



Vibra Health Plan (VHP) promotes an environment where members along with their families' experience healthcare conducted by providers in a professional manner respecting all member rights. Contracted providers including physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, allied health professionals, nurses and other health care workers are expected to adhere to the VHP Code of Conduct. The following are guidelines adapted from the American Medical Association and American Osteopathic Association statements regarding provider behaviors and professionalism.

The VHP Code of Conduct clarifies common expectations and defines conduct that is considered professional. VHP expects all providers to adhere to these expectations.

Patient-Physician Relationships

Providers will:

- Conduct their business in a manner that fosters development of trust ensuring the patient's welfare and best interest is the priority, acting as a patient advocate.
- Honor the Member Rights and Responsibilities as published in the VHP Provider Manual.
- Will notify the patient or authorized caregiver by phone and/or in writing should the provider determine there is a need to terminate the care relationship. The notification must state the reason for the termination as well as the effective date. If the patient is in an active course of treatment; the provider must facilitate a safe transfer of services to an equally qualified provider if the patient so requests.
- Promote quality, evidence based care by maintaining and improving competency through continuing education, staying current with best practice and implementing appropriate new guidelines within their practice.
- Ensure patient safety when implementing new guidelines or innovative care practices. New devices, therapies, or medications prescribed must be proven effective through sound scientific evidence and appropriate clinical expert recommendation.
- Fully inform the patient and gain consent to the investigational treatment should the provider participate in research.

Shared Decision Making and Consent

Providers will:

- Assess the patient ability to comprehend and fully understand the recommended care and treatment. If the patient is not able to understand, providers will work with an authorized surrogate decision maker who will act on the patient behalf.
- Communicate in terms and language the patient understands taking social and cultural differences into account. Seek confirmation of the patient understanding through use of questions and active listening.
- Not withhold information from the patient.

- Share the results of tests and diagnostic procedures within a reasonable time.
- Disclose fully who will be involved with care and treatment.
- Disclose any conflicts of interest that might affect decision making.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Providers will:

- Protect and maintain privacy and confidentiality as defined by Federal guidelines and VHP policies.
- Safeguard private information by not sharing passwords or leaving information up on the computer screen unattended.

Genetic Testing

Providers will:

- Ensure they are properly trained and competent
 - In recognizing the indications for testing and ordering the appropriate test(s).
 - Have the skills needed to help patients understand the meaning of results from genetic test(s).
- Ensure confidentiality of testing and results, not sharing with employers, insurers, or other third parties without expressed consent in writing by the patient.

End of Life Care

Providers will:

- Proactively discuss end of life care and help patients develop an advanced care plan/ living will.
- Provide interventions that are medically necessary and appropriate in end of life care including pain management and supportive care.
- Not order procedures, tests, or surgeries that have no proven benefit to the patient's quality of life.

Research

Providers who participate in research will:

- Ensure they have successfully completed training and maintain the Institutional Review Board requirements.

Community Health

Providers will:

- Meet public health obligations by
 - Routinely screening for HIV and other infectious diseases appropriate for patient age and social activity.
 - Report test results as required by law.
 - Notify those potentially exposed to initiate testing and/or treatment.

- Counsel patients on safe driving related to alcohol and substance use or other medical conditions as appropriate.
- Screen for potential abuse.
- Seek to eliminate disparities in care by providing culturally appropriate treatment and communication without discrimination.
- Provide age appropriate preventive care following the U.S. Preventive Task Force recommendations to improve population outcomes.

Self-regulation

Providers will:

- Support development of professional behaviors of students, fellows, and employees by role modeling and mentoring.
- Not become romantically or sexually involved within the patient – provider relationship.
- Not demonstrate behaviors perceived as sexual harassment with any patient, employee, or peer.
- Stay up to date on new practices, guidelines, and protocols.
- Not accept financial or in kind contributions from pharmacy or other vendors that may appear to influence prescribing activity.
- Report unethical or unsafe practices demonstrated by colleagues.
- Seek help when experiencing conditions that impair ability to safely practice.
- Maintain positive, respectful communications with peers, employees, and others.
- Not use abusive or foul language, including repetitive sarcasm.
- Not use threats or intimidation
- Not tolerate disruptive behavior by a peer or colleague.
- Report peers who you think may be practicing while impaired.
- Support the peer review process.
- Seek out assistance in conflict resolution when managing disagreements.

Inter-professional Relationships

Providers will:

- Take active part in designing systems to improve patient and population outcomes. Participate in quality projects and programs.
- Listen to others respectfully and be open to new processes and ways of accomplishing good outcomes.
- Never expect a nurse or other caregiver to follow an order that they perceive to be contrary to the patient’s best interest or against policy.
- Clarify miscommunication and unclear orders.
- Seek ethics consults when needed to promote respect for the values, needs, and interest of all participants.
- Address dissatisfaction with policies or process through the proper leadership channels.

Financing and Delivery of Health Care

Providers will:

- Advocate for fair, informed decision making which includes consideration of costs.
- Contribute to planning and decision making for improving care for those vulnerable or at risk for poor outcomes.
- Act as a wise steward of resources when ordering tests, treatments, or therapy.
- Ensure appropriate coding and billing for procedures and care delivered.
- Ensure balance billing is utilized only as allowed by regulations.

References

- American Medical Association, Code of Medical Ethics (2016) retrieved from <https://www.ama-assn.org/about-us/code-medical-ethics>
- American Osteopathic Association, Rules and Guidelines on Physicians' Professional Conduct (2017) retrieved from <http://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/about/leadership/Pages/aoa-rules-and-guidelines-on-physicians-professional-conduct.aspx>