



Standards of Conduct for Participants

The UT Health San Antonio Regional Physician Network (“RPN”) has the expectation of each member to conduct all activities in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and with the utmost ethical integrity. While the information that follows is not all inclusive, it is indicative of important and frequent activities involving daily business and workplace operations.

Members shall adhere to the applicable laws, rules, regulations and policies of governmental and organizational authorities. The failure to do so will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of membership affiliation.

Code of Ethics

1. No member shall accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably appear to influence the member in the discharge of duties.
2. No member shall disclose confidential information or use such information for his or her personal benefit.
3. No member shall transact any business in an official capacity with any business entity of which the member is an officer, agent, or member, or in which the member owns a substantial interest.
4. Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment are unacceptable behaviors. Such unacceptable behavior includes verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Standards of Conduct

Accuracy of Records. All records, whether of a medical, operational, or financial nature, should be maintained in accordance with applicable laws and policies. No one may alter or falsify information on any record or document. Making any false statement in a medical record that is used to support billing of medical services may be considered criminal fraud. Billings to third-party payors (government and private insurance payors) and federal sponsored research are examples of records that must be accurate and conform to appropriate laws and regulations.

Computer Information Security. It is a violation of the Texas Penal Code to disclose computer passwords; penalties range from a Class B misdemeanor to a felony depending on the related monetary damage. Computer passwords should be considered highly confidential. Never disclose computer passwords to anyone. Furthermore, do not write or otherwise document passwords in a place that is accessible by others.

Computer Software. Members or participants who use software licensed to the RPN must abide by applicable software license agreements and may copy licensed software only as permitted by the license. Unauthorized duplication of copyrighted software is a violation of federal copyright law. Furthermore, it is illegal to install licensed software on more than one computer, unless the license expressly provides for more than one installation. Members or participants should direct any questions about applicable software license agreements to the President.

Confidential Information. Confidential information about RPN's members, patients, strategies, and operations is a valuable asset. Although an individual may use confidential information to perform a job, that information must not be shared with others, inside or outside of the RPN, unless the individuals have a legitimate need to know and is shared in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Confidential information includes personnel data, patient information, research data, financial data, strategic plans, marketing strategies, member lists and data, supplier and subcontractor information, and proprietary computer software. When the RPN collects information from individuals, such as patients, it is required to disclose to the individual their rights under federal regulations.

Conflicts of Interest. RPN members are prohibited from having a direct or indirect interest, financial or otherwise, in a corporation or business, engage in a professional activity, or incur an obligation of any nature that is in substantial conflict with or might reasonably tend to influence the discharge of the member's official duties at the RPN. All members and participants are expected to disclose, annually, any arrangement with a company or entity external to the RPN that might create a potential conflict of interest.

Contacts with the Government and Outside Investigators. The RPN expects to cooperate in government investigations with all reasonable demands made in any government investigation of the RNP or a RPN member. However, it is essential that the legal rights of the RPN and its members be protected. If a member receives a subpoena, inquiry, or other legal document from any governmental agency regarding RPN business, whether at home or in the workplace, immediately notify the President. The RPN does not prohibit a member from speaking to any government investigator or agent. However, to best protect the member and the RPN, if any governmental agency or any attorney contacts a member at home concerning RNP business, the member may politely ask the agent to contact the member at the office.

Contacts with the Media. The Board of Directors acts as the spokesperson for the RPN. If at any time a reporter is requesting information or is on the RPN campus, the member should call the President. If any member of the media contacts a member, kindly instruct them to contact the President.

Contracts and Agreements. Only individuals expressly authorized in writing by the President may enter into contracts or agreements, either orally or written, on behalf of the RNP. No person may sign a contract unless expressly authorized to do so in writing by the President.

Fraud, Waste and Abuse. It is every member's responsibility to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. The RPN's Fraud, Waste, and Abuse training specifies individual responsibilities and actions regarding fraud/dishonest acts.

- Fraud is defined as knowingly and willfully attempting to receive financial gain by making false statements or developing a scheme to receive anything of value.
- Abuse is defined as activities that result in excessive or unreasonable costs to the RPN, or other state or federal agencies.

Gifts and Gratuities. A member must not accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably tend to influence the discharge of official duties or that the member knows or should know is being offered with the intent to influence official conduct.

Kickbacks. Kickbacks are undisclosed payments, gifts, or services offered in return for something of value, increased business, or business referral. It is a criminal offense to receive or solicit any remuneration, including a gift, cash, bribe, rebate, or discount in return for referring an individual or patient to the RPN or for any service offered by the RPN. It is also a crime to receive or solicit remuneration in return for purchasing, ordering, or arranging for or recommending purchasing, leasing, or ordering any good or service. Members who are involved in any type of kickback scheme will receive disciplinary action, including termination and possible prosecution, if applicable.

Purchases For Items, Goods or Services. No member may expend RPN funds for any purchase unless the person is authorized to make the purchase, and the purchase is made in accordance with all purchasing procedures.

Retention and Disposal of Records. The RPN is required to maintain an active and continuing records management program that identifies vital and confidential records and ensures the appropriate retention and disposition of records. No member should tamper with records, or remove or destroy them except in accordance with the approved retention and disposition policy.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. The RPN is committed to the principle that the working environment should be free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are illegal and unprofessional. Members who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

Use of RPN-Owned Property. It is the responsibility of each member to preserve the RPN's assets, including time, materials, supplies, equipment, and information. RPN assets must be used only for related purposes. As a general rule, the personal use of any RPN asset is prohibited. The incidental use of items such as e-mail, the Internet, and telephones is permissible provided that the use complies with all applicable policies and that the use does not result in additional cost to the RPN. A local phone call is an example. Any use of RPN resources for personal financial gain is prohibited.