

ISSUE DATE: March 28, 2023
EFFECTIVE DATE: May 18, 2023
REVISION DATE: XX/XX/XX

RECOMMENDER: Sarah Begeal LCSW DATE: 5/18/23
Sarah Begeal, Deputy Director of Community Services

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL: Lori Morgan LCSW DATE: 5/18/23
Lori Morgan, Director of Community Services

COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD APPROVAL: John Bezirgianian DATE: 5/18/23
John Bezirgianian, Medical Director &
Community Services Board Chair

REASON: Update to the 18 NYCRR Part 521 Regulations AND;
Amendments of the New York State Social Service Law Section 363-D

Standards of Conduct

Mission and Values

The mission of the Tioga County Community Services Board is to assure that the citizens of Tioga County have affordable access to services and support which are necessary to assist them to be productive, caring and contributing members of the community. Service recipients and other interested parties should play an integral part in the planning, development, and monitoring of the service system.

Intent

Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's (sometimes referred to as "Tioga County Mental Hygiene" or "the Organization") Standards of Conduct (the Standards) apply to all Affected Individuals. The term "Affected Individuals" for purpose of these Standards includes all employees, contractors, subcontractors, independent contractors, student interns, volunteers, supervisors, senior administrators, including the Compliance Officer, Director of Community Services and Community Services Board members.

The Standards of Conduct were approved by Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's Director of Community Services and the Community Services Board. This document is a formal statement of the Organization's commitment to the standards and rules of ethical conduct.

Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene is committed to compliance with all applicable Federal and State laws and the prevention of unethical, improper or unlawful behavior or acts in the delivery and billing of services, and prevention and detection of fraud, waste and abuse. Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene is committed to stopping such behavior as soon as possible after discovery, and to discipline those persons involved in such behavior or acts, including those who fail to report a violation.

All Affected Individuals, as defined above, must comply with the Standards of Conduct, immediately report any alleged violations of wrongdoing, and assist Management and the Compliance Officer in investigating allegations of wrongdoing.

While the standards addressed in this document are intended to guide Affected Individuals in their daily responsibilities, they do not replace any County OR Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene policies and procedures. There may be instances not addressed by the Standards of Conduct or existing policies and procedures, or there may be activities that seem to conflict with the Standards. Affected Individuals must seek direction from their supervisor, other Management staff, or the Compliance Officer in these instances.

Ethics

It is the policy of Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene to comply with all laws and regulations applicable to its business and to conduct business with the highest degree of integrity. To accomplish this, all Affected Individuals must obey the laws and regulations that govern their work and always act in the best interest of those who receive services and their families (collectively referred to as service recipients) and the Organization. *See also Tioga County Ethics and Disclosure Law in compliance with Article 18 of the New York State General Municipal Law located in the Employee Handbook posted on the County's Intranet under "Employee Handbook – EH Forms".

Guidelines for Affected Individuals: Ethics

- You are expected to keep Management staff informed of what you are doing; to document or record all services or transactions accurately; and to be honest and forthcoming with the Organization, regulatory agencies, and internal and external auditors.
- You are expected to comply with the Organization's policies and procedures, accounting rules, and internal controls.
- You are expected to function with honesty in your work for the Organization and with service recipients, other providers, suppliers, and all others with whom the Organization does business.

Conflict of Interest

For purposes of this section on conflict of interest, an immediate family member is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the Affected Individual is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage. An immediate family member of a person includes:

- The person's spouse;
- Natural or adoptive parent, child, or sibling;
- Stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, or stepsister;
- Father-in-law, mother-in-law; son-in-law; daughter-in-law; brother-in-law; or sister-in-law;
- Grandparent or grandchild; and
- Spouse of a grandparent or grandchild.

Affected Individuals may not engage in any conduct that conflicts – or is perceived to conflict – with the best interest of the Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene. You must not allow any outside financial interest or competing personal interest to influence your decisions or actions taken on behalf of the Organization. This means that you or your immediate family should not personally benefit from doing business with the Organization, should not have

independent relationships with those who deal with the Organization, should not use Organization property for personal benefit, and should not compete with the Organization.

You must avoid any situation where a conflict of interest exists or might appear between your personal interests or those of your family and the interest of the Organization. The appearance of a conflict of interest may be as serious as an actual conflict of interest.

Affected Individuals must disclose any circumstances where the employee or their immediate family member is an employee, consultant, owner, contractor, or investor in any entity that (i) engages in any business or maintains any relationship with the Organization; (ii) provides to, or receives from, the Organization any referrals of service recipients; or (iii) competes with the Organization.

If you have a potential conflict, you must make full disclosure to the Compliance Officer, members of Management and the Board, as appropriate. You will be provided with actions that may be necessary to address or prevent conflict of interest.

Guidelines for Affected Individuals: Conflict of Interest

It is a conflict of interest for you to personally take for yourself opportunities that are discovered through the use of the Organization's property, information, or your position with the Organization; to use the Organization's property or information for personal gain; or to compete with the Organization.

There are many types of situations where potential conflicts may arise. You must promptly report any actual or potential conflict of interest to your immediate supervisor or directly to the Compliance Officer.

Outside Activities and Employment

- You may not conduct outside activities during work time. Such activities interfere with your regular duties and negatively impact the quality of your work.
- You are a representative of the Organization in your everyday life and must represent the Organization positively in the community.
- Outside employment must not conflict in any way with your responsibilities to the Organization or its service recipients. You may not compete against Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene, work for its competitors, or have any ownership interest in a competitor.

Use of Organization Funds and Resources

- The Organization's assets are to only be used for the benefit of the Organization and its service recipients. Assets include not only funds, equipment, inventory, and office supplies, but also concepts, business plans and strategies, information about service recipients, financial information, computer property rights, and other business information about the Organization.
- You may not use Organization assets for personal gain or give them to any other persons or entities, except in the ordinary course of business as part of an approved transaction.

- Property and resources of the Organization should only be used for the benefit of the Organization or its service recipients.

Maintenance of Records

Employees, including student interns, and independent contractors must record and report all information related to Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene and its operations, its service recipients, and financial information fully, accurately, and honestly. Records include, but are not limited to, records of the service recipients, documentation of services, accounting books or records, financial statements, timesheets or records, expense reports, vouchers, bills, payroll, claims, payment records, correspondence, and any other method of communication. Employees and independent contractors must not omit or conceal any relevant information.

Guidelines for Employees and Independent Contractors: Recordkeeping

Many of the Organization forms are legal documents used to prove that a service was provided, to bill for a service, to record a job task, or to record specific happenings. You must document accurately and honestly, and only for those services that you provided or those events in which you were involved.

Employees, including student interns, and independent contractors are expected to maintain complete, accurate, and contemporaneous (timely) records as required by the Organization. The term "records" includes all documents, both written and electronic, that relate to the provision of Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene services or provide support for the billing of Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene services. Records must reflect the actual service provided.

Falsification of Records

- You must not make any false entries in any of the Organization's records or in any public record for any reason.
- You may not alter any permanent entries in the Organization's records. Any records to be appropriately altered must reflect the date of the alteration, the name, signature, and title of the person altering the document, and the reason for the alteration, if not apparent.
- You may not sign the name of another person to any document.
- Signature stamps may not be used.
- You may not create or participate in the creation of any records that are intended to mislead or to conceal anything that is improper.
- Backdating and predating documents is unacceptable.

Expense Records

- You must always charge expenses accurately and to the appropriate cost center or account, regardless of the financial status of the program, project, contract, or the budget status of a particular account or line item.

Retention of Records

- The retention, disposal, or destruction of records of or pertaining to the Organization must always comply with legal and regulatory requirements and Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene policy.
- You may not destroy records pertaining to any legal action or government investigations or audit without written approval of the Compliance Officer.

Protection of Confidential Information

During your employment, contract, or association with the Organization, you may acquire confidential information about Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene, its staff, and service recipients which must be handled in strict confidence and not discussed with outsiders. The protection of confidential business, employee, and service recipient information is very important. Violations may result in fines and penalties, legal action, or criminal charges.

The Organization has developed policies and procedures to assure that the confidentiality of Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene information and information about service recipients is protected and released only with the appropriate authorization or for lawful reasons. All Affected Individuals are required to comply with Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's Patient Confidentiality and HIPAA Policy. If you have any questions concerning confidential information or existing policies, contact your immediate supervisor or the Compliance Officer.

Guidelines for Affected Individuals: Confidentiality

You must treat all of the Organization's records and information as confidential.

You may not release confidential information without the proper authorization. Confidential information includes not only information about service recipients and their families, but also non-public information about the Organization that may be of use to the Organization's competitors or harmful to the Organization or its service recipients if released.

You must protect the Organization's information and avoid discussing or disclosing the Organization's information, purposefully or inadvertently (through casual conversation), to any unauthorized person inside or outside the Organization. Furthermore, staff may not share confidential information about the Organization with anyone, except where required for a legitimate business purpose. Ask your supervisor if you are not sure whether certain information is confidential.

The Organization's information may not be removed from the Organization's property without permission from a supervisor or administrator with proper authority over the information.

Termination of Employment or Contract

- You may not use any confidential information gained from your employment or contract with the Organization for your benefit or another organization's benefit. You may not take copies of any reports, documents, or any other property belonging to the Organization.
- Upon termination of employment or contract with the Organization, you must return all of the Organization's property including, but not limited to, copies of documents, notes, and

other records containing confidential information; computer disks; your ID and keys; and credit cards.

Information Security

Guidelines for Affected Individuals: Information Security and Technology

- You are responsible for properly using information stored and produced by all the Organization's computer systems.
- Computers, internet access, email, or other office communication systems are intended for business-related purposes only and not for uses that may be disruptive, offensive, harassing, or harmful to others.
- Do not share your system username or password with another person or allow another to access the computer with your password or log-on information.
- All Affected Individuals are required to comply with *Tioga County Comprehensive Information Security Policy (pages 1-28 in the County Employee Handbook) and posted on the County's Intranet under "Employee Handbook – EH Forms"*.
- If you have any questions concerning information security, contact your immediate supervisor or the Compliance Officer.

Fair Dealing

Business Dealings and Referrals

Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene will not be inappropriately influenced with goods or services from any business in which Affected Individuals and their immediate family members have a substantial interest.

Conducting business with providers, contractors, suppliers, service recipients, and competitors may pose ethical, and sometimes legal, problems. Affected Individuals are expected to deal fairly with providers, contractors, service recipients and competitors.

As defined in the Conflict of Interest Policy, and for purposes of these Standards of Conduct, an immediate family member is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the Affected Individual is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage. An immediate family member of a person includes:

- The person's spouse;
- Natural or adoptive parent, child, or sibling;
- Stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, or stepsister;
- Father-in-law, mother-in-law; son-in-law; daughter-in-law; brother-in-law; or sister-in-law;
- Grandparent or grandchild; and
- Spouse of a grandparent or grandchild.

Guidelines for Affected Individuals: Fair Dealing

The Standards of Conduct and the following guidelines are intended to help you make appropriate, responsible, and correct decisions in these and all matters:

Kickbacks and Rebate

- Kickbacks and rebates in cash, credit, or other forms are prohibited. They are not only unethical, but also in many cases illegal.

Gifts and Gratuities and Entertainment

- Affected Individuals may not without permission of the Compliance Officer accept, solicit, or offer anything of value from anyone doing business with the Organization.
- Under no circumstances may an employee or immediate family member of an employee accept a cash gift or gratuity from a service recipient, a family member or friend of a service recipient, or a vendor or potential vendor. Any Affected Individual who gives or accepts such a cash gift or gratuity will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of contract, assignment or engagement with Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene.
- You may not solicit money, gifts, gratuity, or any other personal benefits or favors of any kind from providers, contractors, accounts, or service recipients and their families.
- You must not offer or accept entertainment that is not a reasonable addition to a business relationship but is primarily intended to gain favor or to influence a business decision.

Agreements with Contractors and Vendors

The Organization must ensure that any agreements with contractors and vendors clearly and accurately describe the services to be performed or items to be purchased. Performance standards and the applicable compensation, if any, must be reasonable in amount, not be excessive in terms of industry practice, and must equal the value of the service(s) rendered or items purchased.

Improper Use of Funds or Assets

Use of the Organization's funds or assets for any improper purpose is strictly prohibited. If you are aware of or have reason to believe that funds or assets are being improperly used, you must report this immediately to your supervisor or the Compliance Officer.

You may only approve payments or receipts on behalf of the Organization that are described in documents supporting the transaction. "Slush funds" or similar off-book accounts, where there is no accounting for receipts or expenditures on the Organization's books, are strictly prohibited.

Federal and State Programs

Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene is committed to complying with the laws and regulations that govern the Federal and State programs that it administers. The Compliance Program, these Standards of Conduct, and policies and procedures are developed to provide

guidance in your day-to-day work and activities you perform on behalf of the Organization. You must abide by the policies and procedures and the Standards set by the Organization.

Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's programs and services are largely funded by Federal and State healthcare programs, including Medicaid and Medicare. Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene is committed to full compliance with all Federal and State healthcare program requirements. Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene must also comply with laws and regulations designed to combat fraud, waste, and abuse and the submission of inaccurate or false claims.

Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene has put in place procedures and practices to ensure that:

- All service documentation, records, and reports are prepared timely, accurately, and honestly;
- All documentation supporting claims for service is complete and maintained in accordance with regulatory requirements and the Organization's policies;
- All claims submitted to any government or private healthcare program are accurate and comply with all Federal and State laws and regulations and payer requirements;
- Claims are only submitted for medically necessary services provided by eligible providers;
- All claims are properly documented and accurately coded; and
- Billing errors are promptly identified and any payments received in error are promptly returned to the payer.

Employees and independent contractors responsible for the documentation, charging, coding, billing, and accounting of services must comply with all applicable State and Federal regulations and Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene policies and procedures.

It is against the law and Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's policies to knowingly or carelessly submit a false claim. Submitting a false claim includes using false records, using the wrong code, double billing, or billing or causing to be billed services that are not provided or fully documented, and billing for services that are not medically necessary.

All Affected Individuals have a responsibility to notify the Compliance Officer promptly if they are charged with a criminal offense related to healthcare or are proposed or found to be subject to exclusion from Federal or State healthcare programs.

Governmental Investigations

There may be times that the Organization is asked to cooperate with an investigation by a Federal or State governmental agency, or to respond to a request for information. A request may be formally addressed to the Organization or to an individual employed by or associated with the Organization. All Affected Individuals must report any requests for information or cooperation with an investigation to the Chief Executive and Compliance Officer immediately.

Employment Environment

Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene is committed to creating a safe and professional workplace where employees and others are treated with respect and without regard to their race,

sex, gender, age, religion, national origin, color, marital status, disability, or other protected characteristics. Business integrity, teamwork, trust, and respect are the Organization's most important values. Unlawful discrimination or harassment of any sort violates these values. All Affected Individuals must exhibit and promote respect, integrity, trust, and teamwork in the workplace and must comply with the Organization's policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment in all facets of the Organization's work.

All Affected Individuals are required to support Tioga County's commitment to a safe and professional work environment and to demonstrate appropriate behavior in the workplace.

All Affected Individuals are prohibited from joking about another person's race, sex, age, religion, national origin, color, marital status, disability, or other protected characteristics.

All employees are prohibited from considering someone's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or other protected characteristic in making decisions about hiring, placement, assignment of duties, training, promotion, termination, compensation, benefits, and other work terms.

Sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexual harassment includes any form of unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature.

Affected Individuals are responsible for understanding Tioga County's policies prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment. You should consult with an appropriate supervisor, or administrator, if you have questions about your right to a workplace free from unlawful harassment or discrimination or if you have questions about your duty to avoid discrimination.

Tioga County Policies regarding Personnel Workplace Violence Prevention and Discriminatory Harassment Policy can be found in the Employee Handbook located on the Intranet (pages 1-9 in the Employee Handbook), Ethics Rules-Revised (pages 1-28 in the Employee Handbook).

Seeking Guidance and Reporting Violations

All Affected Individuals must report any suspected fraud, waste, and abuse; illegal or unethical acts; actual or suspected violations of Federal or State laws and regulations; actual or suspected violations of the Standards of Conduct, the Compliance Program and Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's policies and procedures; improper acts in the delivery or billing of services; and other wrongdoing (collectively referred to as "compliance concerns") to their immediate supervisor, member of senior management, the Compliance Officer or Director of Community Services. Concerns can be reported confidentially and anonymously if desired, through the **Tioga County Mental Hygiene Corporate Compliance Hotline at 607-689-8181**, or via mail to the agency address: **Attention: Corporate Compliance Officer 1062 State Route 38, PO BOX, 177 Owego, NY 13827.**

Concerns may also be reported directly to the Office of Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) via the OMIG Compliance Hotline **877-873-7283** OR online website at <https://omig.ny.gov/medicaid-fraud/file-allegation>

When actual or suspected noncompliance is reported to any Affected Individual, it must be promptly referred to the Compliance Officer. Steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the reporters. The Organization will not tolerate any form of retaliation or intimidation

against a person who makes a good-faith report in accordance with the Standards of Conduct and its Compliance Program.

All Affected Individuals must cooperate fully and honestly in any investigation into reported noncompliance.

Corrective Action and/or Discipline

Affected Individuals found to have engaged in non-compliant activity or wrongdoing addressed in these Standards of Conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, contract, assignment, or association with Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene.

Affected Individuals who knowingly fail to report compliance concerns are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, contract, assignment, or association with the Organization.

Employees may face disciplinary action ranging from a verbal warning to suspension or termination, depending on the incident and the relevant surrounding circumstances. A more significant level of discipline will be taken for intentional or reckless behavior.

Your Responsibilities

- ✓ Attend required training and read and understand Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's Compliance Plan, Compliance Program Policies and Procedures, and Standards of Conduct.
- ✓ Follow Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's Standards of Conduct and abide by all policies and procedures, guidelines, and Federal and State laws and regulations.
- ✓ Be alert to any situation that could violate Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene's Standards of Conduct, Compliance Program, policies and procedures, guidelines, and/or Federal and State laws and regulations.
- ✓ Promptly report any questions, issues, compliance concerns, wrongdoing, violations, or suspected violations to your supervisor, another member of Management, a member of the Compliance Committee, or the Compliance Officer.