



Human Resources Policy and Practices
Section: Employee Rights and
Responsibilities
Policy: **Confidentiality**
Current as of: 4/1/09

Purpose: To ensure confidentiality of all medical, personal and financial information of the persons we serve, including both external and internal customers.

Policy: Employees of Valley Health may have access to what is referred to as “confidential information.” Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, individually identifiable information concerning patients, families, employees, volunteers, and physicians. It may also include financial, medical, personal, human resources documentation and other information relating to VH. Employees may learn of or have access to some or all of this confidential information through a computer system or through their employment activities.

Confidential information is valuable, sensitive and is protected by federal and state laws and regulations as well as strict VH policies. Employees of VH must understand and comply with these laws and policies governing confidential information. Employees must also understand that violations of these laws and policies will subject them to discipline, which might include but is not limited to termination of employment, and potential legal liability.

Accordingly, as a condition of and in consideration of employees’ access to confidential information, the following must be adhered to:

1. Employees will use confidential information only as needed to perform their legitimate duties as employees of VH. This means, among other things, that:
 - a) Employees will only access confidential information for which they have a need to know based on their authorized job duties; and
 - b) Employees will only disclose confidential information to employees, volunteers, physicians, and other persons who have a right and need to know; and

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Issued by: VH Human Resources
Approved by: VH Senior Management Team

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VH Policy Revision Date: 10/21/97, 10/22/01,
11/11/02, 4/7/05

4/1/09
Date

Michael J. Halseth, President and C.E.O.

- c) Employees will only access and disclose confidential information in a manner which provides for privacy and security; and
 - d) Employees will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, review, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized within the scope of their legitimate duties; and
 - e) Employees will not misuse confidential information or be careless with confidential information.
2. Employees will safeguard and will not disclose their security codes, passwords, identification badges, or any other authorizations which allow them to access confidential information. In addition, employees will accept responsibility for all activities undertaken using their security codes, passwords, identification badges, or other authorizations.
 3. Employees must understand that their obligations under this policy will continue after they leave the employment of VHS. Employees also understand that their privileges hereunder are subject to periodic reviews, and that VH may at any time revoke their security codes, identification badges, or access to confidential information.
 4. Employees must understand that their continued employment is contingent upon their adherence to the information stated in this policy. Employees further understand that their failure to comply with applicable laws and this policy may result in their loss of employment with VH.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION:

Employees are to refer any requests for information from the news and media to the VH Public Relations Department (See: HR 512 Release of Information to the News Media).