

## **CONSOLIDATED MAIL OUTPATIENT PHARMACY POLICY MEMORANDUM**

### **SUBJECT: PERSONNEL POLICY AND EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

- 1. PURPOSE:** To establish an overview of personnel policies appropriate employee conduct at the Great Lakes Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP).
- 2. POLICY:** Appropriate conduct and compliance to VA personnel policies are conditions of employment, they are necessary to provide quality health care services for our patients and ensure a safe working environment for employees. In accordance with 5 CFR 2635.704(a), "An employee has a duty to protect and conserve Government property and shall not use such property, or allow its use, for other than authorized purposes".
- 3. RESPONSIBILITY**
  - a. The CMOP Director is responsible for ensuring overall compliance with this policy
  - b. CMOP supervisors are responsible for educating and/or providing guidance to employees concerning personnel policies and appropriate employee conduct, disseminating information, ensuring staff compliance on a day-to-day basis, and implementation of disciplinary actions when necessary. It is the responsibility of supervisory staff to assure that staff has read the SOP and demonstrate required competency before being assigned any job duties.
  - c. All CMOP staff members are expected to conduct themselves in a reasonable manner, complying with standard VA personnel policies and rules of employee conduct outlined in this policy. It is expected that staff members inform their supervisor when personal information changes (telephone, address, emergency contact, etc.) to enable the CMOP to be prepared for emergencies. The employee has a responsibility to inform the supervisor of situations in which job expectations are unclear.
- 4. PROCEDURES**
  - a. **ATTITUDE:** Be interested in your job and in learning how to do it better. Be courteous, helpful, and understanding; be willing to assist others to ensure the quality of healthcare provided to America's Veterans of the highest quality and reliability. Employees are expected to cooperate with their peers. Leadership will provide a positive and professional working atmosphere to ensure all CMOP staff adheres to responsible and professional conduct.
  - b. **ATTENTION TO DUTIES:** Employees must be alert and pay strict attention to their duties. Lengthy, personal, non-job related discussions cause distractions which can lead to errors or delays that jeopardize patient care and are considered unacceptable on-duty behavior.

- c. **PERSONAL APPEARANCE:** Be neat, clean, well groomed, and attired appropriately for your work area while on duty. Employees who violate these requirements may be asked to wear a gown, sent home, and/or may be subject to disciplinary action.

i. Unacceptable Clothing

1. Loose-fitting clothing, jewelry, or other items that could become entangled in machinery.
2. Long hair: Hair should be properly contained to prevent entanglement in moving machinery.
3. Open-toed shoes, sandals, shoes with greater than two inch heels.
4. Excessively baggy or saggy clothing, cargo pants, miniskirts, bulky jackets or coats, clothing containing offensive messages, spandex or other form-fitting pants or shorts, visible undergarments, spaghetti straps, halter tops, tube or tank tops, and any other provocative, revealing, or suggestive clothing.
  - a. Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must all reach the tips of fingers when standing straight with arms loosely hanging at the side.
5. All header covers with the exception of facility provided headwear and baseball caps worn square on the head with the bill facing forward. Facility approved stocking caps for receiving personnel are allowed during appropriate weather conditions.

- d. **CONDUCT:** Your actions and behavior reflect upon you, the CMOP, the medical centers served, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. You are expected to look and act in a professional manner. Engaging in any of the following behaviors is subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal.

- i. It is expected that relationships with co-workers, supervisors, CMOP management team, and the public are cooperative and courteous in nature. Differences of opinion will be resolved in a professional manner. All staff members are expected to ensure that internal and external customers are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii. Employee's work assignments will be completed according to their position description or functional statement. Employees who fail to comply with carrying out assigned work activities or project assignments will be subject to disciplinary action.
- iii. Employees will not engage in behaviors that can be perceived as intimidating, harassing, threatening or assaultive toward others. The use of any form of violent behavior or encouraging others to use any form of

violent behavior in the workplace constitutes unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

- iv. Weapons and/or illegal or controlled drugs (except those prescribed by a physician) and intoxicating beverages are prohibited on CMOP property.
  - v. Drugs stocked by the CMOP for authorized dispensing to eligible veterans are not to be used by or transferred to any other unauthorized person. Any employee participating in a drug diversion activity will be subject to prosecution.
  - vi. Employees will not engage in conduct that can be considered sexually harassing, abusive, coercive and/or intimidating. Sexual harassment in any form is inappropriate and unacceptable conduct that will not be tolerated at any level.
  - vii. Disorderly conduct including loud or boisterous actions is prohibited.
  - viii. VA regulations prohibit gambling, commercial solicitations, vending, and collections of private debts on CMOP property.
- e. ATTENDANCE: Employees are required to report to work on time and properly attired. Employees will remain at their assigned workstations and not leave prior to designated breaks or quitting time without supervisory authorization. All employees are expected to be on duty during the full period of their tours unless absent on approved leave; to observe the opening and closing hours of their tour of duty; and to adhere to established luncheon periods. Employees cannot be away from work unless they have requested leave or otherwise been authorized duty time away from the work area and the supervisor has approved the absence. Employee check in and out times will be monitored by their immediate supervisor or the pharmacist-in-charge.
- i. Tardiness: repeated tardiness will not be tolerated. Excessive tardiness could be a cause for an employee to be charged absence without official leave (AWOL).
  - ii. Breaks, lunch periods, absences from assigned area:
    - 1. Two 15-minute breaks are allowed per eight-hour shift, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A thirty minute lunch period is allowed. Breaks and lunch period will be confined to the time allotted. Lunches and coffee breaks will be taken in areas intended for the purpose and not in working areas.
      - a. Breaks and lunch periods can be combined with supervisory authorization, but such combined periods cannot be taken during the first or last hour of the scheduled tour of duty. Breaks and lunch periods should be taken and staff should not work through them.

- b. Except for designated breaks and lunch periods, employees will remain on the job at all times. In unusual circumstances where an employee must be absent from his/her assigned area, permission of the supervisor or pharmacist-in-charge will be obtained.
- iii. Annual Leave must be scheduled in advance through the designated system and notification of such a request provided to the supervisor. (SF-71s will only be used emergencies), so that the supervisor granting the leave can make adjustments in work assignments. Unscheduled annual leave may be granted at the discretion of the appropriate supervisor based on workload and staffing considerations. Emergency leave must be requested within the first two (2) hours of absence. If the supervisor or designee does not give approval, leave will not be granted. For unscheduled or emergency leave, the employee must submit an electronic leave request on the first day he/she returns to duty. When calling in to request emergency annual leave a supervisor must be contacted, it is not acceptable to call in to a fellow employee or clerical staff to request emergency leave. If the supervisor is not readily available, it is acceptable to leave a message on the supervisor's voice mail along with the telephone number of where the employee can be reached if necessary.
- iv. Sick leave is used when an employee is incapacitated to perform duties by physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy or childbirth; when an employee receives medical, dental, or optical examinations or treatments; or when through exposure to a contagious disease, the presence of the employee in the workplace would jeopardize the health of others; and for purposes related to the adoption of a child. All sick leave requests must be submitted through the designated system on the first day the individual returns to duty. Sick leave should not be abused; it is considered an insurance against lost income during periods of extended illness and should be used responsibly. Use of sick leave that appears abusive will result in the employee being placed on sick leave justification. This requires the employee provide written certification by a doctor for all sick leave used.
  - 1. If an employee becomes ill while at work, he/she must notify the supervisor and make an appropriate leave request whenever possible.
  - 2. If an employee is not able to report for duty because of illness, the employee must call the sick leave call-in line (708-786-7820) as soon as possible, but no later than two hours after the beginning of

his/her scheduled tour. If an employee leaves a message on the sick leave call-in line, they should include a telephone number where they can be reached.

3. Illness or injury causing an absence of three or more working days will require substantiation by a doctor's certificate. Medical certification must include a statement that the employee was incapacitated for work and date(s) or incapacitation. Employees who expect to be absent for more than one day on sick leave should inform the sick leave call-in line of the approximate date that they will be returning to duty.
  4. Requests for sick leave to cover non-emergency exams or treatments should be requested and entered in the designated system at least two weeks in advance for scheduling purposes.
- v. **LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP):** is a special category of leave that must be requested in writing well in advance. The written request is submitted through the immediate supervisor to the CMOP Director for approval/disapproval. Approval or disapproval depends on the individual circumstances and the operational needs of the CMOP. LWOP is not automatically approved and is not a matter of right.
- vi. **ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE (AWOL):** is an unapproved leave charge, not a disciplinary measure. Any unauthorized absence from the work area can result in AWOL. Although AWOL is not a disciplinary action, it may lead to future disciplinary action should an unapproved absence be repeated. To avoid confusion and possible AWOL, it is important that the employee let the pharmacist-in-charge, lead technician, or supervisor know where he/she will be working if other than the previously scheduled area. In the event an employee is absent for other than scheduled leave, they must speak with a supervisor to request the type of leave that best fits the circumstances for the request. Contact shall be made in the following order: Primary Supervisor, Associate Director CMOP, and Director CMOP. AWOL for unauthorized absence may be charged it:
1. An employee fails to notify their supervisor within the first two hours of the beginning of their scheduled tour, unless there are mitigating circumstances.
  2. An employee is not on duty for any reason without approved leave, such as returning to duty from lunch or break late, leaving early, or being away from the assigned area without authorization.

3. An employee does not return to duty as directed at the end of a period of approved absence.
4. An employee does not have leave to cover an absence and is not approved for FMLA.

f. SECURITY

- i. Maintaining security of the CMOP building, work equipment, drugs and supplies is the responsibility of all employees. CMOP operations will be limited to authorized personnel. Employees must wear their PIV identification badges at all times while on the CMOP premises. The PIV badge will be worn in front, above the waist with the photo displayed so that the person's picture and name are easily seen by anyone facing/speaking to the individual. Employees will only enter and exit the CMOP by the doors where their PIV cards allow them to access. Employees will never hold doors open for other staff to enter without using their security cards. Entry and exit through loading dock openings is strictly prohibited for both safety and security concerns. In the event of a fire or other emergency employees will exit via the posted emergency evacuation routes or nearest available exit.
- ii. When a badge is believed to be forgotten or misplaced the employee will be sent to retrieve the badge before starting work. Time used to retrieve the badge is at the expense of the employee, government employees will be required to use leave and contract employees will not be paid. The employee will be allowed to resume duties immediately upon return to CMOP with their PIV badge. Should the employee fail to locate the badge or return to CMOP before the end of the shift the PIV badge will be considered lost.
- iii. Misplaced or lost badges are a serious concern. PIV badges are legal federal identification badges that contain sensitive employee information. An employee that habitually misplaces or loses their PIV badge may receive disciplinary action.
- iv. Lost badges are reported to the Facility Information Security Officer (FISO) and HR Representative.
- v. All CMOP personnel are required to positively identify all individuals before allowing them access to CMOP. Questionable situations regarding authorized access are to be promptly referred to a supervisor.

- vi. Only on-duty CMOP personnel and personnel on authorized business (paid and without compensation) will be allowed into CMOP areas.
- vii. All CMOP visitors will be asked to wait in designated areas until a supervisor or pharmacist-in-charge is able to talk to them and arrange for them to conduct their business with the appropriate person or in a designated area.
- viii. Computer and data security will be overseen by the FISO. The FISO is responsible for ensuring that all personnel have access to only the sensitive information required to carry out their authorized functions or assigned duties, providing training, and monitoring access and computer equipment use.

g. PERSONAL EQUIPMENT/PROPERTY

- i. Large radios, disc players, cell phones, small fans, etc., are not allowed in the production area and should be stored in the employee's locker for use in the break area or outside the building during authorized breaks, lunch, before, and after work.
  - ii. Portable music devices such as iPods are permitted in the production area only if headphones are used in one ear and volume is maintained at a reasonable level. If the employee cannot hear supervisory instructions, the device is too loud. Employees must be aware of their surroundings, therefore, headphones are prohibited any time when not performing duties at a workstation or walking anywhere within the warehouse or production area (headphones are prohibited anytime an employee is ambulating).
  - iii. Employees are prohibited from carrying any device or USB cord capable of being connected to any government owned computer while on the production floor or in the warehouse area.
  - iv. No bags (except clear bags), containers, backpacks, purses, or other carry-alls will be allowed in the production area.
  - v. No food will be allowed in the production area.
  - vi. Beverages in sealed containers will be allowed so long as they are kept away from electronic equipment.
  - vii. Employees will not be allowed to keep perishable items in their lockers.
- h. SMOKING: is prohibited within CMOP buildings or within forty feet of any building entrance. Smoke only in areas designated for smoking. All employees

are responsible for enforcing the smoking policy by politely reminding anyone seen smoking in an unauthorized place of our smoking policy. Smoking is only permitted during approved CMOP breaks.

- i. **PERSONAL MESSAGES:** Urgent or emergent messages will be received through your area supervisor or designee and will be relayed to you as soon as possible. Non-emergency messages will be related to you at the first available break or during lunch, whichever comes first. No personal calls are to be received in work areas to avoid distractions that can result in work errors or patient safety concerns. CMOP telephones are for official work related use or appropriate emergencies as approved by the supervisor. The front desk phone can be used during normal business hours at 708-786-7820. The phone at Baker is used after hours at 708-786-7809.
- j. **TELEPHONE:** In case of an emergency employees with supervisory permission may use the phone for an emergency personal call.
- k. **BULLETIN BOARDS:** Each employee can review the CCS Browser and the electronic display monitor located in the break room and/or production area for important notifications. Bulletin boards also provide important employee information is located in break rooms and the production area.
- l. **RECEIVING ORDERS:** Employees receive directions/assignment of duties from their supervisors or designees only. If other personnel such as a contractor request you do something that does not relate to or takes away from assigned work duties, the employee should politely ask them to refer their request to the appropriate CMOP Supervisor or the CMOP administrative office (this is necessary in the interest of scheduling work). Exceptions may be made at the employee's discretion, provided requested services may be performed without sacrificing scheduled work.
- m. **CARE OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT:** Each employee is expected to use tools and equipment properly (per SOP direction if available) and to keep them clean and in good operating condition. If an employee discovers that repairs to equipment, tools, furnishings, or other items are needed, they should report the need to their supervisor.
- n. **ACCIDENTS:** If an employee is involved in an on-the-job accident, whether or not they are injured, they must report the incident to their supervisor as soon as possible so the supervisory reports (VA 2162, ASSISTS CA-1, and/or CA-2) can be completed. Any accident that requires emergency treatment will be handled by calling 911. Supervisors must notify CMOP Safety Officer of any injuries or accidents immediately.



- o. **FINANCIAL DEALINGS:** Employees will not engage in financial dealings with fellow staff members. This includes loaning, borrowing, making purchases, selling items, and getting checks cashed or accepting money, gifts, or tips. The VA does not desire to become involved in the financial affairs of its employees. However, if repeated complaints of non-payment of just financial obligations are received from creditors, action will be taken as authorized by applicable regulations.
- p. **GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES:** In general, federal employees may not give a gift to an official superior nor can an employee accept a gift from another employee who receives less pay. A gift includes any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, or other item having monetary value, but does not include modest items of food or light refreshments offered other than as part of a meal. Employees all receive TMS training regarding the ethics of gifts between employees. Professional standards and ethics rules permit the acceptance of gifts as long as they are less than \$20/occurrence, and no more than \$50 in aggregate value over a given consecutive 12 month period from any one source. There are no legal restrictions on gifts given to peers or subordinates although common sense (and propriety) should apply.
- q. **GIFTS TO VA STAFF INCLUDING REFRESHMENTS**
  - i. In order to avoid violating or giving the appearance of violating government ethics rules, CMOP employees may not accept any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan or anything of nominal monetary value (e.g. pens, magnets, post-it notes, etc.) from a sales representative or any other person seeking to become involved or who is currently involved in business interactions with VA while on VA grounds or while performing an official government duty. CMOP employees must be aware that government ethics rules apply to VA staff regardless of whether the staff are located on VA or off VA property or are on-duty or off-duty. While gifts of nominal value may not violate professional standards and ethics rules, such gifts do not improve the quality of care, may subtly introduce bias into an operational decision, could negatively affect veteran and public perception of CMOP healthcare, and potentially add unnecessary costs to the healthcare system. As such, CMOP employees may not accept any gift, even of nominal value, from a sales representative when performing an official VA duty.
  - ii. Continuing education materials and textbooks may not be given to individual employees, but may be donated to the facility if approved by

the Operations Manager and if such materials are intended for use by all employees in those departments.

- iii. This policy does not prohibit or restrict CMOP employee participation in educational programs or meetings conducted by universities or professional organizations and funded by an unrestricted or similar education grant paid for by the pharmaceutical industry. However, programs conducted by for-profit medical education providers are considered to be directly sponsored by the pharmaceutical company. Additionally, this policy does not impose restrictions on snacks and beverages that may have been provided as a part of such grant while attending functions.
- r. **PROBATIONARY PERIOD AND PERFORMANCE RATING:** Your supervisor will keep you informed on a continuous basis of how you are performing your work. They will point out strengths and weaknesses in a constructive manner and develop goals in particular areas in which you need to make improvement. They will assist you by arranging for appropriate training or re-training (if deemed necessary based on routine performance assessments).
- s. **SCHEDULES:** Employees will be given two weeks' notice of schedule changes with the exception of emergency staffing coverage.
- t. **ASSIGNMENT CHANGES:** Assignment changes will be discussed with individuals involved before being put into effect.
- u. **PROMOTIONS:** All promotions will be made with Chief Business Office (CBO) promotion policies. All employees of CMOP will be afforded equal opportunity to compete for promotion.
- v. **RESIGNATIONS:** An employee who decides to quit their job should give at least two weeks' notice and must complete an official resignation form (facility clearance form). Assistance with this form is available from your supervisor or the CMOP administrative office.
- w. **REPORTING FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCIES:** Any employee who discovers a fire should immediately report it by pulling an alarm in the nearest building fire alarm box and notifying anyone in the area. For all other emergencies, dial 911.
- x. **CONSERVING UTILITIES:** Employees are expected to turn out unnecessary lights and turn off water faucets to help conserve utilities in other areas.

- y. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** If you have a question or problem, discuss it with your supervisor first. If further help is needed see the Associate Director or Director.
- z. **INFECTION CONTROL:** All staff is expected to perform their assigned duties in a safe manner by adhering to routine infection control procedures, which include the use of personal protective equipment when indicated, following established hand hygiene guidelines, and the prompt reporting of possible infectious disease to supervisory staff. Food is not permitted in the production or warehouse areas. Beverages are permitted in spill-proof containers and must be kept away from work surfaces and computer equipment.

## **5. REFERENCES**

- a. VA Directive 5011, dated 12/21/2008. [www.va.gov/ohrm/directives-handbooks/documents/5011-15.doc](http://www.va.gov/ohrm/directives-handbooks/documents/5011-15.doc).
- b. VHA Directive 2009-071. Prevention of Workplace Harassment.
- c. GL-CMOP Policy Memorandum 765-30-04 Infection Control.
- d. VHA Directive 2010-039 Compliance with the Management of Non-Controlled Drugs.
- e. 38 CFR 1.218 Security and Law Enforcement at VA Facilities.
- f. OSHA 3170-02R 2007 Safeguarding Equipment and Protecting Employees from Amputation.
- g. 5 CFR 2635.704 Office of Government Ethics.

**6. RECISSION:** 765-00-03 Personnel Policy and Employee Conduct dated January 2, 2015.

**7. REISSUE DATE:** May 2019



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