

Report on Medicare Compliance Volume 31, Number 45. December 19, 2022

A Code of Ethics for Healthcare Compliance Professionals

By Nina Youngstrom

This tool appears in the Health Care Compliance Association's *Healthcare Compliance Forms and Tools*.^[1]

Principle 1: Obligations to the Public

Healthcare compliance professionals (HCCPs) should embrace the spirit and the letter of the law governing their employing organization's conduct and exemplify the highest ethical standards in their conduct in order to contribute to the public good.

Rule 1.1: HCCPs shall not aid, abet, or participate in misconduct.

Rule 1.2: HCCPs shall take such steps as are necessary to prevent misconduct by their employing organizations.

Rule 1.3: HCCPs shall exercise sound judgment in cooperating with all official and legitimate government investigations of or inquiries concerning their employing organization.

Commentary: While the role of the HCCP in a government investigation may vary, the HCCP shall never obstruct or lie in an investigation.

Rule 1.4: If, in the course of their work, HCCPs become aware of any decision by their employing organization which, if implemented, would constitute misconduct; adversely affect the health of patients, residents, or clients; or defraud the system, the professional shall: (a) refuse to consent to the decision; (b) escalate to the highest governing authority, as appropriate; (c) if serious issues remain unresolved after exercising "a" and "b," consider resignation; and (d) report the decision to public officials when required by law.

Commentary: The duty of a compliance professional goes beyond other professionals in an organizational context, inasmuch as their duty to the public includes prevention of organizational misconduct. The compliance professional should exhaust all internal means available to deter their employing organization, its employees, and its agents from engaging in misconduct. HCCPs should consider resignation only as a last resort because compliance professionals may be the only remaining barrier to misconduct. In the event that resignation becomes necessary, however, the duty to the public takes priority over any duty of confidentiality to the employing organization. A letter of resignation should set forth to senior management and the highest governing body of the employing organization the precise conditions that necessitate HCCP's action. In complex organizations, the highest governing body may be the highest governing body of a parent corporation.

This document is only available to subscribers. Please log in or purchase access.

[Purchase Login](#)