

# Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center

## Policies and Procedures

Subject: Electronic E-Mail Usage

Policy #: 4.9.6

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### 4.9.6 E-Mail Usage

#### **PURPOSE**

This policy provides the guidelines for the use of e-mail (electronic mail) services for **Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center**.

#### **SCOPE**

This e-mail usage policy applies to all employees, contractors, business associates, part-time employees, volunteers, and other individuals who are provided access to the organization's e-mail system.

#### **POLICY**

Electronic mail or e-mail has been found to be an effective form of business communication. The e-mail system is provided to the personnel of **Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center** for business purposes only. All data, files, attachments and messages are the property of **Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center**.

The e-mail system may be monitored for content by personnel and systems authorized by the Executive Director. Communications via e-mail are not private and can be accessed and disclosed as deemed necessary by management or as required by law. Unless authorized by the Executive Director, employees may not intentionally intercept, eavesdrop, record, read, alter, or receive another person's e-mail messages.

Messages deleted from the system may still be available to others, either through a system back-up or from all recipients of the message.

Employees who are terminated have no rights to the content of their e-mail messages and will not be allowed access to the **Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center** e-mail system. Furthermore, terminated staff should make no attempt to access the **Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center** e-mail system after their last day of employment.

Always remember to protect or limit access to HIPAA protected information. Some reminders are:

- Extreme care should be taken when sending an e-mail containing PHI to ensure that the recipient e-mail address corresponds to the intended recipient.
- Except where PHI relates specifically to treatment, any PHI transmitted by e-mail should be limited to the minimum necessary to meet the recipient's needs.
- E-mail messages containing PHI or confidential information (such as social security numbers) must not be sent to or forwarded to non-**Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center** e-mail addresses - except for providers or payors directly associated with the treatment or service of the individual consumer.

Additionally, the **Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center** e-mail system will include a system-wide disclaimer and confidentiality notice for transmitted messages. The statement is:

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE TO RECIPIENT: This transmission contains confidential information belonging to the sender that is legally privileged and proprietary and may be subject to protection under the law, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail, you are prohibited from sharing, copying, or otherwise using or disclosing its contents. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately by reply e-mail and permanently delete this e-mail and any attachments without reading, forwarding or saving them. Thank you.

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action. This action can be, but not limited to, probation, suspension, termination of employment, and/or civil or criminal prosecution.

## **PROHIBITED ACTIONS**

It is a violation of the Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center policy to transmit any message, or attachment, that might be considered:

- discriminatory (based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.)
- offensive
- defamatory
- sexual
- pornographic
- political
- harassing
- a non-approved solicitation of funds
- illegal, and/or prohibited by Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center procedures or policies.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Please keep the following guidelines in mind when sending or receiving e-mail:

- Include a Subject line that applies to the context of the e-mail discussion.
- Always check your spelling before sending an e-mail message.
- Do not use all capitalization – it is considered rude and implies shouting.

- Do not use all lower case – it implies laziness.
- Do not use any e-mail footer or tag line that has not been approved by **Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center** management.
- Limit the use of abbreviations in business related e-mail messages.
- Limit the use of backgrounds, wallpapers, font styles and font colors in e-mail messages as they often impact the ability to read through web-based or mobile e-mail clients. Studies indicate the Arial, Tahoma, Trebuchet MS, and Verdana are the most easily read font styles.
- Ensure that the recipient’s e-mail address is correct before sending the message.
- Limit recipients to only those with a recognized role or need to know.
- When replying to or forwarding a message – do not change the content of the original message without noting changes or additions.
- Always protect PHI and send only the amount of information required.
- In the event of contact by consumers or other external care partners, it is your duty to alert them to the fact that Internet e-mail is not secure, private or guaranteed and the risks of exposure of PHI.
- Report any questionable or illegal e-mail (see “Violation Reporting”) below.
- Do not participate in, encourage, or forward any e-mail chain letters or advertising.

## **1 PROCEDURE**

### To request an e-mail account:

1. A team leader must submit a request to the Executive Director or Security Officer.
2. After review and approval, the I.T. staff will create the account for the approved staff member.

## **VIOLATION REPORTING**

Any observed misuse or violation of this policy should be immediately reported to one of the following persons:

- Executive Director,
- Chief Financial Officer,
- Security Officer