delay of leave. Additionally, if you are planning an elective medical treatment you must consult with the agency first regarding the dates of such treatment. Where the need for leave is not foreseeable, you are expected to notify the agency within one to two business days of learning of your need for leave, except in extraordinary circumstances. Request for Family/ Medical Leave Forms are available in HR and should be used when requesting a Leave.

**Medical Certification:** if you are requesting leave because of your own or a covered relation’s serious health condition, you and the relevant healthcare provider must supply appropriate medical certification. You may obtain Medical Certification Forms from HR. When you request leave, the agency will notify you of the requirements for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 days after you request

leave). If you provide at least 30 days notice of medical leave, you should also provide the medical certification before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification in a timely manner may result in denial of leave until it is provided.

The agency, at its expense, may require an examination by a second healthcare provider designated by Occupational Medicine. If the second healthcare provider's opinions conflict with the original medical certification, the agency, at its expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, healthcare provider to conduct an examination and provide a final binding opinion.

The agency may require subsequent medical re-certification. Failure to provide requested certification within 15 days may result in delay of further leave until it is provided.

**Reporting While On Leave:** if you take leave because of your own serious health condition or to care for a covered relation, you must contact your supervisor or HR bi-monthly regarding the status of the condition and your intention to return to work. In addition, you must give notice as soon as practicable (within two business days if feasible) if the dates of leave change or are extended or initially were unknown.

**Leave is Unpaid:** Family/ medical leave is unpaid leave although you may be eligible for short or long-term disability payments and/ or worker's compensation benefits under those insurance plans. These plans are described elsewhere in the handbook. If you request leave because of birth or adoption of a child, any accrued Earned Time normally will be substituted for unpaid family/ medical leave; under Massachusetts Maternity Leave law, however, you may elect not to use your accrued Earned Time for the first eight weeks of leave by notifying your supervisor in writing at the start of your leave. If you request leave because of your own serious health condition, for the foster care placement of a child, or to care for a covered relation with a serious health condition, any accrued Earned Time first will be substituted for any unpaid family/ medical leave. The substitution of paid leave time for unpaid leave time does not extend the 12-week leave period. Further, in no case can the substitution of paid leave time for unpaid leave time result in your receipt of more than 100% of your salary.

**Medical and Other Benefits:** During an approved family/ medical leave, the agency will maintain your health benefits as if you continued to be actively employed. If paid leave is substituted for unpaid family/ medical leave, the agency will deduct your portion of the health plan premiums as a regular payroll deduction. If your leave is unpaid, you will be home billed for your portion of the premium. Your healthcare coverage will cease if your premium payment is more than 30 days late. If your payment is more than 30 days late, we will send you a letter to this effect. If we do not receive your co-payment within 15 days of this letter, your coverage will cease.

**Intermittent and Reduced Schedule Leave:** Leave because a serious health condition may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a single health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours you work per workweek or workday) if medically necessary. If leave is unpaid, the agency will reduce your salary based on the amount of time actually worked. In addition, while you are on an intermittent or reduced schedule leave the agency may temporarily transfer you to an available alternative position, which better accommodates your recurring leave and which has equivalent pay and benefits.

**Returning from Leave:** If you take leave because of your own serious health condition (except if you are taking intermittent leave), you are required to provide medical certification that you are fit to resume work.

- FMLA leave, including Military Caregiver Leave, is unpaid except for periods that may be paid under the Agency's Earned Time policies, and Worker's Compensation. All employees are required to exhaust any paid time off during an FMLA leave prior to being unpaid.
- FMLA leave taken under this policy is considered simultaneous use of state and federal

entitlements whenever appropriate and permitted by law.

## **NON-FMLA LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Other leaves of absence (non-FMLA) may be requested in a variety of circumstances, including personal leave, military leave as distinct from FMLA, Military Caregiver or Qualifying Exigency Leave, extension of FMLA leave, medical leave for those who do not qualify for FMLA, and Massachusetts Maternity Leave.

## **MASSACHUSETTS PARENTAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Circle Home, Inc. is in full compliance with the Massachusetts Paternal Leave of Absence law and provides an eight (8) week leave of absence to an employee for any of the following reasons: birth of a child (including the period before and after childbirth), adoption of a child under age 18, or adoption of a child under age 23 if the child is mentally or physically disabled. To qualify, you must have been employed full time for at least three (3) months. All employees are required to exhaust all paid time during the leave prior to being unpaid.

An eligible employee is expected to give at least 2 weeks' written notice of the commencement of leave, except when such notice is not possible because of unexpected disability. Before beginning leave, the employee must provide notice in writing of the intention to return to work, giving the anticipated date of return.

If an employee who is eligible for MA Parental Leave of Absence is also eligible for FMLA leave, the respective leave periods will overlap, and maternity leave will count towards the employee's FMLA leave.

If the qualifying reason for FMLA leave is the birth or adoption of a child. Massachusetts Parent Leave leave will be in addition to FMLA leave, however, if the qualifying reason for FMLA leave is not the birth or adoption of a child.

## **MILITARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The agency will grant up to two weeks of leave annually if you are required to complete annual military reserve training requirements. The agency will pay the difference between your regular wage and your gross military pay. You will be required to provide proof of your duty to the agency in order to be eligible for leave and pay under this section. In addition, if you are called for active duty, you have certain rights to be reinstated to your position under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

If you must be absent for military duty or military reserve training, please inform your manager and the Human Resources department as soon as you know when you must serve.

## **SMALL NECESSITIES LEAVE**

In addition to leave set forth under the agency's FMLA policy, employees eligible for FMLA leave are entitled to a total of 24 hours leave during the preceding 12-month period, as defined in the FMLA policy, for the purpose of meeting certain family obligations. Those obligations must be one of the following:

- Participation in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of an employee's child, such as parent teacher conferences or interviewing for a new school;
- Accompanying an employee's child to routine medical or dental appointments;
- Accompanying an employee's elderly relative to routine medical or dental appointments or appointments for other professional services related to that elder's care.

## **Definitions**

- Elderly relative: An individual at least 60 years of age who is related by blood or marriage to the employee
- School: A private or public elementary or secondary school; Head Start Program; or a licensed children's day care facility
- Child: A son or daughter, whether biological, adopted, foster or legal ward, or a child of an employee standing in loco parentis, who is under the age of 18 or incapable of self-care because of mental or physical disability.

## **Procedure**

### **Initiating the Leave**

When the need for the leave is foreseeable, an employee must tell his/ her supervisor at least seven days before the leave is to begin. Otherwise, an employee must notify his/ her manager as soon as he/ she is aware of the need for the leave.

Employee should complete the Leave of Absence (LOA) form and review with his/ her manager. After your manager has approved the leave, you should schedule a time to meet with HR to review your completed and signed form. During this meeting a communication plan will be established and any other necessary paperwork will be reviewed.

### **Leave Time**

If an employee is entitled to any paid leave under the agency's employment policies, that leave must be used before any unpaid leave under this policy will be granted.

### **Intermittent Leave**

An employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced-leave schedule. An employee must take the leave in minimum increments of no less than one hour.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE**

Circle Home, Inc. ("Circle Home") provides qualifying employees up to fifteen (15) days of unpaid leave under this policy during any twelve (12) month period for any of the following purposes: to seek or obtain medical attention, counseling, victim services or legal assistance; to secure housing; to obtain a protective order from a court; to appear in court or before a grand jury; to meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official; or to attend child custody proceedings or address other issues directly related to the Abusive Behavior against them or a Family Member.

To be a "qualifying employee" the employee must (1) be an employee who is a victim of, or who has a Family Member who is a victim of, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault or kidnapping ("Abusive Behavior") and (2) have exhausted all earned time or personal leave, where the purpose of the leave is for the employee to seek medical attention, sick leave already available to the employee prior to requesting or taking leave under this policy.

For purposes of this policy, a Family Member includes a married spouse, persons in a substantive dating or engagement relationship who reside together, persons having a child in common (regardless of whether they have ever been married or resided together), a parent, step-parent, child, step-child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild, and persons in a guardianship relationship. An employee who is a perpetrator of Abusive Behavior is not a qualifying employee under this policy.

### **Notification / Request for Leave**

A qualifying employee is required to notify his or her manager-at least seven (7) business days in advance of their decision to take leave under this policy. No advance notice is required where there is a threat of imminent danger to the health or safety of the employee or the employee's Family Member. Under such

circumstances, an employee is required to notify his or her supervisor within three (3) business days that leave was taken or is being taken under this policy. Notification may be made either by the employee, a family member of the employee or a professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the Abusive Behavior on the employee or the employee's Family Member.

### **Documentation**

An employee taking leave under this policy is required to submit to his or her supervisor or to the Human Resources Department, within a reasonable period of time, documentation supporting the need for the leave. Any one of the following documents will satisfy this requirement:

- A protective order, order of equitable relief or other documentation issued by a court as a result of the Abusive Behavior.
- A document under the letterhead of the court, provider or public agency which the employee attended to obtain assistance related to the Abusive Behavior.
- A police report or statement of a victim or witness provided to police, including a police incident report, documenting the Abusive Behavior.
- Documentation that the perpetrator of the Abusive Behavior has: admitted to sufficient facts to support a finding of guilt of Abusive Behavior, or has been convicted of, or has been adjudicated a juvenile delinquent by reason of, any offense constituting Abusive Behavior and which is related to the Abusive Behavior.
- Medical documentation of treatment as a result of the Abusive Behavior.
- A sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, provided by a counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted in addressing the effects of the Abusive Behavior.
- A sworn statement, signed by the employee under the penalties of perjury, attesting that the employee or the Family Member has been the victim of Abusive Behavior.

### **Confidentiality**

To respect an employee's right to privacy, all documentation and other information related to an employee's leave under this policy will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed by Circle Home other than under the following circumstances: (1) as requested or consented to, in writing, by the employee; (2) as ordered to by a court of competent jurisdiction; (3) as required by law; (4) as required in connection with an investigation authorized by law enforcement; or (5) as necessary to protect the safety of the employee or others employed at the workplace.

### **Returning from Leave**

Upon the employee's return from leave under this policy, the employee is entitled to restoration to the employee's original job or to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment.

### **Non Retaliation**

An employee will not be discharged or discriminated against for exercising his or her rights under this policy. Any concerns that this provision of the policy has been violated should be reported immediately to Human Resources.

# **REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAMS**

## **TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT**

While on duty, you must use your own automobile to travel. Circle Home, Inc. will reimburse you for mileage at the rate established by the IRS and you will also be reimbursed for the actual cost of parking and tolls. The Agency will not pay for parking tickets.

The Agency does not compensate for commuting mileage: to or from the office, to your first patient, or from your last patient.

To obtain travel reimbursement, you must comply with all Agency policies, including record keeping and reporting procedures.

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

Regular employees who work a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week are eligible for tuition assistance after having completed six (6) months of employment at Circle Home, Inc.

The maximum annual tuition reimbursement for full-time employees is \$1,500.00 per semester with a maximum of \$3,000 per calendar year. Part-time employees receive a pro-rated tuition reimbursement benefit, i.e., a 30 hour week employee would receive up to \$1,200.00 per semester and a maximum of \$2,400.00 per calendar year.

If you are interested in this program please contact Human Resources for information and an application for tuition assistance. For your application to be complete, you must provide information which details tuition costs and evidence of payment. Please also obtain your manager's approval and submit your application before the start of the course. Courses must be related to your employment and you must achieve a grade of C or better.

You are advised to consult your tax advisor regarding any tax implications associated with tuition assistance.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/CONTINUING EDUCATION**

After one year of employment, the Agency will reimburse full time employees, up to \$125.00 per year to defray costs associated with professional development. Any such activities must be approved by your Manager in advance. Relevant documentation, including evidence of payment must be sent to Human Resources for approval of reimbursement.

After one year of employment, qualifying part time employees, those who are regularly scheduled and work a minimum of 20 hours per week are eligible to receive a pro-rated benefit.

## **ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES REGARDING EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

Any reimbursement for business expenses under this policy or any other Agency policy will be subject to the following additional rules:

- The amount of expenses eligible for reimbursement during any calendar year will not affect the expenses eligible for reimbursement in any other taxable year.
- Reimbursement shall be made not later than December 31 of the calendar year following the calendar year in which the expense was occurred, and
- The right to reimbursement is not subject to liquidation or exchange for any other benefit.

# **BENEFIT PLANS**

The following is a very brief description of the current benefit plans offered by Circle Home, Inc. Detailed information is available in applicable plan documents. Eligibility, plan benefits, and premium costs are determined by insurance carriers or providers. Specific information about the various benefit plans and costs is available in Human Resources. Actual plan documents or insurance contracts are the governing instruments that determine entitlement to coverage and benefits, benefits levels and all other matters. The Agency reserves the right to amend, terminate or replace benefit plans from time to time as the Agency determines appropriate.

**To provide the best protection for yourself and your loved ones:** it is essential that you promptly inform Human Resources of any changes in status (qualifying event) which would affect your benefits or those of your beneficiaries. A qualifying event includes marriage, divorce or separation, childbirth or adoption, the loss of dependent status of your grown child, loss of an insurance plan by your spouse, reduction in hours, and Medicare eligibility.

## **MEDICAL INSURANCE**

Circle Home, Inc. provides health insurance benefits for full-time and part-time employees (those working at least 24 hours per week) and contributes a flat dollar amount toward the monthly cost of the plan.

Circle Home, Inc. complies with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Health Care Finance and Policy with respect to Commonwealth Choice voluntary health plans for those part time employees who are ineligible for health insurance benefits provided by Circle Home, Inc.

## **DENTAL INSURANCE**

Employees who are regularly scheduled and work at least 24 hours per week, may participate in a dental insurance plan. The plan is priced at group rates and funded entirely by employee paid premiums.

## **VISION PLAN**

Employees who are regularly scheduled and work at least 24 hours per week, may participate in a vision plan. The plan is priced at group rates and funded entirely by employee paid premiums.

## **CONTINUATION PRIVILEGE (COBRA)**

Under the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), participants in a medical plan are provided with the opportunity for a temporary extension of group coverage and group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would end. If you or any eligible dependents participate in the Agency's medical plans, you and/or those dependents are eligible for continuation of coverage. Qualifying events include:

- reduced hours or termination of employment for reasons other than gross misconduct
- death of a covered employee
- divorce or legal separation
- your enrollment in Medicare (your beneficiaries have the right to continue coverage)
- dependent child who has reached the maximum age allowed under the group plan may continue

coverage under the provisions of the law.

If you have questions about your eligibility to participate in this program and the cost of premiums, you are encouraged to consult with the HR Business Partner in a timely manner.

## **VOLUNTARY BENEFITS**

Flexible medical and dependent care accounts, offer you the opportunity to save on your tax liability through pre-tax withholdings.

Post tax voluntary benefits choices include, but are not limited to, short term disability, life, and accident insurance plans, which can be tailored to meet your individual and family needs.

## **LIFE INSURANCE and LONG TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE**

For benefited full and part time employees (24 hour minimum), Circle Home provides a basic life insurance plan with accidental death and dismemberment provisions, as well as, long term disability is provided to regular full time employees. Circle Home, Inc. pays for 100% of this benefit.

## **WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

All employees of Circle Home, Inc. are covered by the Massachusetts Worker's Compensation Law and, if unable to work due to a work related injury, are insured for loss of pay, hospitalization, medical costs and other related expenses. Final determination of eligibility and extent of benefits is made by our insurance carrier in line with established legal requirements and standards.

An accident or injury which occurs while on duty must be reported *at once* to your manager and the HR Business Partner, whose first concern will be to ensure that prompt and appropriate medical treatment is received. Whenever appropriate, the injured employee will be accompanied to the medical provider.

The Director of Human Resources is also responsible for reporting all industrial accidents to the Agency's insurance carrier and, as appropriate, the State Industrial Accident Board.

Often, an employee who has been injured on the job may be able to return to work immediately. Sometimes it will take longer. A returning employee may be able to resume his/her regular position, or may be placed in a modified position until the physician lifts the restrictions.

If you are injured and your physician indicates that you may return to work with restrictions, a transitional work program with specific goals and time frames will be designed to assist you. *Circle Home, Inc. reserves the right to require an independent medical opinion depending on the circumstances and nature of the injury.*

Many individuals will be working on your behalf to evaluate your condition and physical capacity and to help you rehabilitate. We expect that if you suffer a work related injury, you will actively participate in this program.

## **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

Unemployment insurance is provided for each employee and is paid wholly by the Agency. As provided by law, qualification for benefits depends upon the reason for unemployment. Information about how to apply for unemployment benefits will be provided to you by the Human Resources Department upon separation.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY**

By law, the Agency contributes to Social Security/FICA for all employees. This plan is detailed and may affect each person in a different way. Social Security provides for a varied set of benefits. These benefits, paid in part by the Agency, include among others: Death Benefits, Survivor Benefits, Medicare Benefits, Retirement Benefits, and Disability Benefits. The Social Security Administration recommends that you contact them:

- \* Every few years, to request a copy of their record of your earnings and tax record to assist you in planning for your future. Your earnings should be carefully reviewed.
- \* If you are unable to work because of an illness or injury that is expected to last a year or longer.
- \* If you are age 62 or older and plan to retire.
- \* If you are within 3 months of age 65, even if you do not plan to retire and even if you continue to participate in group health insurance plan.
- \* If someone in your family dies.
- \* If you or someone you know has limited income and is 65 or older, blind or disabled.

Social Security should serve as a foundation upon which you can build a total package of protection. It should be supplemented with pensions, savings, insurance, and other investments.

## **RETIREMENT PLANS**

Circle Home, Inc. provides a 403 (b) retirement plan for eligible employees. Features of the plan include an employer contribution in the amount of 1% of earnings, plus a match of 25% for the first 4% deferred.

The 403 (b) plan allows you to invest in a wide variety of options, with before tax dollars, creating additional retirement planning funds with your own savings. Limits on investment amounts vary, depending on age and individual circumstances. The Financial Services Representative from the retirement investment company is available on a regular basis to provide information and assistance; contact information is also available in Human Resources.

The 403 (b) plan is a benefit which represents a substantial investment in your future. A copy of this plan is available upon request.

- Employees who were employed prior to January 1, 2006 continue to be covered in a defined benefit plan as well as in the 403 (b) plan.
- If you are contemplating retirement, notify your supervisor and make an appointment with the HR Business Partner in order to obtain all pertinent information concerning your pension benefits and other related matters. Of course, questions are welcome at any time.

# **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

It is the policy of Circle Home, Inc. to provide a work environment as free as is possible from recognized hazards and to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety regulations. In like manner, employees are expected to comply with all safety and health requirements whether established by federal, state, or local law or by the Agency itself.

## **REPORTING ON THE JOB ACCIDENTS**

Any accident or injury which occurs while on duty must be reported to your manager and to Human Resources within 24 hours of incident. Their first concern will be to ensure prompt and appropriate medical treatment. Human Resources ensures compliance with documentation required by providers and insurers, as well as with state and federal record keeping requirements. Failing to report promptly results in unwanted treatment and financial delays.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The Agency strongly believes in open and free communication. Discussion about any situation which concerns your work, your adjustment to the Agency or the Agency itself is encouraged.

Whether you have questions or problems relating to work, or to the interpretation and/or application of a policy, or you have an idea or suggestion which would be beneficial. Issues cannot be addressed and suggestions can't be considered unless we communicate with one another.

Your concerns and ideas should be brought to the attention of management. Human Resources will also be available to assist you at any point.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS CODE**

All staff will be expected to project a professional image while on duty.

Employees represent Circle Home, Inc. to patients, their families, employee co-workers and the general public. Employee personal cleanliness, hygiene, and grooming are expected to be exemplary. All employees are required to wear their Identification Badge during all work hours. Employee style of dress is expected to be professional and appropriate to your position.

- Staff will be expected to exercise good judgment in choosing conservative appropriate apparel for their work and to exercise care in grooming, personal hygiene, and cleanliness. Adherence to Personal Appearance & Dress Code standard is an ongoing requirement of employment. Circle Home, Inc. makes the final decision in determining whether a style meets reasonable and acceptable standards.
- Management has the immediate authority and responsibility for ensuring the appropriate dress and appearance of their personnel. Management can send an employee home who does not comply with the dress and appearance policy.

## PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS CODE (Continued)

### *Guidelines*

- Personnel will be required to wear official identification badges while on duty.
- Visiting staff may wear clean, comfortable working shoes with closed toes. Non-visiting staff must wear professional and safe footwear appropriate for a business environment. Flip Flops are a safety risk and are not allowed.
- Hair must be neatly groomed. It must be secured so that it does not fall into the face.  
Note: hair falling about the face or otherwise dangling could present an infection control problem, e.g. hair falling into wounds or sterile trays.
- Sideburns must be neat and well-trimmed. Moustaches and beards may be worn if neatly trimmed.
- Nails must be an appropriate length for safe clinical practice, clean and well manicured. No chipped polish. Clinical staff should keep their nails no longer than a quarter inch tip and may not have acrylic nails.
- Jewelry must be simple, not excessive or dangling.  
Note: Dangling and/or large jewelry presents a safety hazard for personnel and patient. Large rings also present two (2) infection control problems: adequate hand washing cannot be achieved; and the ring provides a warm, moist environment for bacterial growth
- Cologne or other scented items should not be offensive to patients and other staff.
- Staff will use standardized nursing bag and computer bag and clinical record files, if appropriate.
- When working, employees are expected to dress in a way which conveys a competent professional impression. Clothing must be appropriate to the position; in good condition, clean, and pressed. It should fit properly and be attractive, but not distracting or revealing. Clothing with advertising and/or slogans is not acceptable.
- Suits, dresses, skirts, split skirts, sweaters, blouses, shirts, and tailored slacks are appropriate attire. Skirts and dresses must be moderate in length. Blouses and jerseys are to be modest and worn with proper undergarments.
- Casual clothing, beach clothing, suggestive attire, denim, shorts, halter tops, tube tops, tops that expose bare midriffs, and extremes in style are not acceptable.
- To be appropriate, footwear must be safe as well as neat and clean. Please do not remove your shoes or boots in patient's homes. You can carry a pair of your own "house shoes" with you; they must have a hard sole to provide protection.

## PERSONAL CONDUCT AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

Circle Home, Inc. policy is to encourage employees to develop their performance to the highest level of their ability and to behave in a manner consistent with the highest standards of professional conduct. These standards are the foundation of our excellent reputation and they also contribute to a harmonious and pleasant work environment. Standards of conduct are incorporated in Circle Home, Inc.

### **CORPORATE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM.**

Misconduct will result in disciplinary action ranging from reprimand to probation to suspension to discharge, depending on the nature and seriousness of the conduct or performance deficiencies involved. Appropriate action will be determined, at the Agency's discretion, following due consideration of the particular facts and circumstances of each case.

What follows is a list of representative examples of misconduct which will result in appropriate corrective action, up to and including the possibility of immediate discharge. The list is not all inclusive, and is not arranged in any order of importance.

- Poor work performance
- Insubordination; refusal to follow a manager's instructions (Professional judgment regarding quality care must be considered)
- Behavior, or interactive style which is inappropriate to the workplace
- Unauthorized absence from duty; excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- Repeated failure to complete required tasks and/or documentation
- Falsification of employment records or Circle Home, Inc. records
- Conduct which is unethical, immoral, illegal, or unsafe; that which may reflect poorly on and/or be detrimental to the reputation and/or welfare of Circle Home, Inc.
- Larceny, misappropriation or unauthorized possession or use of property, and/or information belonging to Circle Home, Inc. and/or other employees, or patients
- Abusiveness of any nature. Disorderly conduct. Deliberate neglect, destruction, or misuse of property belonging to Circle Home, Inc. and/or other employees, or patients
- Any deliberate act or omission detrimental to patient care, Agency operations, or the welfare of fellow employees
- Refusal to treat or serve a patient for reasons, which include, but are not limited to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or diagnosis
- The use or unauthorized possession of weapons
- The use or unauthorized possession of marijuana, narcotics, barbiturates, amphetamines, or other mood altering drugs, unless properly prescribed by a physician
- Coming to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs

- Breach of confidentiality
- Violation of Agency policy and procedures, including policies on credentialing and/or fitness for duty/health requirements
- Any behavior that shows a serious lack of dependability and/or good judgment

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

You may be exposed to information concerning the condition, care and treatment of patients, or you may have access to sensitive operational or financial information. Under no circumstances may any information of a personal or official nature be transmitted or divulged in any way to anyone not authorized to receive such information in the normal course of their duties, including fellow employees. **A violation of this policy will result in strong disciplinary action, up to and including termination.**

Circle Home, Inc. respects the privacy of its employees and will not release your address or telephone number without your permission, except as it is required to do so by law or recognized authority.

In maintaining its certification, Circle Home, Inc. is subject to inspection by regulatory and credentialing agencies. Components of those inspections include segments of personnel records and medical records, showing fitness for duty. Your financial information is NOT part of such inspections.

Specific additional information is located in your **CORPORATE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM** booklet, which you are required to review as a component of your yearly performance evaluation.

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

Circle Home, Inc. complies with federal, state, and local regulatory authorities in guarding against abuse and neglect.

The well-being of our clients is of utmost concern to us. We believe that the most effective way to ensure commitment to our standards is through the ongoing training, education, and development which we provide. The reporting system which we have established allows for effective and appropriate action. Guidelines include the following.

1. All instances of verbal and/or physical abuse, neglect or mistreatment or misappropriation of patient property, whether suspected or clear, must be reported.
2. In most instances reports should be directed to your immediate manager.
3. Reports may be made confidentially, although the manager must document the report in writing. In the event that requested anonymity cannot be maintained, the original reporter will be so advised as soon as possible.
4. There may be instances when a report to the manager is not comfortable or possible. In those instances an employee may report to anyone above their manager, within the organization.
5. Mandatory reporting to Mass DPH, Nurse's Aide Registry, etc. follows regulatory compliance guidelines.

You are urged to consult with management whenever there is a question of abuse, neglect, mistreatment or misappropriation of patient property.

## **FITNESS FOR DUTY**

Any offer of employment for direct clinical care positions is conditional, pending a medical examination by a physician stating the individual is free from communicable disease, including tuberculosis, and fit to perform the duties of the position. An employee transferring from an administrative to a field position as a clinical care giver will receive final approval for such transfer following a physical examination, under the same terms and conditions.

When there are fitness for duty concerns, and an employee is out for greater than 5 days (or less if warranted), whether injured on the job or outside the job, the Agency is concerned about the employee's ability to perform his/her duties within the job description. In these circumstances, the employee will be seen by either Occupational Health or the employee's physician and present a return to work clearance.

**Failure to comply with fitness for duty and infection control requirements will result in suspension from duty, without pay and/or termination.**

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Please take pride in a good attendance record. The Agency depends upon its employees to be at work. Absence and/or tardiness place an unfair burden on co-workers and compromises patient care.

Should you be unable to report to work because of illness or some other reason beyond your control, you are required to notify your Manager/ Director. Voice mail messages must be sent to your Manager/Director. In your message, please include a brief, pertinent description of any patient issues for visits which are needed. To ensure adequate staffing, notification is expected to be timely i.e. no later than the start of your work shift. The manager grants approval for payment of any Earned Time or Extended Illness Pay. Any absences resulting in being out of work three days or more should have a doctor's note to return to work.

Punctuality and attendance at work are very important aspects of satisfactory job performance. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action, as well as the loss of favorable consideration toward salary increases, promotions or transfers.

Absenteeism without notification after two consecutive no call/no shows will be considered a voluntary resignation. Unauthorized or excessive absences or tardiness will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION**

It is the responsibility of each employee who holds a clinical license and/or certification, to maintain eligibility for and to keep current, all applicable licenses and certifications. The Human Resources Department maintains a file, recording that original documents have been presented. Copies, indicated as such, are kept in the personnel files.

Documents must be presented and a copy filed in the employee's personnel file by the close of business, **at least 48 hours before the expiration date.**

When licensure in a state has not been presented or verified, the appropriate managers will be notified and

the employee will be prohibited from providing direct patient care in that state.

**Failure to comply with licensure requirements will result in disciplinary action, including suspension from duty, without pay and/or termination.**

## **SMOKE, DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS**

It is the policy of Circle Home, Inc. to maintain a workplace which is smoke, alcohol, and drug free. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substances or alcohol is prohibited while on duty or on Agency property. Any violations of this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment.

It is a condition of employment that each employee abides by this policy and notify the Agency of any criminal drug conviction, within five days of such a conviction. The Agency has an obligation to notify the appropriate federal agency within ten (10) days of receiving such a notice of conviction.

Being a health care provider in the Lowell Community, our Agency is dedicated to working with our local partners to build a healthy community. A smoke free setting is a step in that direction. We seek to set a good example to all who come to our Agency by removing the presence of smoke.

As a result, Circle Home, Inc. is a smoke-free environment. Specifically, this means that smoking will be prohibited on all Agency property, including the buildings, as well as, the parking lots and any Circle Home, Inc. leased property. (smoking is allowed in a designated spot behind the dumpster.(smoking is allowed in a designated spot behind the dumpster) In addition, smoking will be prohibited in vehicles located on Agency property.

We ask for cooperation from all Circle Home, Inc. employees. For those employees who smoke, smoking cessation groups are offered at Lowell General Hospital, as well as, through Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Human Resources is available to assist you with contacting these resources.

## **Drug-Free Workplace Policy**

### **Purpose and Goal**

Circle Home, Inc. is committed to protecting the safety, health and well-being of all employees and other individuals in our workplace. We recognize that alcohol abuse and drug use pose a significant threat to our goals. We have established a drug-free workplace program that balances our respect for individuals with the need to maintain an alcohol and drug-free environment. We encourage employees to voluntarily seek help with drug and alcohol problems.

### **Covered Workers**

Any individual who conducts business for the organization, is applying for a position or is conducting business on the organization's property is covered by our drug-free workplace policy. Our policy includes, but is not limited to executive management, managers, ~~supervisors~~, full-time employees, part-time employees, per visit and per diem employees, off-site employees, volunteers, interns, contract/ temporary employees and applicants.

### **Applicability**

Our drug-free workplace policy is intended to apply whenever anyone is representing or conducting business for the organization. Therefore, this policy applies during all working hours, whenever conducting business or representing the organization, while on call, paid standby, while on organization property and

at company-sponsored events. In addition, the prohibitions on activity which violates state or federal law, but not those activities which are lawful, apply at all times, and in all places.

## **Prohibited Behavior**

It is a violation of our drug-free workplace policy to use, possess, sell, trade, and/or offer for sale alcohol, illegal drugs or intoxicants.

Prescription and over-the-counter drugs are not prohibited when taken in standard dosage and/or according to a physician's prescription. Any employee taking prescribed or over-the-counter medications will be responsible for consulting the prescribing physician and/or pharmacist to ascertain whether the medication may interfere with safe performance of his/her job. If the use of a medication could compromise the safety of the employee, fellow employees or the public, it is the employee's responsibility to use appropriate personnel procedures (e.g., call in sick, use leave, request change of duty, notify supervisor, notify a doctor) to avoid unsafe workplace practices.

The illegal or unauthorized use of prescription drugs is prohibited. It is a violation of our drug-free workplace policy to intentionally misuse and/or abuse prescription medications.

It is a violation of the policy to divert to an employee's own use, or for the use of any other individual, medications maintained by the organization or by third parties (including patients) for the use of patients, or to falsify or fail to keep accurate records concerning such medications. All medications must be stored, procured, distributed and inventoried in accordance with the organization's medication administration policy.

## **Notification of Convictions**

Any employee who is convicted of a criminal drug violation must notify the organization in writing within five calendar days of the conviction.

## **Drug Testing**

To ensure the accuracy and fairness of our testing program, all testing will be conducted according to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) guidelines where applicable and will include a screening test; a confirmation test; the opportunity for a split sample; review by a Medical Review Officer (Occupational Health Physician) designated by Circle Home, Inc. including the opportunity for employees who test positive to provide a legitimate medical explanation, such as a physician's prescription, for the positive result; and a documented chain of custody.

All drug-testing information will be maintained in separate confidential records.

Each employee, as a condition of employment, will be required to participate in drug testing upon request of management under the circumstances described below in the section entitled "Required Tests" Before any required drug testing, an employee or application will be required to complete a written consent form at the Occupational Medicine facility. The substances that will be tested for include: Methamphetamine/Amphetamines, Opiates, Cocaine, PCP and Marijuana.

Testing for the presence of alcohol will be conducted by analysis of blood.

Testing for the presence of the metabolites of drugs will be conducted by the analysis of urine.

Any employee who tests positive will be immediately removed from duty.

An employee will be subject to the same consequences of a positive test if he/she refuses the screening or the test, adulterates or dilutes the specimen, substitutes the specimen with that from another person or sends an imposter or refuses to cooperate in the testing process in such a way that prevents accurate completion of the test.

**a) Required Tests:**

- 1. Pre-employment Testing:** All employees being considered for employment at Circle Home, Inc. will be drug tested. Once the employee candidate is made a job offer they must present at the collection site designated by Circle Home, Inc. within 4 calendar days for drug testing. When cleared by the collection site, the employee candidate will then need to make an appointment with Occupational Medicine for a Pre-placement Health Screen. Applicants that test positive for drugs (following any available confirmation test and/or opportunity for a split review, where applicable) will consult with a Medical Review Officer (Occupational Medicine Physician). If there is no legal medical reason for the positive drug test the employee's job offer will be rescinded. Circle Home, Inc. will allow the candidate to reapply for a position after one year. If the candidate fails a second drug test their record will be marked as a "not fit for hire". Failure or refusal of a job applicant to submit to a conditional drug and or alcohol test may result in failure to obtain employment at Circle Home, Inc.
- 2. Client Required Testing:** Employees may be required to submit to drug and or alcohol test as a condition of working at a client site. Sufficient notice will be provided to the employee (30 days) of the client requirement and allowed time during work hours to complete the drug and or alcohol test through Occupational Medicine. Failure or refusal to submit to a conditional drug and or alcohol test may result in employment action and inability to work at specific client.
- 3. Reasonable Suspicion Testing:** Employees may be required to submit to drug and or alcohol testing should observed physical, behavioral, performance, conduct, body odor and/or speech indicate a possible impairment. These observations may also include indications of an employee's chronic use of, or effects of withdrawal from, drugs or alcohol. The determination may be made on a single instance of conduct involving a serious potential risk of harm to the employee or others, or to Circle Home, Inc. property or the property of others. Any employee who shows visible signs of being impaired or "unfit" for duty should be referred to Occupational Medicine for a reasonable suspicion drug or alcohol test.
- 4. Post-Accident Testing:** Any employee who is involved in a "serious work related accident" must present for a drug or alcohol test within the time period specified by Circle Home, Inc. A "serious work related accident" is an accident that requires Circle Home Inc. to make a workers' compensation claim and necessitates medical treatment beyond first aide, an automobile accident, or an accident causing property damage or liability. The employee may be involved in a serious work related accident if he or she contributed to or caused the accident, even if the employee is not personally injured.
  - All post-accident testing must be administered as soon as possible following the accident. Employees who are involved in a work-related accident must be readily available for testing or will be considered to have refused to submit a test.
  - Except where circumstances do not permit, Circle Home, Inc. shall transport or make arrangements for the transport of the employee to the collections site. If the employee is hospitalized, the hospital will conduct a urine drug screen and alcohol test.
- 5. Return-to-Duty:** Return-to-duty testing is a one-time announced test that will be required when an employee who has tested positive for drugs or alcohol has completed the required rehabilitation treatment and is ready to return to the workplace. Circle Home, Inc. may also utilize this type of testing for any employee who has been absent for more than 6 months from work.

- 6. Follow-Up:** Follow-up testing also is referred to as post-rehabilitation testing. This testing follows an employee's return to the workplace after completing rehabilitation. It is administered on an unannounced, unpredictable basis for a period of time of up to 5 years.

## **Consequences**

One of the goals of our drug-free workplace program is to encourage employees to voluntarily seek help with alcohol and/or drug problems. If, however, an individual violates the policy, the consequences are serious.

In the case of applicants, if he or she violates the drug-free workplace policy, the offer of employment can be withdrawn. The applicant may not reapply.

If an employee violates the policy, he or she will be subject to progressive disciplinary action (which, depending on organization's assessment of the nature of the offense, may include termination for a first offense) and may be required to enter rehabilitation. An employee required to enter rehabilitation who fails to successfully complete it and/or repeatedly violates the policy will be terminated from employment. Nothing in this policy prohibits the employee from being disciplined or discharged for other violations and/or performance problems.

## **Return-to-Work Agreements**

Following a violation of the drug-free workplace policy, an employee may be offered an opportunity to participate in rehabilitation. In such cases, the employee must sign and abide by the terms set forth in a Return-to-Work Agreement as a condition of continued employment.

## **Assistance**

Circle Home, Inc. recognizes that alcohol and drug abuse and addiction are treatable illnesses. We also realize that early intervention and support improve the success of rehabilitation. To support our employees, our drug-free workplace policy:

- Encourages employees to seek help if they are concerned that they or their family members may have a drug and/or alcohol problem.
- Encourages employees to utilize the services of qualified professionals in the community to assess the seriousness of suspected drug or alcohol problems and identify appropriate sources of help.
- Offers all employees and their family members' assistance with alcohol and drug problems through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Treatment for alcoholism and/or other drug use disorders may be covered by an employee benefit plan. However, the ultimate financial responsibility for recommended treatment belongs to the employee.

## **Confidentiality**

All information received by the organization through the drug-free workplace program is confidential communication. Access to this information is limited to those who have a legitimate need to know in compliance with relevant laws and management policies.

## **Shared Responsibility**

A safe and productive drug-free workplace is achieved through cooperation and shared responsibility. Both employees and management have important roles to play.

All employees are required to not report to work or be subject to duty while their ability to perform job duties is impaired due to on- or off-duty use of alcohol or other drugs. Employees are encouraged to report their own drug or alcohol problems to the Human Resources department or to their manager. Depending on the nature of the issue, whether the employee has engaged in any misconduct and other factors deemed relevant by the organization, self-reporting is likely to lessen any disciplinary consequences and increase the likelihood that rehabilitation will be viewed as an appropriate response.

In addition, employees are encouraged to:

- Be concerned about working in a safe environment
- Support fellow workers in seeking help
- Use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Report dangerous behavior by other employees to their supervisor or to the Human Resources department

It is the supervisor's responsibility to:

- Investigate reports of dangerous practices.
- Report dangerous behavior to the Human Resources department.

## **Communication**

Communicating our drug-free workplace policy to both supervisors and employees is critical to our success. To ensure all employees are aware of their role in supporting our drug-free workplace program:

- All employees will receive a written copy of the policy.
- All employees will receive information about the EAP.

## **Investigations**

Allegations that this policy has been violated will be investigated by the Human Resources department or other members of management as determined appropriate by the organization. Management will determine an appropriate resolution based on the evidence available to it, and will inform the affected employee(s) of its determination.

## **POSTING OF NOTICES, DISTRIBUTION AND SOLICITATION**

Solicitation, distribution of materials or literature, or the posting of notices on Agency property by anyone not employed by Circle Home, Inc. is strictly prohibited.

Of course, there are occasions when you may wish to talk about and/or distribute information about non work related topics, i.e., walkathons, cookie and candy sales, etc. You may do so when you are on break or lunch time and are not in a working area.

**All visitors to the Agency are required to report to the Receptionist on duty and will register before being admitted inside. Please refer to your policy “HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY/SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT” which you will find in this manual.**

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Circle Home, Inc. is committed to maintaining a work place as free from internal or external pressure as possible. Employees should avoid any conduct which is disloyal, disruptive, competitive, or damaging to the Agency. Comprehensive information is located in your **CORPORATE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM** booklet, which you received during orientation.

The Agency will consider personal values and beliefs of employees, whenever possible, in honoring requests from employees not to participate in an aspect of care to a given patient.

## **RESIGNATION PROCEDURE**

Non Clinical Staff that leave Circle Home, Inc. are requested to provide at least two (2) weeks written notice of intended termination. Clinical Staff is required to give three (3) weeks written notice. Directors and Managers are requested to give at least four (4) weeks written notice. Properly done, resignations are in writing and are submitted to your manager and HR Business Partner. Employees are expected to work all days during the notice period. Letters of resignation should contain the following information.

- statement of intent to resign
- last day to be worked (effective date)
- reason for leaving
- any other comments

All resignations are processed through the Human Resources Department. This ensures that all internal procedures are completed and the Agency has the information required to meet its legal responsibilities. Experience has proven that employers are better able to keep abreast of the general concerns and needs of employees by using a formal exit process in Human Resources.

Please schedule your exit conference with the HR Business Partner. This will provide an opportunity to discuss a number of subjects including the conversion of any earned, but not used vacation time to compensation and the availability of your final check.

All Agency contributions toward insurance benefits will cease upon termination of employment. You will be given information about the cost of continuing health insurance coverage, at your own expense, under the provisions of Title X of the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA). The required paperwork will be provided to you by mail.

All Agency property, including all computerized equipment, your equipment bag and contents, your ID badge, and any other Agency property must be returned on your last day of work. Arrangements may be made during your exit conference.

## **DRIVING POLICY**

Community health care services demands that many employees be in their automobile throughout the workday. A prerequisite to employment is the availability of an automobile at all times for employees conducting home visits or for those whose role and function require transportation (unless Public Transportation is appropriate). All new employees will be subject to a Motor Vehicle Record Check and must possess a valid driver's license in the state that they are living in. A satisfactory driver's license

record and safe driving habits are requirements for new and continued employment.

All current employees are subject to have their motor vehicle report reviewed on as needed basis. Motor vehicle reports are conducted in compliance with all federal and state statutes, such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). A written authorization form must be completed by the employee.

Drivers may not be authorized to operate a vehicle in the conduct of business if any one of the following are disclosed through a Motor Vehicle Report review or occur during employment:

1. Any conviction for any violation or combination of individual incidents that may cause harm to Circle Home, its employees, patients or the general public. Each case will be reviewed as it arises.

**Examples include but not limited to:**

- Careless or Reckless driving violations.
  - Failure to stop for a police officer.
  - Suspended or non-valid driver's license.
  - Conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
  - Conviction of Vehicular Homicide.
  - Falsification of driver's record.
  - Leaving the scene of an accident.
2. Two (2) or more at fault accidents in the prior 36 months.
  3. Two (2) citations for moving violations in the prior 36 months.

All current employees are expected to maintain a safe driving record. All employees who use their personally owned vehicle in the regular course of employment must report any moving vehicle accidents and moving vehicle traffic violations to their manager/supervisor or to the HR department within 24 hours of the occurrence.

- The employee should park in appropriate and legal parking areas when conducting home visits. If an employee receives a parking ticket, they are responsible for paying the parking fines;
- The employee keeps his/ her automobile in good working condition and makes necessary arrangements to replace his/ her automobile if it becomes disabled;
- The employee may be subject to disciplinary action if he/ she is out of compliance with this policy, or may be terminated if continued and sustained automobile is not available;
- Staff will not transport patient, or patient's family or friends in vehicle under any circumstances;
- Staff will keep any patient information, including electronic devices and Agency equipment securely and confidentially within their vehicle as they conduct business and are prohibited from storing agency equipment in a car overnight.

### **TEXTING AND TALKING ON HAND-HELD CELL PHONES WHILE DRIVING POLICY**

Of increasing concern to Circle Home, Inc. are the dangers of distracted driving. Recent deadly crashes involving drivers distracted by talking and texting while driving highlight a growing danger on our roads. Numerous studies have demonstrated how to use of hand-held cell phones while driving pose a significant safety risk to motorists, their passengers and other on the road. In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2008 nearly 6,000 people die in crashes involving a distracted driver. Massachusetts state law and New Hampshire prohibits sending or reading, texting, emailing, accessing the internet, and instant messaging while driving or stopped in traffic.

Circle Home, Inc. is concerned about the safety of its employees. It is our hope that if we lead by example, the practice of no texting or talking on hand-held cell phones while behind the wheel will spread throughout the community. Circle Home, Inc policy requires compliance with Massachusetts and New Hampshire laws related to electronic devices. In the interest of safety, our policy goes further by prohibiting employees from using for any purpose a hand held cell phone while driving on Circle Home, Inc. time. It is the Agency's expectation that all employees will adhere to this policy. Each employee will complete a statement or acknowledgement that they have read and understand the policy.

### **CAR ACCIDENT REPORTING**

- All car accidents that occur while working will need to be reported to the employee's manager (or designee, weekends or after-hours) as soon as reasonably possible.
- In the case of an automobile accident involving organization staff, while working, organization staff will stop immediately and render aid to injured persons as necessary and within his/her scope of practice.
- Staff will have a police officer present to file an accident report, unless on private property. Emergency services will be notified as appropriate.
- Staff will obtain information including name, license number and car insurance information from persons involved in the accident and/or witnesses.
- Staff will provide proper car insurance information to other persons involved in the accident.
  - If staff's car is involved in the accident, the staff's car insurance and driver's license will be provided. The staff will be advised to notify their insurance agent.
  - Staff will notify the manager of the accident as soon as reasonably possible.
- Staff or the manager will fill out a written occurrence report as soon as possible, but no later than the next working day. If injury is sustained, an accident report will also need to be completed for Worker's Compensation purposes and notification to appropriate authorities.
- The Executive Director/Administrator or designee will notify legal counsel if necessary of the accident and forward the written occurrence report.
- Staff will be instructed to discuss the accident with the police, and appropriate department personnel.

### **AUTO INSURANCE – VISITING STAFF**

Circle Home, Inc. requires all staff who travel in the course of the work day (regardless of residing state) to show evidence annually of meeting the minimum requirements for Massachusetts Auto Insurance. The minimum Liability requirements for auto insurance in Massachusetts are as follows: Part 1 Compulsory Insurance \$20,000 (per accident) \$40,000 (aggregate) and Property Coverage of \$5,000.

Visiting Staff need to forward a copy of their auto insurance policy on an annual basis to the Human Resources Department. Any changes in employee auto insurance policies during the year need to be forwarded to Human Resources.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & SOCIAL NETWORKING**

The agency respects the rights of its employees to use social media tools not only as a means to further the agency's business, but also as a form of self-expression. However, it is important that all employees be aware of the implications of engaging in forms of social media and online conversations that reference the agency. Therefore, employees must use sound judgment and common sense by adhering to the agency's service values, business standards, and by following all applicable agency policies as well as the applicable regulatory requirements. Remember that the same rules and guidelines that apply offline and to our messaging and communications in traditional media still apply when engaging in Social Media activities.

Employees are not to share information about patients or their families, including protected health information. Disclosures about patients are a violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). To ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained, our policy prohibits employees from making friend requests to or responding to friend requests from patients and/or patients' families.

Discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct by an agency employee that is attributed to or in any way identified with the agency or directed at another agency employee will not be tolerated.

Likewise, the agency prohibits the use or publication of Confidential Information as defined in the organization's Confidential Information Policy. Just because an employee is not at work does not remove the employee's obligation to maintain confidentiality.

Employees should not represent themselves as speaking for the agency, and should make clear that they only speak for themselves. Employees should strive to be honest and accurate in their postings. Finally, the use of social media should not interfere with an employee's performance of his or her responsibilities at work.

## **SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

### **POLICY**

The organization will plan, implement, and monitor an environmental management program that addresses the office environment as well as the patient care environment, including, but not limited to:

- Environmental safety, addressing hazards, injuries, and unsafe practices
- Security, addressing unsafe areas, on-call, isolation, and security concerns
- Hazardous materials/wastes, addressing OSHA, EPA regulations, hazardous spills, health hazards, and reporting spills/exposures
- Emergency management addressing continuing care, communication, coordination with other community organizations and prioritizing patients
- Fire safety, addressing fire hazards, fire response, fire escape, and communication
- Equipment management, addressing maintenance, recalls, cleaning, and set-up, including the proper use, handling and care of desktop computers and laptop/clinical documentation devices.
- Utilities, addressing electrical outlets, grounding, and batteries

The senior management will have the responsibility for the following activities:

- Designing the environmental safety and equipment management program
- Teaching organization personnel and patients how to implement the environmental safety and equipment management program

- Implementation of environment of care processes
- Measuring and assessing the effectiveness of the design and management of safety risks
- Improving the performance of the environment-of-care function
- Designating the safety committee to manage an organization-wide safety program

The organization will maintain a systematic process to measure the effectiveness of the environmental safety and equipment management program.

The policies included in this section comprise the environmental safety and equipment management program and are considered standard operating procedures.

## PROCEDURE

- The Executive Director/Administrator, in conjunction with the senior management, will ensure education of all organization personnel about the environmental safety policies and procedures and their responsibilities in the implementation.
- Organization personnel will receive an orientation to the environmental safety components upon hire and as needed.
- Knowledge and competence will be demonstrated during the orientation and probationary period as well as throughout the year.
- Environmental safety and equipment management program in-services/web based training will be scheduled annually and as needed. Training will be mandatory and will be documented in the personnel file.
- Clinical Managers and clinical organization personnel will educate patients and their family/caregivers in safety measures in the home to minimize hazards related to care provided.
- The environmental safety and equipment management program will be evaluated as part of the annual program evaluation.
- As part of the performance improvement program, the organization will assess, through defined measures, the effectiveness of the environmental safety and equipment management program in:
  - Maintaining safe environments for patients and organization personnel
  - Educating organization personnel and patients how to implement the program
  - Improving the organization's performance in environmental management, including management of safety risks
- Measures will be developed to specifically address the components of the environmental safety and equipment management program, including, but not limited to:
  - A. General safety – office/community and patient environment
  - B. Fire safety – office and patient environment
  - C. Equipment management and safety – office and patient environment
  - D. Utility management and safety – office and patient environment
  - E. Medication management
  - F. General personal safety – office and patient environment
  - G. Emergency management planning – office and patient environment
  - H. Outcomes of office environment safety checks

Any areas demonstrating a pattern or trend will be analyzed by the Safety Committee for development of recommendations and actions. These will in turn be brought to the Executive Director/Administrator or designee will be responsible for intervening whenever conditions immediately threaten life, health, or damage to equipment or buildings.

You should familiarize yourself with the location of fire alarms, extinguishers and fire exits in your area. It is imperative that all employees be prepared and ready at all times to participate in fire drills or emergency practices.

This handbook reflects the agency's current policies, which are subject to change, revision or withdrawal as needed.