

LIVING HOUSTON METHODIST VALUES

A Handbook for Employees | 2020

HOUSTON
Methodist[®]
LEADING MEDICINE



HOUSTON METHODIST

MISSION

To provide high-quality, cost-effective health care that delivers the best value to the people we serve in a spiritual environment of caring in association with internationally recognized teaching and research.

VALUES

INTEGRITY

We are honest and ethical in all we say and do.

COMPASSION

We embrace the whole person and respond to emotional, ethical and spiritual concerns as well as physical needs.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We hold ourselves accountable for our actions.

RESPECT

We treat every individual as a person of worth, dignity and value.

EXCELLENCE

We strive to be the best at what we do and a model for others to emulate.

DEAR HOUSTON METHODIST EMPLOYEE



Marc L. Boom, MD
President and Chief
Executive Officer

Please keep this handbook handy for quick reference to answer any questions you may have about Houston Methodist. It contains important information that you may eventually need — such as employee benefits and business practices.

While this book contains a lot of institutional information, it's our employees who help create a culture and patient experience unique to Houston Methodist. By embracing our I CARE values of integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence, you are helping create something

special. These values are at the core of our culture and ensure that the patient is at the center of everything we do. The patient experience is an integral part of our external promise of leading medicine.

Our goal is to set a new standard for leading academic medical centers through unparalleled safety, quality, service and innovation. We can't do this without you. You play a vital part in our commitment to leading medicine — a commitment that has made Houston Methodist one of the premier hospital systems in the United States.

While new patients come to us for our innovative treatments and clinical expertise, it's their extraordinary patient experience at Houston Methodist — which depends on you — that will bring them back to us and earn their loyalty.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc L. Boom'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Thank you for everything you do for our patients.

Marc L. Boom, MD
President
Chief Executive Officer
Houston Methodist

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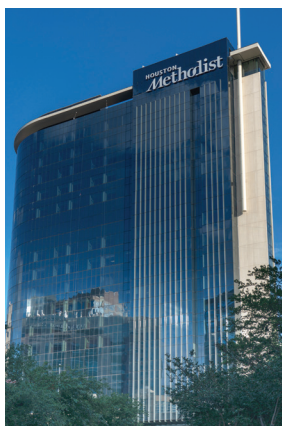
This handbook covers many situations that may arise during the course of your work. There may be times when the answers to your questions are not apparent. Please see your supervisor for guidance or explanation when needed. You may also speak with a representative of the Human Resources Department or the Business Practices Office. Changes to existing policies are made on a regular basis. The most current version of the Houston Methodist Policies and Procedures are on the Houston Methodist intranet and take precedence if a matter is in conflict with the printed handbook. In the event that an employee does not have access to a computer, the policies and procedures may be obtained from the employee's manager or the Human Resources Department at the appropriate entity.

ABOUT HOUSTON METHODIST

Houston Methodist has a proud tradition of leading medicine. It is comprised of an academic medical center in the world-renowned Texas Medical Center, six community hospitals, a long-term acute care hospital, a leading-edge research institute, and freestanding emergency care and imaging centers that serve the Greater Houston area and beyond.

Houston Methodist is primarily affiliated with Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, two of the nation's leading centers for clinical care. Houston Methodist also has affiliations with Texas A&M Health Science Center and the University of Houston. Houston Methodist leverages these affiliations to take on the toughest challenges in medicine to pioneer better treatments and provide high-quality patient care and cutting-edge research.

HOUSTON METHODIST HOSPITAL



Houston Methodist Hospital, the flagship hospital of Houston Methodist, is located in the Texas Medical Center. For more than 100 years, Houston Methodist Hospital has served the Houston community and the world with the highest-quality patient care in a cost-effective, spiritual environment. Affiliated with the Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, Houston Methodist continues its longstanding commitment to improving the community's health and well-being.

From its humble beginnings in downtown Houston, Houston Methodist Hospital has evolved into one of the nation's largest private nonprofit hospitals with 933 operating beds.

The hospital has more than 8,000 employees, making it one of the largest employers in Houston.

The hospital's reputation for excellence in patient care and its commitment to improving patient outcomes represent a significant

motivation in the development of six multidisciplinary centers of excellence:

- Houston Methodist Cancer Center
- Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center
- Houston Methodist J.C. Walter Jr. Transplant Center
- Houston Methodist Lynda K. and David M. Underwood Center for Digestive Disorders
- Houston Methodist Neurological Institute
- Houston Methodist Orthopedics & Sports Medicine

Houston Methodist Hospital is ranked among the country's top hospitals in nine specialties by *U.S. News & World Report* in its 2019 "Best Hospitals" issue, and for the eighth year in a row is named the No. 1 hospital in Texas and No. 1 in the Houston area. Houston Methodist Hospital's nine ranked specialties include: cancer (39), cardiology and heart surgery (16), diabetes and endocrinology (49), gastroenterology and GI surgery (14), geriatrics (34), nephrology (15), neurology and neurosurgery (34), orthopedics (14), and pulmonology (24).



HOUSTON METHODIST BAYTOWN HOSPITAL

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital has provided quality medical care for Baytown, east Harris County and the surrounding counties of Chambers, Liberty and Montgomery since 1948. The hospital's origin goes back to

1944 when Humble Oil and Refining Company contributed \$500,000 for the construction of a hospital in Baytown. Confirming the need for a first-class community health care facility, local businesses, organizations and individuals supplemented Humble's gift with \$1.2 million.

In 1950, Houston Methodist Baytown was the first Harris County Hospital outside of Houston to be honored with full accreditation by The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations. Since then, the hospital has achieved a number of milestones, including earning

Magnet recognition for nursing excellence, attributable to its growth and to the enhancement and expansion of services available to the residents of Baytown and surrounding areas.

Today, Houston Methodist Baytown provides comprehensive care for patients through its acute inpatient and extensive outpatient services. Provided health care services include, comprehensive cancer treatment programs, bariatric surgery, cardiovascular surgery and services, obstetrics/gynecology, physical, speech and occupational therapy, primary care, orthopedics and sports medicine, and occupational health services.

The hospital also provides a medicine residency program. Houston Methodist Baytown continues its commitment to providing the most current medical services and technology to better serve its community through an ongoing \$100 million construction and renovation program that includes a new and expanded emergency department and new outpatient center.

HOUSTON METHODIST CLEAR LAKE HOSPITAL



Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital is a full service hospital with 178 licensed beds, including 8 operating rooms, an on-site ambulatory surgery center, 4 primary care clinics and 6 orthopedic and sports medicine clinics throughout the surrounding communities.

The campus offers state-of-the-art diagnostic imaging, including two newly expanded cardiac catheterization labs with electrophysiology capabilities. Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital is a nationally accredited Chest Pain Center, Primary Stroke Center, comprehensive accredited center by American College of Surgeons American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and also accredited with the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer.

The hospital offers an exceptional array of inpatient and outpatient services including 3D mammography and other imaging services, labor and delivery with a level II neonatal ICU, cancer center including medical oncology, hematology and radiation oncology, advanced laparoscopic surgery, bariatric surgery, cardiology and cardiovascular surgery, critical

care services, comprehensive orthopedics and sports medicine and physical, occupational, pediatric and aquatic therapies, primary care, neurology, urology, urogynecology, otolaryngology, women’s services and emergency care.

HOUSTON METHODIST CONTINUING CARE HOSPITAL



Houston Methodist Continuing Care Hospital, which opened in 2014, is a long-term acute care hospital that proudly serves the Greater Houston area, focusing on the needs of patients who require extended hospitalization, typically for 25 days or more. Located in Katy, Houston Methodist Continuing Care is committed to providing its patients with unparalleled safety, quality, service and innovation that the community depends on from Houston

Methodist. From planning and treatment to discharge and recovery, the care team works with patients and their families to provide the highest quality of care and to facilitate each patient’s transition back home.

As an extension of Houston Methodist West Hospital just two miles away, several outpatient services are offered at Houston Methodist Continuing Care, including imaging, rehabilitation and wound care.

Houston Methodist Continuing Care also serves as the central hub for both the Houston Methodist Revenue Cycle division and the Houston Methodist Health Information Management department.

HOUSTON METHODIST SUGAR LAND HOSPITAL



Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital offers leading-edge technology and excellent medical care in a unique, home-like environment.

The hospital is designed to maximize patient comfort and convenience, while offering the highest-quality medical diagnosis and treatment.

In 2019, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the hospital at No. 5 in the Houston area and No. 9 in Texas.

An integral part of the Fort Bend community since 1998, the hospital is an extension of Houston Methodist Hospital in the Texas Medical Center, with the same standards of excellence and commitment to quality. That combination of medical center expertise and hometown convenience makes Houston Methodist Sugar Land the first choice for Fort Bend County physicians and patients.

More than 1,000 physicians, representing the full range of medical specialties, are on staff at Houston Methodist Sugar Land — not to mention an experienced, caring nursing staff and support personnel dedicated to serving patients.

With centers of excellence in cardiology, neuroscience, oncology, orthopedics, urology and women's services, Houston Methodist Sugar Land offers a wide range of services, including cancer center; catheterization lab; imaging and radiology; emergency department; endoscopy; heart and vascular center; infusion center; inpatient services; intensive care; joint program; lab services; neuroscience and spine center including treatment of headaches and migraines and stroke program; palliative care; rehabilitation services including aquatic therapy, Big® & Loud® therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, respiratory therapy and speech therapy; surgical services including robotic assisted surgery; women's services including the breast care center and childbirth center with level II NICU; and wound care.

In 2007, surgeons at Houston Methodist Sugar Land performed the first open-heart surgery in Fort Bend County. And since then, Houston Methodist Sugar Land has performed many more "firsts" and has received numerous recognitions and awards for excellence in patient care, technological innovations, medical advancements and community involvement, including chest pain center accreditation and stroke certification. The hospital also achieved Magnet® designation awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center and is the only hospital in Fort Bend County that is nationally accredited by the American College of Surgeons-Commission on Cancer.

Houston Methodist Sugar Land has grown into a world-class facility with 347 beds and 27 operating rooms, making it the largest health care provider in Fort Bend County.

HOUSTON METHODIST THE WOODLANDS HOSPITAL



Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital opened in June 2017 as the eighth hospital in the Houston Methodist system. This 187-bed, 470,000-square-foot, full-service, acute care hospital offers many of the same services as our flagship hospital in the Texas Medical Center. Also on the beautiful

hospital campus, located at the intersection of I-45 and TX 242, are two medical office buildings, which include a breast care center, cancer center and infusion center, heart and vascular services, neurology, orthopedics and sports medicine, rehabilitation services, wellness services, an outpatient laboratory and several other multi-specialty physician practices.

In September 2019, Houston Methodist The Woodlands broke ground on a \$250-million expansion project that will add 100 beds, focused on medical/surgical and women's services, and 10 operating rooms. It will also include the expansion of the endoscopy center, heart center, emergency center and diagnostic imaging department to include an enhanced neuro-diagnostic and interventional center. Completion is scheduled for early 2022.

Houston Methodist Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation also opened on the campus in December 2019. The new state-of-the-art facility features a full-length indoor pitching and batting cage, full-swing multisport simulator, an outdoor sports and agility training field and more. The new location offers the most advanced services including pre and post cancer therapy, virtual neuro rehab, speech therapy and pelvic floor therapy.

Recognitions awarded to Houston Methodist The Woodlands include:

- DNV Primary Stroke Certification
- American College of Radiology Breast Imaging Center of Excellence
- Pathway to Excellence Designation
- Hip and Knee Replacement Program Certification from DNV GL Healthcare
- MBSAQIP Accreditation as a Comprehensive Center for Bariatrics

- NICU Level III Designation
- 2019 Bill Aston Award for Quality
- AHA “Get with the Guidelines” – Stroke Gold Plus Award
- 2019 Bernard A. Birnbaum, MD Quality Leadership Award by Vizient, Inc.

HOUSTON METHODIST WEST HOSPITAL



Houston Methodist West Hospital opened to patients in 2010 and now has more than 1,500 employees.

The hospital has 293 operating beds and 19 operating rooms. The hospital is a Magnet®-recognized health care facility by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Magnet

Recognition Program®. Principal medical services provided by Houston Methodist West include inpatient and outpatient medical and surgical care, state-of-the-art surgery suites, endoscopy suites, cardiac catheterization labs, a 24-hour emergency care center, full-service imaging center, executive wellness screenings, and vascular care, robotic surgery, women's services, orthopedics and sports medicine, neurology and neurosurgery, urology, plastic surgery and otolaryngology.

HMW has state-of-the-art technology throughout the hospital including a hybrid OR, robotic surgery (both the Si and the Xi), electrophysiology services, and an outpatient transplant clinic.

The campus reflects Houston Methodist's approach of delivering patient- and family-centered care, combining hospitality with the latest medical technologies. Houston Methodist West Hospital's medical staff is highly trained and experienced in all medical specialties.

The hospital is committed to leading medicine in the West Houston and Katy communities by delivering Houston Methodist's standard of unparalleled quality, safety and innovation to the patients we serve.

HOUSTON METHODIST WILLOWBROOK HOSPITAL



Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital opened in December 2000 to serve the growing Northwest Houston community. The 312-bed, tertiary care hospital is located on a 52-acre campus featuring four primary facilities.

The North Pavilion provides medical and surgical inpatient and outpatient services,

emergency department, cardiac catheterization lab, operating rooms, laboratory, pharmacy, diagnostic and therapeutic services, the Swadesh Khurana Healing Garden, full-service Pathway Café, chapel, and specialized services, including the inpatient neuroscience unit and the Houston Methodist Heart & Vascular Center and Stroke Center. In late February 2020, the hospital will open a new medical/surgical unit on the fifth floor, which will add 36 more patient beds.

The Women's and Children's Pavilion offers family-centered care services for the community. This facility has a Sleep Center, the Houston Methodist Breast Care Center at Willowbrook, and the Houston Methodist Childbirth Center at Willowbrook. The Childbirth Center offers midwifery services and includes private labor and delivery suites, an antepartum unit with fetal monitoring and cardiac telemetry monitoring capability, and a level III neonatal intensive care unit staffed around the clock with Texas Children's Hospital neonatologists and neonatal nurse practitioners.

The Centerfield Outpatient Center is home to Houston Methodist Orthopedics & Sports Medicine at Willowbrook, Houston Methodist Cancer Center at Willowbrook, Rehabilitation Services, and the Outpatient Surgery department, currently under renovation to add more surgical suites.

The Hargrave Medical Office Building houses the Wound Care program, the Houston Methodist Wellness Center that includes an employee fitness center, the Weight Management Team, and physician offices.

Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital manages two fully operational emergency rooms in the community at the Houston Methodist Emergency Care Centers in Cypress and Spring. In the spring of 2020, a third ECC will open in the Glenloch subdivision in Spring. In January 2020, the hospital opened a new primary care clinic in Tomball. It will also open new

facilities in the Towne Lake neighborhood in Cypress in the spring of 2020. A facility at the Boardwalk at Towne Lake will provide orthopedic and sports medicine services, primary care, obstetrics and gynecology, an array of physician specialists and on-site X-ray and lab services. Additionally, Houston Methodist will open a dedicated physical therapy space and Breast Care Center at Tuckerton and Towne Lake Parkway. In 2018, the hospital opened a 700 car capacity parking garage for physician and employee parking.

Recent awards and designations awarded to Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital include:

- Vizient Bernard A. Birnbaum, M.D., Quality Leadership Award for excellence in delivering superior quality and safety as measured by the Vizient Quality and Accountability Study
- Management System Certification by DNV GL for conformance to the Quality System Management standard: ISO9001:2008
- Prestigious Magnet Recognition for Nursing Excellence by the American Nurses Credentialing Center
- An “A” Hospital Safety Score from The Leapfrog Group for 12 consecutive cycles
- Chest Pain Center Accreditation with Primary PCI and Resuscitation from the American College of Cardiology
- American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get With the Guidelines – Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award with Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite
- Cardiac Cath Lab Accreditation with PCI from the American College of Cardiology
- Childbirth Center awarded Texas Ten Step Program designation from the Texas Department of State Health Care Services
- Primary Advanced Certified Stroke Center by DNV
- Surgical Weight Loss Program received national accreditation in bariatric surgery from the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program
- Breast Care Center Imaging Center of Excellence designated by the American College of Radiology
- Breast Care Center accredited by the American College of Radiology in Stereotactic Breast Biopsy

HOUSTON METHODIST PRIMARY CARE GROUP

With locations throughout the Greater Houston area, Houston Methodist Primary Care Group is dedicated to providing the highest-quality patient care for the entire family. Houston Methodist Primary Care Group is proud to be a part of Houston Methodist and its family of hospitals, ensuring efficient access to specialty and hospital services whenever the need arises. As members of the Greater Houston community, Houston Methodist Primary Care Group is committed to the well-being of its patients, providing the right care at the right time in convenient locations throughout the Houston area.

HOUSTON METHODIST SPECIALTY PHYSICIAN GROUP

The Houston Methodist Specialty Physician Group is an integral part of Houston Methodist's overall strategy to become one of the nation's leading medical centers. Established as a nonprofit corporation certified by the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners, the specialty physician group enables physicians to maintain autonomy with respect to clinical practice while growing their practice within an academic environment.

HOUSTON METHODIST ACADEMIC INSTITUTE



The Houston Methodist Academic Institute is the cornerstone of Houston Methodist's position as a nationally recognized academic medical center. It comprises the Research Institute and Education Institute, including 681 faculty, 29,408 trainees, 1,261 clinical protocols and \$55.3 million in total

extramural funding. The Academic Institute facilitates the interchange of people and ideas among the clinical, research and education pillars of Houston Methodist and coordinating academic strategy for the system. The Research Institute provides the critical research programs and infrastructure serving the system to bring new scientific discoveries to patients as rapidly

as possible through the full cycle of a cure for FDA approval, from certified design, manufacturing, and testing to clinical trials. Its research goals are closely aligned with and provide the academic resources for Houston Methodist Hospital's Centers of Excellence. The Education Institute coordinates Graduate Medical Education, Continuing Medical Education, our primary academic affiliation with Weill Cornell Medicine, and affiliated programs with the Texas A&M University College of Medicine including the EnMed engineering medicine program.

HOUSTON METHODIST GLOBAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES



Houston Methodist Global Health Care Services, a subsidiary of Houston Methodist Hospital, is dedicated to setting a global standard of excellence in patient-centered care, education and training, clinical collaboration and advisory services. The organization drives international activities

and initiatives for Houston Methodist. Houston Methodist serves patients, physicians and health care organizations around the world by leveraging and sharing local institutional knowledge with its international partners. Each year, Houston Methodist's hospitals and physicians treat thousands of patients from more than 90 countries around the world.

THE HOUSTON METHODIST EXPERIENCE

A sense of personal connection between patients and their health care providers is just as important as their physical health. At Houston Methodist, we want all of our patients, guests, and customers to feel welcomed, special and unique. A personalized health care experience fosters these feelings by addressing physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Our commitment to our patients remains our priority. Excellent care is driven by our continued focus on unparalleled safety, quality, service and innovation.

Our Service goal is to provide an exceptional culture of personalized service, satisfaction, and engagement for patients, families, employees, and physicians in the safest environment.

In order for us to be progressive, passionate and personal in our caregiving, we must use our **I CARE** values — integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence — to serve patients at every level and enhance their safety. This will link each patient’s goals with Houston Methodist’s advanced research, experienced professionals and superior facilities. We must also continue to implement our values in ways that care and serve all those we interact with — including each other. Our values put into action through caring and serving others is what creates the Houston Methodist Experience.



I CARE VALUES

As essential shared objectives that we carry out every day, the Houston Methodist I CARE values are fundamental to the Houston Methodist Experience:

Integrity

We are honest and ethical in all we say and do.

Compassion

We embrace the whole person and respond to emotional, ethical and spiritual concerns as well as physical needs.

Accountability

We hold ourselves accountable for our actions.

Respect

We treat every individual as a person of worth, dignity and value.

Excellence

We strive to be the best at what we do and a model for others to emulate.

In conjunction with an emphasis on caring and serving Houston Methodist values are essential to creating a personalized patient experience. Every patient and guest deserves to be treated with our highest standards for care and hospitality.



PATHWAY TO UNPARALLELED

Houston Methodist strives to be unparalleled in safety, quality, service and innovation. This vision, propelled by our values allows us to continue to transform our organization to inspire others, engage our people, and serve our patients, guests and visitors with excellence.

Patient safety, quality, service, and innovation are the driving forces behind the decisions we make. We relentlessly seek to improve on how to create an environment of accountability by setting clear goals and expectations to ensure our success. Houston Methodist continues to be a preferred place to receive quality healthcare.

Unparalleled Compassionate Communication

Foundational to this unparalleled journey is compassionate communication, which is our intentional, heartfelt words and actions. Compassionate communication is lived out using the following five tools:

- Be present in the moment. When we are fully present, we let the other person know that in that moment, nothing is more important than what they have to say.
- Listen with your ears and your eyes. Someone's body language and facial expressions can tell us as much as their words and their tone.
- Engage with questions. Take time to make sure you fully understand the other person's perspective.
- Let your actions show you understand. Remember, actions speak louder than words. When we take action, we show that we truly communicate with compassion.
- Practice the 10/5 rule. When you are within 10 feet of someone, make eye contact and smile. Within 5 feet, use a sincere greeting or friendly gesture.

To view a brief video on the five tools of compassionate communication you can click on the following link: <https://vimeo.com/251668097>

Unparalleled Caring and Serving

The idea of caring and serving is embedded in the name we've chosen for our values: **I CARE**. Caring is at the core of what kind of organization we are. Your actions bring our values to life every day. We all have opportunities to care and serve. It starts with taking the time to care for

ourselves, so we can be our best each day. It also includes caring for our coworkers across the organization, our patients and their families, and our community.

To view a brief video on what caring and serving means and to see examples in action you can click on the following links:

What Does Caring & Serving Mean:

<https://vimeo.com/326396834/0e8bfe79c3>

Caring for Our Patients, the Wedding Story:

<https://vimeo.com/315316986/1e7b015a0a>

Caring for Ourselves:

<https://vimeo.com/326396529/e762d7172b>

Caring for Our Team:

<https://vimeo.com/326396148/0dfb02ebb8>

Caring for Our Community, the Scurlock Story:

<https://vimeo.com/315317066/1989f89300>

Closing from Dr. Boom and Harvey One Year Later:

<https://vimeo.com/278201139/2360bd7b55>

PERSONALIZED SERVICE

Every patient should receive the best possible service in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Houston Methodist has developed fundamental service standards and techniques to personalize the journey of the patient care process.

Service Standards

- Smile, make eye contact and greet all our guests.
- Heads up phones down-our patients come first.
- Seek out guests to assist them; be their guide.
- Use our patients' preferred names, to personalize their experience.
- Interact with our patients and guests; we are here for them.
- Display On-Stage behaviors in all public and patient areas.
- Honor diversity as we are all individuals.
- Take five minutes every day to go above and beyond for our patients and guests.

- Anticipate patients' and guests' needs and address them.
- Thank all our patients and guests; they have a choice.

Every Houston Methodist employee is trained and exposed to our culture of excellence that advocates practicing expected behaviors such as:

- **AIDET**

It is a framework to communicate with patients and their families as well as with each other. It is a simple acronym that represents a very powerful way to communicate with people who are often nervous, anxious and feeling vulnerable.

- A** — Acknowledge
- I** — Introduce
- D** — Duration
- E** — Explanation
- T** — Thank

- **Demonstration of Keywords**

The use of demonstrated and consistent language supporting the Houston Methodist Experience is a way to ensure the overall quality of care is being delivered.

Keywords are: Safe, Comfort, Private, Always and My Pleasure

- **Elevator Etiquette**

Patients and their families come first, even when using the elevator at Houston Methodist. Each employee practices the acronym of **H.O.P.** to It!

- **H**old the door
- **O**ff before on
- **P**atients first

- **Demonstration of On-Stage Behavior**

Employees will **ALWAYS** be professional when in front of our patients and guests. When **On-Stage**, our customers are the focus. It is all about the patient experience!

- **Demonstration of Manage-Up Behaviors When Talking to Patients and Family**

Managing up others is communicating about our expertise when it comes to our employees, departments and service deliveries, which creates a positive impression of others before the patient or family meets them.

- **Standards of Practice**
 - Positive language
 - Hourly rounding
 - Leader rounding
 - Bedside report
 - Rounding in waiting areas
 - Discharge phone calls

UNPARALLELED INNOVATION

Unparalleled innovation is the relentless discovery of new opportunities and solutions, big and small, to enable us to become unparalleled. It also means having a “yes, and” mentality which helps us look past obstacles to identify new opportunities. We all have the opportunity to create big and small innovations every day.

Some innovations might save lives, some might change lives, and some might make lives, for both patients and employees, just a little bit easier. Every day, every single person at Houston Methodist has opportunities to either drive innovation, or to be an early adopter and support innovation.

Our Center for Innovation has created an intranet site to support our employees in contributing to innovation. Visit

<https://ideas.houstonmethodist.org/> to learn more.

If you have a great idea to share, please send it in using our ideas page:

<https://ideas.houstonmethodist.org/share-your-idea/>

To see a brief video on what innovation means to employees across the HM system, or see an example of an innovation, click on one of the links below:

Innovation at HM: **<https://vimeo.com/357897635/55aca1ad90>**

Face of Innovation: **<https://vimeo.com/357896523/151f6e9bea>**

The Sound of Healing: **<https://vimeo.com/357897372/9955e0a0cb>**

Patient Engagement Technologies:

<https://vimeo.com/357897022/41e8f24777>

Code Lavender: **<https://vimeo.com/357896326/b98d561363>**

Picture Perfect: **<https://vimeo.com/357897242/3e54e7355e>**

CULTURE OF SAFETY

By promoting a culture of safety through action and awareness, we help ensure that patients and employees feel secure and protected. In addition to observing standard safe practices, it is important to stay focused and alert at all times. Paying attention to detail and reporting potential safety risks helps protect your patients and colleagues and works to prevent high-risk events. Regular communication among all caregivers, staff and, when appropriate, patients and families, fosters trust and empowerment, and is a proven way to improve safety

Stop the Line – Speak Up for Patient Safety, is a program we've had in place since 2016 to empower employees to speak up when they see a possible adverse event.

To view a brief video on the Stop the Line program, click on the link below:
<https://vimeo.com/165479489>

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

DEI Vision Statement

Houston Methodist will be known for having a culture of inclusive behavior that allows us to provide unparalleled, personalized care and service to a diverse patient population through effective teamwork, while ensuring dignity and respect for every patient, provider, colleague and our community.

Houston Methodist began a journey of intentional DEI programming in 2018. Five strategic goals guide the priorities for system-wide DEI programming:

- Enhance patient outcomes and equity of care
- Invigorate morale, teamwork and engagement
- Recruit and retain diverse talent to continue to reflect our community
- Foster a culture of innovation
- Expand our business, academic mission and global position

Employee Resource Groups

Houston Methodist introduced Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in 2019 to empower staff to actively contribute to our DEI strategic goals. ERGs are volunteer, employee-led groups made up of individuals who join together based on common interests, backgrounds or demographic factors such as (but not limited to) gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability and veteran status. ERGs must be secular and non-partisan, have an Executive Sponsor, establish a charter through the DEI Program Manager at Corporate, and must include anyone who wants to join, even if they are not a representative of the group in question. ERGs at Houston Methodist are intended specifically to address diversity, equity and inclusion issues in the workplace, overcoming barriers that may exist or are perceived to exist. For more information, review Policy HR70 and its attachments.

BUSINESS PRACTICES: ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

The following section contains information about Houston Methodist's commitment to ethical practices and compliance with the law, which is demonstrated through the Business Practices Program.

BUSINESS PRACTICES PROGRAM

Houston Methodist is committed to building and maintaining a culture of integrity and ethics consistent with our core values: integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence. The purpose of the Business Practices Program is to demonstrate the commitment of Houston Methodist to the highest standards of ethics and compliance with the law.

PROGRAM VISION: *All actions taken in the name of Houston Methodist are consistent with strong moral values, high ethical standards, and the law.*

The Business Practices Program (Program) helps all employees make this vision a reality.

This vision is supported throughout Houston Methodist. The audit and compliance committee of the board of directors and the Business Practices Committee, consisting of senior management and entity representatives, provides direction, guidance and oversight of this effort. The vice president, who is also the Business Practices Officer and chief audit officer, leads the program. The Business Practices Officer reports functionally to the board of directors' audit and compliance committee and reports administratively to the executive vice president and chief legal officer of Houston Methodist. The Business Practices Officer, working through the entities' Business Practices Offices, is responsible for the implementation of the Program.

Each entity's Business Practices officer is responsible for directing Business Practices activities within their entity. The program website provides the name and contact information for each entity's Business Practices Officer.

The board of directors adopted the Business Practices Policy and the Business Practices Program Plan.¹ All directors, officers, medical staff members and employees of all Houston Methodist entities are expected to perform patient care activities, research and business operations in a manner consistent with the program's vision and Houston Methodist's core values — **I CARE**.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees must:

- Complete Business Practices Program training
- Do the right thing!
- Follow approved policies and procedures
- Live Houston Methodist values in all aspects of Your work
- Report questionable practices
- Cooperate in investigations of reports of questionable practices

Complete Business Practices Program Training

The Business Practices Program provides training to employees. Training focuses on business practices, ethics, and legal and regulatory issues. New employees take the Business Practices Program Course as part of our onboarding process. Continuing employees take this course each year online. Employees may be required to attend additional training, depending on their job responsibilities. The Business Practices Office staff is available to provide additional training upon request. *Contact the Business Practices Office at 713.383.5124 to request an in-service.*

Do the Right Thing! — Report Questionable Practices

If you learn about a situation that may violate the law or that may not be the right thing, you should report the situation.² You should report a questionable practice for three reasons:

- Management wants to be aware of any practice or concern that is believed to violate Houston Methodist's values or the law so it can be addressed.

1. NOTE: These numbers throughout the handbook refer to References starting on page 90.

- Reporting a questionable practice identifies issues that might not otherwise be raised and leads to resolution of these issues.
- Reporting questionable practices is part of each employee's responsibility to make Houston Methodist better.
- If you become aware of a practice that may violate Houston Methodist's values or the law and you do not report it, you may be subject to disciplinary sanctions even if you were not involved.

You should report a questionable practice to your supervisor or other individual in your chain of command. If this is inappropriate or makes you uncomfortable, you may contact the following:

- Human Resources (for employment-related matters)
- Your entity's Business Practices officer
- Houston Methodist Business Practices officer at **713.383.5124**
- *Business Practices EthicsLine*:
 - Call **1.800.500.0333**, or
 - Visit **tmhs.myethicsline.com**
- Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission Office of Inspector General

Information about Business Practices *EthicsLine* and Follow-up

You do not have to give your name when you use the Business Practices *EthicsLine*. Incoming calls or web reports are not traced. A report of each concern is sent to the Houston Methodist Business Practices Office, which coordinates the investigation.

If you report a concern to the Business Practices *EthicsLine*, you will receive a tracking number you can use for follow-up with the Business Practices *EthicsLine* or the Business Practices Office (**713.383.5124**). For example, you may want to call back to provide additional information about the concern or inquire about the status of the investigation. Additionally, the investigator may post requests for additional information to facilitate the investigation. These requests will remain in the file until the anonymous caller checks back with Business Practices or the Business Practices *EthicsLine*. You should call the Business Practices *EthicsLine* if you want to check on the status of an investigation without revealing your identity.

While calls to the Business Practices Office are not traced or recorded, caller ID may reveal your identity.

You may use the Business Practices *EthicsLine* web reporting system to follow up on the status of an investigation, as well. Simply click the “Follow Up on a Reported Concern” link at tmhs.myethicsline.com.

All reports of questionable business practices are promptly investigated. Employees who report questionable practices in good faith are protected from retaliation by Houston Methodist Business Practices Procedure BP07 and by federal and state laws.

Note: For assistance with end-of-life issues, follow your entity’s process to request a biomedical ethics consultation.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

While all Houston Methodist employees are expected to actively participate in the Business Practices Program, managers are expected to set the example. In addition to those responsibilities listed above, management must:

- Create a culture within Houston Methodist that promotes the highest standards of ethics and legal compliance.
- Encourage staff to report questionable practices.
- Report questionable practices when they arise, ensuring that:
 - Employees who make reports are not subject to retaliation;
 - Confidentiality is maintained to the extent possible if the reporting employee wishes to remain anonymous;
 - Accurate information is collected from the employee;
 - Business Practices or another appropriate department is contacted for assistance; and
 - The reporting employee is informed that an investigation will take place.
- Continuously evaluate, revise and develop unit policies, procedures and practices for compliance with the law and Houston Methodist standards, and change or write them when necessary. Therefore, Houston Methodist reserves the right to change practices, modify job classifications, or institute any other language deemed necessary.
- Train staff to follow policies and procedures.

- Monitor staff practices and work outcomes to be sure policies and procedures are being followed.
- Ensure that staff complete appropriate Business Practices training.
- Complete the online Business Practices Program Course for Management.
- Be a role model — *Live Houston Methodist values in all of your work and do the right thing!*

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

As a Houston Methodist employee, your actions at work are expected to be in the best interests of Houston Methodist.³ A conflict of interest exists when your private interests influence your actions at work in a way that is not in the best interests of Houston Methodist.³ A conflict of interest can also occur when your private interests appear to influence your actions at work in a way that is not in the best interests of Houston Methodist. Examples of “private interests” include personal or family relationships with competitors or vendors, employment outside of Houston Methodist, membership on some outside boards, and certain outside ownership interests.

Because Houston Methodist is dedicated to conducting business according to the highest ethical principles, conflicts of interest must be recognized, disclosed and managed to assure they cause no harm to Houston Methodist.

- Each employee is responsible for disclosing potential conflicts of interest as they arise. You should disclose a potential conflict of interest to your supervisor, appropriate management member, the Houston Methodist Business Practices Officer, or the chair of any decision-making body you serve.
- If requested, employees are expected to participate in the annual conflict of interest survey.
- Individuals involved in research are subject to additional disclosure requirements outlined in *Research Procedure (RE)*14.⁴

Employees and others associated with Houston Methodist who have a conflict of interest must not vote on the conflicted matter but, following proper disclosure and prior approval, may participate in the decision-making process.⁵

Houston Methodist employees are encouraged to contact their supervisor or the Business Practices Office for further information and guidance on potential conflicts of interest situations.⁶

Business Contracts

Houston Methodist will not contract with organizations or individuals with interests that conflict with Houston Methodist's. Potential conflicts of interest will be disclosed to the appropriate management person(s) for evaluation.⁶ Houston Methodist follows the highest business standards in contracting with third parties. All contracts must be consistent with Houston Methodist policies and procedures. In contracting with third parties, Houston Methodist will comply with all disclosure rules, laws and regulations.

Business Courtesies and Gifts

Accepting gifts or gratuities may give the appearance of providing personal gain or showing favoritism to an individual and/or current or potential business partner. Employees shall not accept or offer gifts intended to induce referral of patients or purchases, to influence any business or patient care decision, or to serve any other improper or unlawful purpose. With the exception of fundraising efforts supported by Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation, employees may not solicit or appear to solicit gifts of any value, either for themselves or for their departments or units.⁷

Before accepting a gift or business courtesy from an individual or business partner or offering a business courtesy, consult *Policy and Procedure BP19*.

Accepting Gifts and Tips from Patients and Visitors

Houston Methodist appreciates the generosity of its patients and visitors who offer gifts to Houston Methodist employees. However, accepting a gift from a patient or visitor may give an unfavorable appearance. For example, a visitor may offer a gift to you in hopes that you will give better care to their family than to other patients. Before you accept a gift from a patient or visitor, consult *Policy and Procedure BP19* or talk to your supervisor.⁷

Employees may not accept tips from patients and visitors. A tip is a small amount of cash offered as a gratuity for service.⁸

Outside Activities

Employees may occasionally participate in outside speaking and consulting engagements. Prior to accepting an engagement related to your position or occupation at Houston Methodist, you must receive approval from an executive within your chain of command with a relative rank of EX03 or above. For most employees all honoraria, consulting fees and reimbursable expenses related to your position or occupation at Houston Methodist must be paid or assigned to Houston Methodist.⁹ HM Physician Organization physicians employed to provide patient care and researchers employed by the Houston Methodist Research Institute should review *Procedure BP34, Principles Governing Outside Activities*, which addresses when physicians and researchers are permitted to retain income from certain types of non-clinical consulting engagements.

Q&A

Your adult son is a salesperson with Company Z which makes chemistry analyzers. You are asked to participate on a committee. The committee is tasked with recommending a chemistry analyzer for purchase by the Hospital laboratories. Do you have a conflict of interest? If you do, what should you do about it?

Yes, you may have a conflict of interest. Your opinions about chemistry analyzers may be influenced by your son's position with Company Z. You should disclose this potential conflict of interest to the chair of the selection committee and work with the chair to determine what role, if any, is appropriate for you to play with this committee.

INTERACTIONS WITH PHYSICIANS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Business arrangements with physicians must be structured to ensure compliance with legal requirements. These arrangements must be in writing.



The Department of Legal Services must approve these arrangements prior to implementation.¹⁰

Houston Methodist does not pay for referrals. Patient referrals and admissions are based on the patient's medical needs and Houston Methodist's ability to meet that need. Houston Methodist does not pay or offer to pay anyone for patient referrals. Additionally, Houston Methodist does not accept payments for referrals. Employees may not ask for or receive anything of value in exchange for the referral of patients. When making a referral to another health care provider, Houston Methodist does not take into account the volume or value of referrals the provider has made or may make to Houston Methodist.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Clinical and biomedical research are part of Houston Methodist's health care mission. Houston Methodist is committed to following high ethical standards in the conduct of research. Houston Methodist must review the

impact of research projects on hospital operations and patient privacy. Employees and others involved in research at Houston Methodist are responsible for following the law and Houston Methodist policies and procedures. Research misconduct will not be tolerated.¹¹

Q&A

Is reviewing records considered research when there is no patient contact?

Houston Methodist defines research as an investigation or study that is intended to further medical knowledge. See *Research Procedure RE11* for more information.

What is research misconduct?

Falsifying data, making up data, or using data or ideas from another source without giving credit are all considered research misconduct. Honest errors or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data are not considered research misconduct. For more information, consult *Research Procedure RE15*.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Employment opportunities at Houston Methodist are updated on a daily basis and are posted on the Houston Methodist Careers website and via MARS, the Methodist Administrative Resource System.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the spirit of excellence, Houston Methodist (HM) is committed to the continuing growth and development of all employees. As an employer of choice, we know how important it is to provide training opportunities that help develop your business, technical, and professional skills, and at the same time help the organization grow. We offer employees an in-depth orientation, beginning their first day focusing on HM Culture and expected behaviors. Recognizing that everyone has different learning needs and available time, we also offer employees more than 100 online courses on a wide range of topics.

At HM, we believe that leaders should not only help others reach their potential, but also be given unique opportunities of their own to learn and grow. That is the purpose of the HM Academy of Leadership and Learning, through which leaders create a Houston Methodist Experience. The academy has an offering for all leaders at all stages in their careers, from charge nurses and team leads to senior executives, each geared toward helping participants achieve success in today's fast-paced health care environment.

The Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) provides necessary education and training to nursing staff for providing excellence in patient care. Evidence-based education, in conjunction with research efforts, aims to provide an expert nursing workforce for the hospital. CPE provides nurses and allied health professionals online resources, such as CE Direct, for unlimited continuous education credits, including certification prep courses. In addition, education events for bioethics, leadership, and computer technology and specialty service line topics offer on-site education for clinical staff to achieve their clinical and career goals. Furthermore, CPE has ongoing professional development programs to help our staff to obtain professional development tools and access funding resources. CPE has served as a facilitator for nursing and allied health staffs in Houston Methodist for their professional development and ensure their career progression.

In addition, educational assistance programs may be provided to employees who choose to continue their formal education in order to improve their professional competence and benefit the organization.

Houston Methodist recognizes and encourages promotion from within the organization to enable employees to realize their career potential.



PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS

Houston Methodist is committed to supporting your continued growth and development. Current employees will be given the opportunity to apply for promotions and transfers when openings become available. Current employment opportunities are posted in MARS and on the Houston Methodist Careers website. Contact the Human Resources Department at your entity for transfer information.⁵⁵

In order to be eligible for a transfer within Houston Methodist into another position, you must:

- Meet the minimum experience, background and education requirements
- Have a minimum of six months of active employment in current role
- Have no formal counseling record for misconduct in the last six months
- Complete a formal online application
- Notify your current manager prior to attending a scheduled interview with hiring manager
- Immediately notify your current manager upon acceptance of internal transfer offer

TOTAL REWARDS

Houston Methodist is proud to offer a comprehensive Total Rewards program. Our Total Rewards program includes all aspects of your compensation, payroll and benefits at Houston Methodist.

COMPENSATION AND PAYROLL PRACTICES

The following section contains information about your salary, which includes Houston Methodist's compensation policy, as well as information on pay periods, overtime, on-call pay and other pay-related issues.

Appropriate Use of Unpaid Persons

Volunteers are individuals who volunteer or donate their services, usually on a part-time basis, for public service, religious or humanitarian reasons without expectation of compensation.

Students, interns, trainees and observers are unpaid individuals who participate in activities at Houston Methodist in exchange for learning and development opportunities, oftentimes for course credit.

Houston Methodist provides guidelines to managers and employees regarding the appropriate use of unpaid persons to ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Refer to *Policy HR 44*. These guidelines also address how Houston Methodist employees may appropriately serve as volunteers for Houston Methodist-related activities.

Exempt and Nonexempt Status

Houston Methodist designates all positions as either exempt or nonexempt, based upon applicable federal and state laws.

An exempt employee is salaried and not eligible for overtime. A nonexempt employee is eligible for overtime once he or she works over 40 hours in a work week.

Exempt and nonexempt designations are based upon the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Pay Periods

Houston Methodist employees are paid on a biweekly basis. Pay periods for Houston Methodist employees begin on Sunday and end 14 days later on Saturday. Payday is the Thursday following the last day of the pay cycle.

Payroll Deductions

Only payroll deductions required by law or those that you have authorized will be withheld from your pay. Deductions required by law include federal Social Security tax, federal income tax, child support, bankruptcy and monies levied by the federal government for outstanding debt owed to the government. Those deductions that may be authorized by the employee may include premiums for health, dental or life insurance; parking fees; cafeteria charges; gift shop charges; or credit union deductions for savings or loan payments.

Payroll Direct Deposit

Employees are required to have their net pay direct deposited into their designated bank/financial institution or Houston Methodist designated Payroll Card each pay period. Employees can have more than one direct deposit account.

DailyPay

DailyPay is a voluntary payroll benefit which allows employees to access a portion of their unpaid wages before payday. This program allows Houston Methodist employees an opportunity to access a portion of their earned wages before payday in the event of an emergency or unexpected expenses and helps avoid paying fees from payday loan services, which are often excessive.

For more information on accessing, please log into MARS self-service and go to the DailyPay section under Payroll and Compensation.

Salary Loan

Houston Methodist provides financial assistance to active employees in limited emergency situations by providing a salary loan that will be paid back through biweekly payroll deductions.

In order to be eligible for a salary loan employees must meet certain eligibility criteria.

Pay Administration

It is Houston Methodist's policy to maintain competitive salary rates and to carry out a wage and salary program that is fair to all employees. Houston Methodist conducts regular compensation surveys and follows appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that our salaries are competitive. New employees will be appropriately paid based on the skills and experience

that they bring to the position, in comparison to current employees of similar skill and experience.

Pay Changes Due to Job Changes

Houston Methodist has guidelines that ensure fair pay practices when employees make job changes within the organization either through voluntary application for a different job or because of changing business needs.

Houston Methodist's policy defines promotions, laterals, and downgrades within the context of our salary structures.

- For promotions there are guidelines that specify a set range of pay change opportunities based on the difference between midpoints.
- For lateral moves there should be no change in pay rate, unless the change in position is considered a "progression" from one level to another within the same salary grade.
- For voluntary downgrades, pay will usually decrease. This includes voluntary transfers to a job with a lower pay range, or moving between hospitals where the salary range midpoint for a similar job may be lower because of different market scales or internal equity values.
- For involuntary downgrades, the pay decision must be discussed with Human Resources.

Human Resources can provide more information about potential impact on base salary if you are considering a job change. You may also reference *Policy HR37 (Compensation and Job Changes)* for additional information.

Performance Evaluations

It is Houston Methodist's policy for employees to receive an objective written review of their job performance on an annual basis during their Focal Point Review or whenever significant changes in performance warrant. The performance evaluation process will provide the basis for the administration of the merit salary increase program.¹²

Merit Increases

The annual merit process has been designed to reward employees in accordance with their effectiveness in their jobs.

Merit increases for regular status (non-PRN, non-temporary) employees incorporate three key factors: the approved organizational merit budget, market competitiveness, and an individual employee's performance rating, as determined through the annual Focal Point Review process.

Generally, merit increases are awarded once a year.¹²

Shift Differential

Because Houston Methodist provides service to the community 24 hours a day, many employees must work evening and night shifts. Employees working these shifts may be paid an additional salary called shift differential, a flat hourly rate determined by job classification. Check with your supervisor to find out if you are eligible for this pay. Please refer to *Policy HR 48 (Shift Differential)* for additional details.¹⁵

On-Call Pay

In some departments, it is necessary to retain employees on an “on-call” status in order for the department to be covered for all emergency situations. Each department establishes policies and practices to manage on-call schedules. If you are required to be on call, your supervisor will review the policies with you and, if appropriate, the on-call pay rate for your job. Please refer to *Policy HR52 (On Call Pay)*.¹³

Overtime

Houston Methodist provides overtime pay to nonexempt employees in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Employees should obtain authorization from management prior to working overtime.¹⁴

Time Records

Employees must be paid for all time worked that is defined as compensable work time according to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Nonexempt (eligible for overtime) employees are not permitted to perform work outside of their primary Houston Methodist work location (e.g., at home, or during commute to and from work) unless they have prior approval from their department management. This includes activities such as responding to and sending emails related to Houston Methodist work, taking phone calls related to work matters, and completing or reviewing departmental paperwork. Nonexempt employees are responsible for ensuring that they are properly recording all hours worked every day.

Reporting false information, reporting time for another employee or allowing another employee to report time for you will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. All employees should review their time cards in the Time and Attendance System for accuracy frequently throughout the pay period to ensure worked time and time off (e.g., PTO) are accurately recorded.

Employees are highly encouraged to use the employee sign-off feature in the timekeeping system each pay period. This will help management know that the employee agrees with the time reflected on the timecard. If there is an error on the timecard, the employee should immediately notify their manager. Management reviews and approves timecards each pay period. Employees should also review their pay stub each pay period and notify their manager immediately if any discrepancies are found.

Work Hours, Schedules and Locations

Houston Methodist has facilities that operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide excellent care to our patients. Therefore, when you accept employment, you do so with the understanding that your unit schedule, shift, hours and work assignment may change, depending on the needs of the organization to best serve our patients.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The following section contains information about the benefits that are available to eligible employees and their families.

Your benefits represent a sizable portion of total rewards and is designed to provide protection and a measure of security for employees and their families.

This section highlights the many benefit plans available to eligible employees. If you have questions, please direct them to your HR department at your entity or HR Hub at 832.667.6211. Most benefits programs require that you have standard hours of at least 20 hours, and not be considered PRN or temporary to be eligible. Exceptions include the compassion benefit, employee assistance program, transportation, and parking subsidy program, wellness, and volunteer benefits through YouDecide's Employee Advantages™ platform and retirement plans.

Many of the benefit plans and programs are paid entirely by Houston Methodist. Some of the voluntary benefit plans and programs are paid either partially or fully by you, the employee.²²

Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave pay of up to three days (maximum of 24 hours) absence per occurrence may be granted for eligible employees when a death occurs in the immediate family and should be reflected accordingly on the time card. If the death is a child or spouse the leave increases to 10 days (maximum of 80 hours).²³

Educational Assistance Plans

Employees are encouraged to continue their formal education in order to improve their professional competence. Houston Methodist provides programs to benefited employees and their eligible dependents to assist with educational expenses.

Tuition Assistance: Employees can receive tuition assistance in two ways — via direct bill to Houston Methodist from the school and tuition reimbursement. Tuition assistance is provided for courses that are part of a degree program at an accredited institution and related to the business of Houston Methodist. A grade of C or better is required for reimbursement or to avoid repayment to Houston Methodist.²⁷

College Scholarships for Children of Employees: College scholarships are provided to approved children who are enrolled in approved programs leading to a degree in health care-related fields.²⁷ The child's parent must have been employed with Houston Methodist for two continuous years in a full-time or part-time position.

Employee Assistance Program

Houston Methodist believes that its employees are its most valuable resource and provides the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees in relieving personal stress, which will enable the employee to bring more energy and enthusiasm into the workplace. The EAP is a benefit designed to provide professional, confidential counseling for employees and their families for a wide range of issues, including stress, depression, relationship problems, family problems, alcohol/drug abuse and financial problems. You and your immediate family may be provided with up to three professional counseling sessions free of charge. Text “Help Me” to **45991** to learn more. Ask your supervisor for more information or contact the Human Resources Department. (See also *Employment Practices and Workplace Behavior: Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace.*)

Family Medical Leave

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, or 480 hours if used occasionally, but not all at once, in a rolling 12-month period for parental leave or serious personal or family illness. The 12 weeks are measured in a “rolling” 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave. An employee on

approved FML may continue group health insurance coverage and pay the regular biweekly contribution toward the cost of the coverage. An employee returning from FML will normally be reinstated to the position held by the employee at the time the leave started or to an equivalent position. However, these employees have no greater employment protection for a specific position than they would have had if they remained at work. See myHR.HoustonMethodist.org.²⁴

Holidays

All employees whose standard hours are greater than 20, and not in a PRN or temporary position have up to eight paid time off (PTO) hours to use for each of the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Holidays are observed on the actual holiday itself unless the holiday falls on a weekend. In such a case, usually the holiday will be observed either on the preceding Friday for Saturday holidays or on the following Monday for Sunday holidays. If you work a holiday, your holiday PTO hours will remain in your PTO balance to be used at another time.

Extra Holidays: When Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a Tuesday, the Mondays before these holidays will be awarded as additional holidays. When Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a Thursday, the Fridays after these holidays will be awarded as additional holidays. No holiday premium will be paid for working on these extra days designated as holidays.

Holiday Premium Pay: In order to provide appropriate patient care, some employees may be required to work on holidays. Nonexempt regular employees who work on Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day or New Year's Day will be paid an additional holiday premium pay at a rate of one-half times their regular base pay (including shift differential if applicable) for hours worked on the actual holiday. The holiday premium pay starts with the 11 p.m. shift immediately preceding the actual

HOUSTON METHODIST BENEFITS PROGRAM	CONTRIBUTION		
	Houston Methodist	Employee After-Tax	Employee Before-Tax
HEALTH AND WELFARE PLANS			
Medical and Prescription Drug plan	•		•
Vision plan			•
Dental plan	•		•
Basic Employee Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) plan	•		
Optional Employee Life Insurance plan		•	
Optional Dependent Life Insurance plan		•	
Voluntary AD&D Insurance plan		•	
Paid Time Off program	•		
Holidays	•		
Compassion Benefit	•		
Parental PTO — all paid by HM	•		
Employee Assistance program	•		
Wellness programs	•	•	
Educational Assistance plans	•		
Short-Term and Long-Term Disability plans	•		
Transportation and Parking Subsidy program	•		•
Flexible Spending Accounts (Health and Dependent Care)			•
Legal Assistance		•	
College Coach	•		
Voluntary Benefit Programs		•	
Adoption assistance Plan	•		
Back-Up Care/Concierge Care	•		
RETIREMENT PLANS			
Defined Contribution plan	•		
403(b) Tax-Sheltered Annuity Plan	•		•

holiday and ends at 11 p.m. on the actual holiday. If the observed holiday differs from the actual holiday, holiday premium will only be paid for time worked on the actual holiday.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be granted to allow employees time away from work without giving up seniority and employee benefits. Unpaid leaves of absence may include disability or medical leave, military leave, or personal leave. Eligible employees may continue health and dental benefits during the leave of absence. See myHR.HoustonMethodist.org.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Houston Methodist offers time off with pay, which may be used for vacation, holidays, personal reasons, severe weather emergencies (or other types of business disruption) and family or personal short-term illness. All employees whose standard hours are greater than 20, and not in a PRN or temporary position, are eligible to use their accrued PTO beginning the first day of employment. Request for PTO must be in accordance with the department's guidelines. See myHR.HoustonMethodist.org.²⁵

Parental PTO

When you welcome a new child into the family, there are many moments you don't want to miss. Houston Methodist offers parental PTO to eligible moms and dads to help capture those early memories.

You have 12 months from the birth, adoption or foster care placement to take parental PTO. You can take parental PTO hours in different ways:

- Take your full amount at once and receive 100% of your regular base pay, or
- Spread it out over the course of the first year, or
- For birth moms, use the benefit to supplement short-term disability benefits so you can receive 100% of your base pay during your time away.

For additional information, including eligibility and hours available, see myHR.HoustonMethodist.org.

Retirement

Houston Methodist provides retirement savings plans for employees to help them build a financial program for their retirement years. The program

includes a Defined Contribution Plan and 403(b) Tax Sheltered Annuity Plan. Specific details regarding eligibility for and provisions of this program may be obtained from myHR.HoustonMethodist.org or the Human Resources Department at your entity.²⁶

Reward and Recognition Programs

Houston Methodist recognizes the importance of its employees. To reward their dedication and outstanding performance, Houston Methodist sponsors a variety of employee reward and recognition programs and events, which may include service awards, holiday season activities, departmental recognition programs and other special events that are typically celebrated throughout the health care industry.

HealthyDirections

Houston Methodist offers a wide variety of wellness programs to support our employees and spouses in their journey to wellness. A variety of wellness programs are available through multiple vendors, including Houston Methodist Wellness, at all Houston Methodist facilities. For more information on these programs, go to myHR.HoustonMethodist.org.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Employees are covered against loss of earnings due to injuries on the job by an employee injury policy provided by Houston Methodist. Houston Methodist will provide an employee who sustains an occupational injury with benefits equal to those defined under the Texas Workers' Compensation Act. See myHR.HoustonMethodist.org.⁶¹

Termination of Benefits Coverage

Coverage will end for the following reasons:

- Termination of employment
- Change in standard hours or employee type that is ineligible for benefits
- Unpaid premium payments either during active employment or leave of absence
- Termination of a benefit plan
- Additional reasons identified in plan documents for specific benefit plans

You may have the right to continue medical, dental and health care spending account coverage for an extended period through COBRA. This provision extends your coverage for a certain period where coverage otherwise would have stopped. If you and/or your eligible dependent(s) have one of the following qualifying events, contact the HR Hub for further information:

- Termination of employment (voluntary or involuntary)
- Reduction in working hours placing you in ineligible status
- Divorce
- Dependent child reaches age of ineligibility or becomes ineligible by plan provision
- Death of employee

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The following section contains direction and guidance on dealing with sensitive information such as business information, personnel records and medical and billing records. Additionally, this section outlines procedures regarding the accuracy, retention and disposal of records.¹⁵

ANTITRUST LAWS

Houston Methodist is committed to following applicable federal and state antitrust laws. These laws are designed to promote fair competition. Talking about private Houston Methodist information with competitors (other health care institutions in the Houston area) may violate antitrust laws. You should not discuss how Houston Methodist sets its prices or salaries. You should not agree with a competitor to boycott a supplier. Additionally, you should not discuss Houston Methodist's relationship with suppliers and payers, including usage rates, financial information and other contractual terms.

Q&A

At another hospital for which I worked, I signed a confidentiality agreement that will not allow me to share information I learned about that hospital while working there. My department is working on a new procedure. I worked on a similar procedure where I previously worked. My supervisor asked me to give her a copy of their procedure to use as a reference. Is it okay to give her a copy of this procedure?

No, your supervisor should respect your commitment to your previous employer. Your supervisor may ask you to call your former employer for the current information and get permission to share the procedure.

I was at a trade association meeting last week. Representatives from our competitors were also at this meeting. During one session, we were discussing the increase in salary levels for allied health professionals. One person suggested that we share how much we pay allied health professionals. By doing so, we might all be able to agree on an acceptable salary level. What should I do?

You should not participate in this discussion in any way. If there are minutes being taken or if the meeting is being recorded, you should state that you cannot participate in the discussion. It would be best to leave this session and ensure that others witness your departure.

ACCURACY OF RECORDS, CHARTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

We create many records, charts and files as part of our work. It is important for records to be correct and complete. Correct, complete records are needed to provide quality patient care, develop valid research data and comply with regulatory and legal requirements. Employees are responsible for ensuring that the records created or used are correct and complete.

Q&A

My supervisor asked me to change the date on a progress note in a patient chart so that we can submit a bill. Would this action violate Houston Methodist's policies?

Yes. Once a patient's chart has been completed, it may not be altered. An addendum may be made to the note, but the note should not be changed and the addendum must be dated with the date it is written.

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF RECORDS, CHARTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

All Houston Methodist records must be kept as long as directed by the Records Retention Procedure and Schedule.¹⁶ If the Schedule does not list a certain type of record, employees should ask their supervisor or the Business Practices Office how long the record should be kept. You should follow the Records Retention Procedure when destroying records.

Q&A

My department is very low on file space, and I need to throw away old files to make room for some new ones. Can I throw away everything that is greater than three years old?

No. Houston Methodist has a formal Records Retention Schedule that should be followed by everyone. The Records Retention Schedule details what records must be kept and for how long. The Records Retention Schedule is part of *Information Management Procedure IM15*, which can be accessed in Policy Tech through the Houston Methodist intranet. If you have any questions, talk to your supervisor or call the Business Practices Office.

INFORMATION SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Sensitive information about Houston Methodist's strategies and operations is a valuable asset. Examples of sensitive Houston Methodist information include personnel data; patient lists and clinical information; quality assurance and care services activities; peer review actions; patient financial information; passwords; pricing and cost data; information pertaining to acquisitions, divestitures, affiliations and mergers; financial data; strategic plans; marketing strategies; supplier and subcontractor information; and research data. Employees may have access to and use sensitive information to perform their jobs. Keeping sensitive information private is a legal requirement and an important ethical obligation. If you have access to sensitive Houston Methodist information, Houston Methodist trusts that you will use this information appropriately. Sensitive information should not be

shared with others without appropriate permission.¹⁷ You should not use sensitive Houston Methodist information you learn at your job except in the course of doing business with or on behalf of Houston Methodist. Employees are not permitted to interfere with or uninstall security features deployed to Houston Methodist technology and devices.

Each employee signs a Confidentiality and Information Security Agreement. When you sign this Agreement, you agree to follow Houston Methodist's policies and procedures to keep Houston Methodist information and information systems safe. Access to information systems and proprietary data is a privilege. Your access to Houston Methodist information systems and sensitive data can be taken away at any time.¹⁸

Q&A

While accessing some employment records as part of my job, I noticed that a new employee is married to my ex-husband. Can I talk to her about my ex-husband?

No. You may not disclose that you saw this information in her personnel record. If you start a conversation with the new employee about her husband (who is your ex-husband), you are not fulfilling your responsibility to keep sensitive information private.



COMPUTER PASSWORDS

Much of Houston Methodist information is kept on our computer systems. It is very important that these computer systems remain secure. One way we keep our computer systems secure is by safeguarding our computer passwords. You should keep your password secret and not share it with anyone. In addition, you should not allow your User ID to be used by another person. You should not write your password down or keep it in an accessible place. If you believe that your password is no longer secure, you should change it immediately and inform your supervisor.

Q&A

My supervisor asked me for my password so that she can access my hard drive if I get sick and am unable to come to work. Is it okay to give her my password?

No, a better practice would be to use a shared drive for department working documents. Contact the Help Desk for information on how to set up a shared drive.

MEDICAL AND BILLING RECORDS

Some of Houston Methodist's most sensitive information is contained in medical and billing records. These types of records contain information about a patient's medical condition, history, medication, family illnesses and financial information. It is important that these records are secure and kept in a safe location. Access to this type of information should be limited only to those employees who need it to do their jobs.¹⁹ Employees must never use or disclose sensitive information that violates the privacy rights of our patients. (Also see *Patient Care and Patient Rights: Right to Protected Health Information*.)

Q&A

I am a nurse. My neighbor has been admitted to the hospital. I do not work on the unit he has been admitted to. Can I check his medical record to see how he is doing?

No. You do not need to access this health information to perform your job. Accessing this information violates your neighbor's privacy rights under federal and state law. Visiting your neighbor is okay if he is listed in your hospital directory for visitors, if he or his family has asked you to, or if you learn about his hospitalization from sources that do not violate his right to privacy (his family tells you of his hospitalization, announcement at worship service, etc.).

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel records often contain sensitive information. Personnel records consist of official records maintained by Human Resources and a departmental file that contains documents of a more temporary nature pertinent to departmental operations such as attendance records. Access to personnel files is permitted only to individuals within Houston Methodist who have a valid need to review the files. In collecting, maintaining and disclosing personnel information, Houston Methodist makes every effort to protect an employee's privacy rights and interests, and prevent inappropriate or unnecessary disclosures of information from any employee's file or record. Houston Methodist only collects and retains the personal information it needs to conduct business effectively and administer its employment and benefit programs.²⁰

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The following section contains information about disciplinary action that may be taken in response to violations of the law or Houston Methodist standards.

PENALTIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE

Everyone is equally responsible for maintaining high standards of lawful behavior. Legal and regulatory compliance violations will lead to disciplinary action that may include termination of employment and may involve governmental, civil and/or criminal prosecution, in addition to exclusion from participation in Medicare and other federal health care program business.

MANAGING PERFORMANCE

All employees have the responsibility to follow standards, such as those established by law, policies, procedures, departmental practices and job descriptions. Each employee also has the responsibility to report to management any violation of such standards.

Day-to-day coaching and counseling are positive forces in helping employees do their best job for the organization. This type of counseling is used as a means to help the employee make changes before formal corrective discipline is applied. Formal corrective measures are considered necessary with repeated and/or serious violations of Houston Methodist policies and procedures and performance standards. These measures include, but are not limited to, being advised of job duties and performance expectations, counseling with formal documentation, following a performance improvement plan, being placed on suspension without pay, being reported to the appropriate licensing body, or other disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees have the right to fair and consistent treatment when progressive discipline is initiated. Houston Methodist has established performance management to ensure that progressive discipline is carried out in an appropriate manner that supports our culture of safety.²¹

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

It is Houston Methodist's policy to promote a safe and productive work environment free from verbal threats or acts of violence and to respond effectively in the event such acts or threats of violence occur. Any direct or indirect threats or aggressive acts of violent behavior will not be tolerated.

Acts of intimidation, bullying and coercion are also unacceptable in the workplace. Violators may be subject to corrective action by Houston Methodist, which may include involuntary termination of employment.

If you suspect that a violation of this policy has occurred, you should contact management, Human Resources or the Security Department as promptly as possible and provide available information to help Houston Methodist take appropriate steps. See *HR Policy HR03*.

To view the Houston Methodist Workplace Violence Prevention Education video, click on the link below:

<https://vimeo.com/354669752>

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR

The following section contains information to serve as a guide and reference for all employees, including management, in carrying out their duties in a consistent and equitable manner.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

Houston Methodist provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities so they may perform the essential functions of a job. Any Houston Methodist employees requiring accommodations for disabilities should provide a written request for accommodation to **ADACorporate@houstonmethodist.org**. For disabilities that are not known or obvious, a physician's explanation of the required accommodation will be requested. Requests that cannot be reasonably accommodated will be discussed in an interactive process between the employee, Human Resources, and Management to identify alternatives when possible.⁶²

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE

As part of Houston Methodist's commitment to safeguarding the health of employees, providing a safe place for employees to work, and supplying our customers with the highest-quality patient care and service possible, Houston Methodist prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, use or possession of alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances on its premises or worksites. Houston Methodist encourages prevention and treatment of substance abuse through education, counseling and rehabilitation programs. Assistance is available through Houston Methodist's Employee Assistance Program.²⁸ (Also see *Employee Benefits: Employee Assistance Program*.)

ANNUAL INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION

To create a safe environment — free from infection/transmission of disease — and to protect our patients, employees, and the community,

all Houston Methodist employees and any contracted clinical personnel, students, volunteers and vendors with direct patient contact must comply with the annual influenza immunization program. Compliance includes immunization or submission of annual request for exemption. Those exempt from immunization must follow specific influenza transmission prevention safety protocols as instructed by Houston Methodist. Consequences for failure to comply with the annual influenza immunization program by stated deadlines each year include suspension without pay and can also lead to termination of employment.

ATTENDANCE

Employees have the obligation to be present at work on all assigned workdays, be on time reporting to work and returning from authorized breaks or meal periods and remain at work until the completion of the assigned workday. Absenteeism and tardiness impair the effectiveness of patient care, interfere with necessary work and place an undue burden on fellow employees. Your attendance record is a major consideration in your performance review.²⁹

BACKGROUND AND CREDENTIALS VERIFICATION

Upon employment, Houston Methodist or its representatives will ask current and former employers about your work record and verify information related to education, credentials (such as professional registration, licensure or certifications), driving records and conviction records as appropriate. Employees are required to keep all registrations, licenses and certifications up to date. Failure to maintain all required licenses and certifications will result in unpaid suspension and possibly termination.⁶³

Houston Methodist reserves the right to perform additional, updated reviews of education, credentials, driving and/or conviction records on an as-needed basis.³³

CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA

Houston Methodist's image is portrayed to current and potential patients through the news media. Houston Methodist cooperates with the media to encourage the presentation of factual and balanced stories.

However, since Houston Methodist's first responsibility is to protect its patients' well-being and privacy, it has developed guidelines for releasing information and protecting patient privacy. It is important for Houston Methodist to maintain a consistent image with the public through the news media. At times, it is necessary to limit Houston Methodist's exposure to the news media where comments could be inappropriate. For this reason, official spokespeople are designated to speak to the news media.³¹ Employees, other than designated spokespersons, should not talk to the news media about Houston Methodist business or patient information without clearance from the Public Relations Department.³⁰

Q&A

A reporter called me at work. He is gathering information on a rumor he heard about Houston Methodist. He stated he called me because he would like my opinion. What should I do?

Unless you are a system spokesperson, you should ask the reporter to contact Public Relations at 832.667.5809.

CONTINGENT WORKERS (INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS, AGENCY, AND TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES)

Houston Methodist provides guidance to management on the appropriate use of contingent workers within Houston Methodist to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. All contract and temporary workers, including independent contractors, must be screened by HR before they are allowed to perform any services for Houston Methodist.⁶⁴ Independent Contractors must be approved by Human Resources and have a contract in place through Legal Services before they will be approved to provide services for Houston Methodist.

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includes computer programs, databases and related documentation owned by the party with whom you are dealing or by another party.

Software is protected by copyright laws and may also be protected by patent, trade secret laws or as confidential information. The creation or loading of unauthorized copies of computer software or using personal software on Houston Methodist computer equipment is prohibited.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Employees are provided an avenue through the Human Resources department to voice their concerns if they feel they have been treated inequitably and their disputes cannot be resolved through normal day-to-day problem solving channels. Concerns of unfair, unsafe or unlawful treatment will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and securely and kept confidential as the law permits. There will be no retaliation against any employee who exercises his or her right to resolve conflicts in this manner. Employees are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department at their entity for assistance.³⁶ (Also see *Ethics and Compliance: Report Questionable Practices*.)

If there are any questions or issues you cannot first resolve with your supervisor, the Human Resources department staff is always available.



Please call your Human Resources department for help with any situations that arise during your employment.

DISTRIBUTION AND SOLICITATION

It is the policy of Houston Methodist that solicitation of employees and/or distribution by employees of printed matter, or solicitations in any manner, including email, will not be permitted within Houston Methodist property or on Houston Methodist premises, except in non-work areas during non-work time. Nonemployees are prohibited from soliciting or distributing materials on Houston Methodist's premises at all times, although some vendor exclusions may apply.⁶⁵

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS USE

Houston Methodist policy regarding the use and monitoring of communications systems includes electronic and telephone communications systems, including but not limited to mail, email, courier services, telephone systems, answering machines, voice mail, fax machines, video equipment and tapes, tape recorders and recordings, pagers, cellular and smartphones, computer networks, and computer directories and files. Houston Methodist technology and/or equipment should be used primarily for business purposes only and all communications and stored information transmitted, received, or contained in the Houston Methodist information systems are the property of Houston Methodist.

Communications that may defame Houston Methodist, employees, customers, vendors or competitors as well as offensive, harassing, vulgar, obscene or threatening communications are prohibited.³²

Use of Social Networking Sites

Employee use of a social networking site while using Houston Methodist computing resources and while on work time should be restricted to activities that support Methodist goals and objectives, and are in accordance with Houston Methodist's values and policies. Posting information related to a Houston Methodist patient is strictly prohibited and may be a violation of HIPAA laws. Posting Houston Methodist confidential or proprietary information is also strictly prohibited. Employees may not present personal opinions that in any way imply endorsement by Houston Methodist.⁶⁶

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION

Employees are required to wear an identification badge while on duty. Two badges are provided to you by Houston Methodist and must be worn above the waist, preferably near the collar, with each picture side of the badge displayed. No decorations or jewelry may be attached to the badge; however, an official service pin or other pin provided by Houston Methodist may be affixed to the badge holder without obstructing the picture, name identification or the magnetic badge reader, if applicable.

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

New employees (full-time, part-time and temporary), contract personnel, volunteers and interns new to Houston Methodist (including those who are rehires and have not worked for Houston Methodist for more than six months) are required to participate in an employee orientation program. In addition to a benefits overview, the orientation program is designed to familiarize all new employees with the history, mission, vision, values and goals of Houston Methodist and their respective entity, departmental responsibilities, performance improvement principles and ethical business practice compliance standards.

Employees are also required to attend and participate in a departmental orientation within the first two weeks of employment for instruction on specific policies and procedures that apply to the department in which the employee will be working.

A safety in-service may take place either in the new hire orientation program or at the departmental level, depending on the entity at which you are employed.

Each new management hire or internal promotion into management is required to attend a management orientation program. The session provides a concise overview of necessary information and procedures for participants to become effective managers at Houston Methodist.

EMPLOYER'S RIGHT TO ACCESS EMPLOYEE INFORMATION IN THE WORKPLACE

An employee's right to privacy will be respected to the extent permitted by law and safe operating conditions. Houston Methodist has the right to know and review activities conducted in or on its property. Houston Methodist has the right to search and inspect all Houston Methodist

premises, property, equipment and work products occupied, held, used or generated by Houston Methodist employees.

EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

Houston Methodist recognizes that from time-to-time employees may have immediate family members who may seek employment with our organization, or through the course of their personal relationships and/or job or organizational changes, may become related to other Houston Methodist employees with whom they work. It is Houston Methodist's policy to select and retain the best qualified individuals for all positions and to maintain a work environment that promotes teamwork and fair treatment while minimizing perceptions of favoritism or conflicts of interest.

For purposes of this policy, "relatives" will include an employee's spouse, children, siblings, parents and grandparents (including in-law and step relation in-laws).

Houston Methodist may hire relatives of employees, but may limit certain situations to reduce potential conflict of interest.

1. Employment of relatives within the same department is strongly discouraged.
2. Employees may not report directly or through the chain of command to another relative.
3. Employment of relatives in areas where there could be an erosion of "check and balance" processes that minimize financial/legal/noncompliance risk to the organization.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Equal employment opportunity is a sound and just concept to which Houston Methodist is firmly bound. Houston Methodist will not engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person employed or seeking employment with Houston Methodist on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran. Houston Methodist will ensure that all applicants and employees receive equal employment opportunity. This policy applies to all employment practices, including recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, merit increase, salary, training and development, demotion, and termination of employment.

Engaging in discriminatory practices or sexual, racial, religious, or any other kind of harassment of patients, visitors or co-workers is prohibited. If you feel you have been discriminated against, please seek the assistance of management.⁶⁴

EXIT INTERVIEW

Houston Methodist may request you to participate in an exit interview when you end employment. Information gathered through this process will lead to the improvement of patient care, working conditions and management practices. Houston Methodist uses this information to promote improvement and never allows it to reflect against any person.

FOREIGN NATIONALS

Export Control and Sanctions Compliance

The United States government export control and sanctions laws and regulations govern and sometimes prohibit the transfer of items, software, and information outside of the United States. This includes the shipping/transporting of physical items as well as providing information or technology verbally, in writing, or in any other way to a foreign national in the U.S. or abroad.⁶⁷

Within Houston Methodist, the term “foreign national” refers to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the U.S. (green card holder), or is a person granted U.S. refugee or asylee status. Foreign nationals may be restricted from participating in certain activities or being granted access to information or locations on Houston Methodist premises in accordance with export control and sanctions laws and regulations. To ensure compliance, all employees, observers, students, volunteers and HMHRI visitors must be screened for export control compliance prior to being granted access to Houston Methodist premises or participating in Houston Methodist work or activities.

Sponsorship of Foreign Nationals

HR-Immigration Services in the System Human Resources Department is responsible for the oversight and processing of all petitions for sponsorship for Houston Methodist employees and sponsored visitors. With the exception of legal counsel, no employees outside the HR-Immigration Services

Department have the authority to provide immigration-related advice or to prepare applications or petitions to be filed with the federal government.

Foreign nationals sponsored by Houston Methodist are required to maintain compliance with the provisions of their visa categories at all times. For sponsored foreign nationals these provisions include but are not limited to permissible work locations, hours, activities, and the prohibition to transfer or change activities without prior approval by HR-Immigration.

Employees on Visas Not Sponsored by Houston Methodist

Employees with temporary work authorization in the United States are responsible for monitoring the expiration of their work authorization and applying for extensions with USCIS as soon as permitted. Employees who fail to renew their work authorization and/or who fail to present evidence acceptable for renewing Form I-9 will be terminated no later than the last day of their work permission.

HARASSMENT

Houston Methodist is committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of harassment, exploitation or intimidation, including sexual, racial and/or religious harassment. Each member of the Houston Methodist community is responsible for fostering mutual respect, for being familiar with this policy, and for refraining from conduct that violates this policy. This policy applies to all individuals, including employees, patients, members, visitors, members of medical and/or house staff, students, volunteers, contractors and vendors. Harassment by/of any employee is strictly prohibited.³⁴ (Also see *Employment Practices and Workplace Behavior: Equal Employment Opportunity*.)

HIRING FORMER AND CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND FISCAL INTERMEDIARY EMPLOYEES

Regulations regarding conflicts of interest may impact Houston Methodist's ability to hire former or current United States government employees or fiscal intermediary employees. Consult Human Resources before hiring a person with this background.

JURY DUTY

In recognizing an employee's responsibility to perform his or her civic duty, Houston Methodist will pay regular base salary of employees whose standard hours are greater than 20, and not in a PRN or temporary position who are required to report for jury duty on a scheduled workday. Check with your supervisor for eligibility requirements. Jury duty must be noted on the time card.

LACTATION ACCOMMODATION

Houston Methodist is a family-friendly employer and encourages all of its pregnant and postpartum employees to consider nursing their children as a means of promoting the health of both the child and the parent. Management is to encourage and support employees in their efforts to continue working and breastfeeding. All Houston Methodist entities are required to provide accessible location(s) allowing for privacy, safety and sanitation for lactating employees while at work.³⁶

MANAGING STAFF REQUESTS

Houston Methodist is dedicated to providing the best medical care available. Houston Methodist also recognizes that employees may have strongly held values and beliefs that cause concern or conflict with some aspect of a patient's plan of care or treatment. Employees who have such concerns may request not to participate in an aspect of patient care. Such concerns or conflicts will be evaluated and resolved so that the quality of care is not compromised.³⁷

MEAL AND REST PERIODS

Although not legally required, employees who work at least eight hours during each scheduled workday should have an opportunity to eat and relax. The time for meals and, if opportunity permits, rest periods will be scheduled by management.

Meal periods are generally unpaid (i.e., time spent at "lunch" is deducted from worked hours). For a meal period to be unpaid for a nonexempt employee under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the meal period should generally be an uninterrupted period of time of 20 minutes or more.

Your unpaid meal period is your own time and you should refrain from working during this period. If you are subject to an automatic meal deduction in the Time and Attendance System and you take a meal period for an amount of time more or less than your automatic deduction, you must ensure that your time card is corrected accordingly. Review your time card frequently throughout the pay period to ensure unpaid meal periods are accurately reflected. Employees are highly encouraged to use the employee sign-off feature in the timekeeping system to indicate agreement with their calculated hours.²⁹

Some departments allow, but are not required by the FLSA to offer, one or two breaks of short duration running from 5 minutes to less than 20 minutes during the workday. It is up to the discretion of department management to determine if breaks are allowed based on operational needs. Breaks are different from unpaid meal periods. When breaks are allowed, they are generally paid as work time unless they exceed 20 minutes. You may not combine paid rest breaks with an unpaid meal period to extend the meal period or forego the meal period in order to leave work early. You may not leave the work premises during paid rest periods.⁶⁸

Q&A

If I work an eight-hour shift, how many paid breaks am I guaranteed?

The FLSA does not require that employees receive paid breaks. Depending on operation needs, some departments allow one or two brief paid breaks per shift. Your manager can provide additional information regarding departmental breaks.

OFF-DUTY EMPLOYEES

Employees who are off-duty are not to remain on the premises of the hospital and/or other buildings unless they are visiting a patient or unless they have official business to conduct.

If visiting a patient, please observe the visiting hour schedule and guest check-in procedures. Please refrain from interrupting the work of any friends or co-workers who are on duty.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Outside employment must not interfere with your required duties at Houston Methodist. Full-time employees may not participate in an outside activity or full-time work that interferes with their duties at Houston Methodist. (See also *Ethics and Compliance: Conflicts of Interest*.)

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

Where applicable, subsidized parking may be available for employees either adjacent to the work site or at a remote facility a few minutes away. Employees are expected to comply with all parking facility rules and regulations. Failure to do so may result in revocation of parking privileges. Houston Methodist does not assume responsibility for theft or damage to an employee's automobile while in parking facilities. Other subsidized transportation options may be available. Check with management if you have questions regarding parking and transportation.

PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Government communications, also known as lobbying or advocacy, is an activity or communication that attempts to influence officials or the public to take a position for or against an issue. Houston Methodist, through its Government Affairs Department, engages in communicating policy positions on issues that impact the entire organization. Houston Methodist personnel shall not advocate to government officials or staff for or against a position on any issue without first conferring with the vice president of Government Affairs. This includes encouraging other staff or patients to contact their political representatives to advocate on a particular issue. Even when acting as an individual in a personal capacity, no resources of Houston Methodist, including email, personal devices provided by Houston Methodist, letterhead or business cards, may be used without prior authorization by Houston Methodist Vice President for Government Affairs.

Political activity, also called electioneering, involves support or opposition to political candidates and the outcome of political campaigns. Campaigning, directly or indirectly, for or against any candidate for political office is strictly prohibited because Houston Methodist is a nonprofit organization. Houston Methodist resources, including but not limited to time compensated by Houston Methodist, money, space, equipment and supplies (such as email system, office supplies, and phone system), and

reputation, may not be used to promote or oppose the election of anyone for public office. These prohibitions apply to campaigns for local, state and national offices, and political action committees (PACs), as well as offices in other countries. Under no circumstances should you represent Houston Methodist in any political activity.

Houston Methodist respects its employees' right to vote and to take part in political activities. However, these activities must take place on the employees' own time and at their own expense. If making a personal campaign contribution, never state or imply that the political contribution is from Houston Methodist. You should not force or appear to pressure co-workers to participate in or support political activity. Do not involve Houston Methodist or co-workers in your personal political causes.

Q&A

My friend is running for office. Is it okay to email some of my co-workers and friends at Houston Methodist to let them know about a campaign event?

No. You should not use Houston Methodist resources, such as email, copy machine, fax machine, or Houston Methodist letterhead for political purposes.

Can I bring my friend to our next mandatory staff meeting so she can meet my co-workers and tell them about her campaign?

No. It is not appropriate to force co-workers to participate in any political activities. Your co-workers must attend this staff meeting. Therefore, you would be forcing them to participate in this political activity. Additionally, this political activity would take place during work hours and interfere with work. Therefore, you should not bring your friend to the staff meeting to talk about her campaign.

A bill on limiting smoking in public places has been proposed. Your CEO communicates the importance of this legislation to promote reduced smoking with the attendant health benefits. He asks you

to communicate with your state representative supporting this bill. Is it okay to email co-workers and friends while at work, asking them to support the bill?

Yes. Your CEO has initiated a “grassroots advocacy” communication to educate people on the bill and its purpose, which has a direct relationship to the health care purpose of the institution. Your further communication to others you know on the same issue is also what is known as grassroots advocacy or “spreading the word.”

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

All employees are required to present themselves in a professional manner at all times and wear appropriate professional apparel. Each employee is required to exercise good judgment in matters of appearance, attire and grooming during work hours. Management will inform employees as to the appropriate dress for their department, including specific regulations concerning safety and uniform requirements.³⁹

PERSONAL MAIL

Houston Methodist requests that you not use any of the Houston Methodist facilities as your personal mailing address, except for professional journals. Mailboxes for outgoing personal mail are available for your convenience.

PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS EXCLUDED FROM MEDICARE, MEDICAID AND OTHER GOVERNMENT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

Federal and state governments can keep individuals and organizations from participating in government-funded programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and research funded by federal grants such as National Institutes of Health grants. Because Houston Methodist participates in these programs, Houston Methodist cannot employ or do business with individuals or organizations that have been excluded from federal health care programs.⁴⁵

If you cannot participate in government-funded programs, you must tell your supervisor. Medical staff members, allied health professionals and vendors must tell the appropriate Houston Methodist personnel. If you

have knowledge that another Houston Methodist employee, a contractor or a vendor doing business with Houston Methodist cannot participate in government-funded programs, you must report this information to the Business Practices Office for verification and resolution.

Houston Methodist screens all employees, physicians, vendors and contractors on a monthly and annual basis against the government exclusion lists.

Q&A

We have a vacant position in our department. We have gone through the interview process and found a qualified candidate. However, Human Resources says we can't hire this candidate because he is excluded. What does that mean?

This means the candidate cannot participate in government-funded programs. These programs include Medicare, Medicaid and research funded by grants from government agencies. Because Houston Methodist participates in these programs, it may not employ or do business with anyone or any company who has been “excluded.” *Sanctioned, debarred and suspended are other words for excluded.*

REPORTING CONCERNS TO DNV-GL

Houston Methodist encourages employees to seek all internal avenues for resolving concerns regarding patient care. These include contacting the Business Practices Ethics hotline, Human Resources, the chief nursing officer, contacting the operator and asking for a patient advocate or patient liaison, and contacting the office of Legal Services. Employees who do not feel the patient care concern is being addressed after pursuing internal reporting channels may contact DNV-GL by calling **866.496.9647**.

SMOKING/TOBACCO

Houston Methodist has a tobacco-free and nicotine-free environment policy and a Tobacco and Nicotine-free hiring policy. The use of tobacco or nicotine substances is not permitted on any Houston Methodist property.

This prohibition includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, vaping devices, or other tobacco-free cigarette-like devices.^{40 75}

SUBPOENAS AND SERVICE OF LEGAL PAPERS

On occasion process servers or law enforcement officers will come onto Houston Methodist property to meet with our employees for legal matters not related to Houston Methodist business. While we are not legally obligated to allow legal papers to be served to Houston Methodist employees while on our premises, we provide employees with the option whether to be or not to be served by a civilian. With regard to law enforcement agency visits to employees while on Houston Methodist premises for all legal matters, Houston Methodist will assist with facilitating these requests in an orderly and nondisruptive fashion to ensure we provide privacy, respect and dignity to the employee when these requests are made. Please contact your entity's HR Department to assist with this process. HR will work in partnership with Houston Methodist's Public Safety Department and law enforcement to ensure proper procedures are followed.

TELECOMMUTING

Houston Methodist assigns employees to worksite locations in a manner that supports the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. Although a telecommuting arrangement may be advantageous to the employee, telecommuting is regarded not as a benefit, but as an alternative work assignment that aids the efficiency and/or effectiveness of a particular department or function. Telecommuting may benefit Houston Methodist by better meeting both business and employee needs, attracting and retaining a diverse and talented work force, improving productivity and reducing operating expenses in some cases.

All telecommuting arrangements must be structured in alignment with Houston Methodist guidelines, implemented with guidance from Human Resources and approved by the appropriate executive. If telecommuting is approved, hours worked must be recorded on the time card appropriately.⁶⁹

TELEPHONES AND COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

The use of telephones and other communications equipment is for Houston Methodist business and not personal use. The use of Houston Methodist

equipment for personal use interferes with efficient operations and takes time away from work and patient care. Personal phone calls on scheduled work time are to be kept to a minimum. When answering any phone for Houston Methodist, it is important to be courteous and convey a positive image. Employees should answer phones promptly, and in answering or placing calls, identify themselves and their department. Use of personal phones and other electronic devices to enjoy music or for other purposes while on work time and in work areas must not interfere with productivity, take focus away from the patient or customer, or cause a disruption in the workplace.

TERMINATION

Since employment at Houston Methodist is based upon continuing mutual consent, either the employer or the employee is privileged to terminate employment at any time for any reason. The reason for termination should be documented for all departing employees. Those who choose to resign their positions should provide a letter of resignation or complete the designated resignation form at the time of notice.⁴⁸

You must return all property (I.D. badge, keys, etc.) to Human Resources or your supervisor before your last day of employment. Please contact Human Resources in advance to discuss your benefit continuation, final paycheck distribution and arrangement for your exit interview. Please note that all outstanding deductions will be taken from your final payment. If your forwarding address changes after you leave, tell Human Resources and your income tax form (W-2) will be mailed to the appropriate address.

REFERENCES AND EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATIONS

When you end employment, you may use the organization as a reference when you seek other employment. Generally, the only information that Houston Methodist will verify with future employers outside of Houston Methodist is dates of employment, job title and final salary. Houston Methodist outsources requests for information on current or former employees. Please contact your entity's Human Resources Department for the employment verification vendor contact information.

UNION-FREE WORKPLACE

Houston Methodist is a union-free employer and maintains a voluntary agreement to provide working conditions, wages and benefits that are

competitive with those offered by other employers in the health care industry. Houston Methodist is further committed to treating each employee fairly and with dignity and respect in accordance with the organization's **I CARE** values.

Houston Methodist believes that a direct relationship with open communication between its management and employees is invaluable to our success as a health care system.

Houston Methodist seeks to empower employees through partnership, enabling its employees to play a key role in shaping both their areas of responsibility and the system as a whole. This direct relationship with employees is vital to fulfilling Houston Methodist's mission of providing high-quality, cost-effective health care to our patients in a caring environment.

Houston Methodist strives to demonstrate our commitment to employees by responding to their concerns and working together to address their problems, and supports employee rights under the National Labor Relations Act if they are considering third-party representation. Houston Methodist will strive to protect the individual rights of all its employees.

Houston Methodist believes that each employee should consider the facts and his or her relationship with Houston Methodist and, if solicited, not sign a union card or union petition. In this way, each employee maintains his or her individual right to deal directly with Houston Methodist management.

Any concerns about working conditions or any other work-related matters can be shared with your direct supervisor, Human Resources or Business Practices.

WEAPONS-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Houston Methodist strives to provide a safe working environment free from the risk of violence with firearms and weapons. Houston Methodist prohibits the possession of any kind of lethal weapon on its premises; this includes all openly carried and concealed handguns regardless of whether a person has been issued a license to carry a concealed handgun by the Texas Department of Public Safety. Only commissioned law enforcement officers and persons granted written permission by the president and chief executive officer of Houston Methodist are permitted to carry weapons on the premises. Houston Methodist employees should report anyone who may be carrying a weapon to a security officer and/or Public Safety Department at their entity.

GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS

This section contains guidance regarding employees' responses to governmental inquiries.

Houston Methodist will cooperate with all government audits and investigations. Accurate information will be provided to external auditors and investigators. Employees should immediately report any non-routine request related to Houston Methodist from a government agency to the Department of Legal Services or Business Practices. Government agents have the authority to approach individuals at any time and request any information. If you are approached by a government investigator while at work, you should immediately contact your supervisor and the Department of Legal Services or Business Practices. Before answering any questions, you have the legal right to consult with your supervisor, Legal Services or Business Practices. Foreign nationals working, learning or conducting other business or visitation to Houston Methodist on a visa sponsored by Houston Methodist should also immediately contact the HR-Immigration Department. Requests for immigration documentation should be provided in accordance with instructions provided during the individual's visa orientation. If unsure, refer all investigators to HR-Immigration.

If you are approached by a government investigator regarding a Houston Methodist matter while on your personal time and away from Houston Methodist, you should ask the investigator for a subpoena or court order requiring you to talk with the investigator. If there is no subpoena or court order, you have certain rights regarding the interview. You have the right to:

- Ask the investigator for a business card or identification card
- Agree to be interviewed as requested and then end the interview at any time
- Agree to the interview, but only with a lawyer present
- Agree to the interview, but only at work during normal business hours
- Take notes about the conversation
- Decline to be interviewed

If the investigator does present you with a subpoena, you should contact your supervisor, Department of Legal Services or Business Practices immediately.

If you agree to be interviewed, tell the investigator, "I am willing to cooperate with you, but I would like to make some calls first." Then, contact the number and administrator on call listed here for your entity for help:

- Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital: 281.420.8600
- Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital: 281.333.5503
- Houston Methodist Continuing Care Hospital: 832.522.1000
- Houston Methodist Hospital: 713.790.2201
- Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital: 281.274.7000
- Houston Methodist West Hospital: 832.522.1000
- Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital: 737.477.1000

All other Houston Methodist entities, call **713.790.2201** to reach the Business Practices officer on call. Houston Methodist-sponsored foreign nationals should call HR-Immigration at **832.667.6288** or **832.667.6240**.

Houston Methodist requires its employees to cooperate with government investigators. However, it is important that the legal rights of Houston Methodist and its employees are respected. It may be difficult to figure out what information can legally be given to a government agent. Some information the government agent is seeking may be confidential and cannot be released by Houston Methodist or its employees unless certain requirements are met. It is important to talk to the contacts listed above to get directions on how to protect the privacy of patient and personnel information.

Q&A

Two agents from the Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General come to your office, and they ask you to hand over Houston Methodist documents to them. What should you do?

You should tell the agents that you are willing to cooperate with them, but that you need to make some phone calls first. You should immediately contact your supervisor, the Department of Legal Services or Business Practices for assistance.

An agent from the Department of Homeland Security comes to your office and asks you to show them where the labor certifications are posted in your building, and for the contact of a foreign national employee in your building. What should you do?

You should tell the agents that you are willing to cooperate with them, but that you need to make some phone calls first. You should immediately contact HR-Immigration, the Department of Legal Services or Business Practices for assistance.

HOUSTON METHODIST BRAND AND MARKETING PRACTICES

HOUSTON METHODIST BRAND

Houston Methodist has a well-established brand supported by a proud history of excellence and innovation. It is important that our communication and marketing efforts maintain a consistent look, feel and voice in order to reflect the quality of the Houston Methodist name. As brand ambassadors, each employee plays a critical role in upholding our brand. For this reason, marketing has established several resources so that employees can help maintain its integrity.

- **Houston Methodist Brand Guide:** The brand guide should be used as your first resource for any questions or directions on brand usage. It also includes a section on other brand resources available, such as where to get templates and logos, and how to order approved promotional items and stationery.
- **Editorial Style Guide:** The style guide is the standards manual for language usage and stylistic questions related to writing, publications and Web content produced across Houston Methodist.
- **Brand Approvals:** Email brand@houstonmethodist.org for all brand reviews of design, writing, proofing, video, etc. of various projects for final approval before project is printed or distributed to the public.

COMMITMENT TO TRUTH IN MARKETING

Houston Methodist markets its services and products in an honest manner. Marketing materials provide information on available services, and follow licensure and accreditation requirements. Marketing information is clear, correct and truthful. Houston Methodist will respect the welfare, privacy and confidentiality of patients in any marketing efforts.



Q&A

My department is sending patients we have treated information on alternative treatments that Houston Methodist can provide for them. We are only sending this information to patients with a particular condition. We had to review patients' protected health information to identify which patients had this condition. Is this okay? Do we need the patients' permission to use their protected health information in this manner?

Yes, but you may also be able to use patients' protected health information without their permission for this purpose because federal and state privacy laws do not regulate certain communications. However, before you engage in this type of activity, consult the Marketing Department at your hospital or at corporate.

PATIENT CARE AND PATIENT RIGHTS

The following section contains information about patient care and certain basic rights of patients. In keeping with our mission, Houston Methodist recognizes and promotes certain basic rights of patients in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and accreditation standards.

PATIENT CARE

Houston Methodist is committed to providing quality health care in a spiritual environment of caring. We demonstrate this commitment by living Houston Methodist values in our daily work activities. Integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence are found at all levels of the Houston Methodist organization. Living Houston Methodist values makes Houston Methodist a better place for patients and visitors.

Houston Methodist also demonstrates its commitment to providing quality health care by maintaining an active patient safety program and by hiring and granting medical staff privileges to properly licensed and credentialed providers.

ADMISSION, TRANSFER AND DISCHARGE

Respect is one of Houston Methodist's core values. Houston Methodist treats every individual as a person of worth, dignity and value. Houston Methodist will not exclude or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, disability, national origin, age, sex or religion from participation in, admission to, access to or treatment in any programs, activities or benefits.⁵⁰ Houston Methodist strives to ensure that all patient transfers are done in a medically appropriate manner from physician to physician, as well as hospital to hospital.

Houston Methodist will work with the patient and family to develop a discharge plan based on patient need for post-hospital care. Information and instructions will be given to the patient, family, and/or others who will be involved in home care. As needed, referrals to appropriate resources will be made.⁴²

Patients who need health care items or services following discharge from a Houston Methodist hospital have the right to choose the supplier or provider of the necessary item or service if they have not assigned this right to the payer. The patients' freedom to choose will be respected.⁵²

Q&A

Patients who need items or services after they are discharged often ask my help in choosing what provider to use. Is it okay to help the patient choose the provider of these items or services?

Yes, it is okay to help patients in this manner as long as the information you provide is in the best interest of the patient and does not benefit you personally. When making suggestions of this nature to a patient, consult *Patient Care/Patient Safety(PC/PS)*²⁹ to make sure you are following the correct process.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Emergency medical services will be provided to individuals who come to the hospital's emergency department if the hospital has the ability and the room to care for this person. Houston Methodist will attempt to stabilize patients requiring emergency or lifesaving treatment regardless of the patient's ability to pay. All individuals who have similar medical conditions will be treated consistently.⁴⁴

END-OF-LIFE DECISIONS

Patients have the right to make advance directives regarding their health care. Patients will be given information describing their rights to request or refuse treatment, and to make advance directives. A patient's advance directive will be honored to the extent permitted by law and within the capabilities of Houston Methodist, its employees and medical staff. The values or beliefs of employees or medical staff may cause concern or conflict with some aspect of patient care. The Biomedical Ethics Consultation Service assists with the evaluation and resolution of the conflict to ensure that the quality of patient care is not compromised.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Patients and their surrogate decision-makers have the right to be informed of their rights prior to receiving care, treatment and services, and to receive respectful and considerate care during their hospital stay. These rights apply to patients admitted to the hospital as well as patients receiving care, treatment or services in an outpatient department or off-campus setting of the hospital. In addition to specific rights, patients have certain responsibilities during their hospital stay. A description of the patient rights and responsibilities is included in System_PCPS049 Patients' Rights and Responsibilities and each hospital entity Patient Guide.

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED/ALLEGED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Employees who suspect that a patient or patient's family member is a victim of abuse or neglect should contact Adult Protective Services or Children's Protective Services. Social workers are available at each hospital to help employees with the report and any subsequent investigation.

RESEARCH

Before participating in a research study, patients will be fully informed of other treatment options that may prove beneficial to them. All known potential risks, discomforts, expected benefits and alternatives must be explained to patients in a manner they can understand. All patients and staff have the right to refuse to participate in research without compromising any other services or functions. A patient's treatment will not be affected by his or her refusal to participate in a research study.⁴⁶

RIGHT TO PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

Patients have rights, with certain exceptions provided by law, with respect to the health information that is created about them at Houston Methodist. Houston Methodist's Notice of Privacy Practices and Houston Methodist's policies and procedures explain these rights. If you have questions or need information regarding your legal duties or Houston Methodist's privacy practices, please contact your entity's Business Practices officer or the Business Practices Office.

Access

Within legal limits, the patient surrogate decision-maker has a right to information contained in their medical record, including current medical records, in the form or format as requested (oral or written) and within a reasonable timeframe as agreed by the hospital and the individual requesting the medical record. The medical record may be requested in an electronic form or format, if available, or a readable hard copy form or format.⁴⁷

Accounting of Disclosures

Patients have the right to request a list of disclosures that Houston Methodist has made of the patient's health information with the exception of disclosures made for treatment, payment or health care operations, those authorized by the patient and certain other disclosures.

Amendment

Patients have the right to request an amendment to their health information if they believe that their health information is incorrect or incomplete. Houston Methodist may deny a patient's request for amendment under certain circumstances, as provided by law.⁴⁹

Complaint

Patients have the right to file a complaint with Houston Methodist or the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights if the patient believes that his or her health information privacy rights have been violated.⁵⁰

Confidential Communications

Patients have the right to request that Houston Methodist communicates health information to them by an alternate means or to an alternate location other than their home address and telephone number. Requests for alternate communications should also be communicated by the patient to all of their health care providers, including their private physician. Houston Methodist will try to accommodate the patient's request for alternate communications.⁵¹

Notice of Privacy Practices

Patients have the right to receive a paper copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices.⁵² Houston Methodist may change the Notice of Privacy Practices,

including adding provisions that apply to all health information that is currently maintained, as well as any information Houston Methodist receives in the future. The most current version of the notice will be posted at each Houston Methodist entity and placed on each Houston Methodist entity's website.

Restrictions

Patients have the right to request that Houston Methodist restrict the use or disclosure of the patient's health information for treatment, payment or health care operations.⁵³ Houston Methodist is not required to agree to the patient's request for certain restrictions.

CODING, BILLING AND CHARGING FOR SERVICES

The following section contains information about billing, charging for supplies/services, payments, reimbursement and the submission of claims and cost reports.

APPROPRIATE CHARGING OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Employees responsible for charging supplies, procedures and other services should follow Houston Methodist policies and procedures. These explain what is chargeable, which cost centers will receive revenue for charges, how to change prices, and how to resolve issues related to outpatient and institutional charging. Employees in this area should also regularly review coding practices and software edits to ensure compliance with government and private payor requirements. Institutional charges are for services provided to other hospitals or sponsors of research.

PATIENT DISCOUNTS

Houston Methodist offers discounts to certain patients who meet defined criteria, but all discounts must comply with a discount policy in order to assure compliance with federal and state law. Co-payments and deductibles should not be routinely waived.

CLINICAL DECISION-MAKING

One of Houston Methodist's core values is integrity. Integrity means, "We are honest and ethical in all we say and do." Integrity in clinical decision-making means that clinical decisions are based on patient health care needs. Clinical decisions are not based on how Houston Methodist pays or shares financial risk with its leaders, managers, clinical staff or licensed independent practitioners.



CORRECTION OF PAYMENT ERRORS

All patient and payer questions about Houston Methodist charges must be reviewed in a timely manner. If billing errors are found, employees should tell the billing office. The billing office will investigate, make corrections and/or refunds within 60 days of identification as defined and required by federal law.⁵⁷

COST REPORTS

By law, Houston Methodist must prepare certain reports about costs and other information about its operations. These reports must be accurate and complete. Reports must reflect services rendered and supplies used. Reports must contain the information required by law. All information on these reports must be properly classified, allocated to the correct cost centers, and supported by verifiable and auditable cost data.⁵⁸

REIMBURSEMENT RELATED TO RESEARCH

Costs and charges associated with research will frequently be paid by a research sponsor rather than by Medicare, Medicaid or an insurance company. Individuals involved in accounting and charging of

research-related procedures must carefully follow all policies and procedures. Contact the Houston Methodist Research Institute or the Business Practices Office for more information.⁵⁹

SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS

Houston Methodist submits claims for payment to the federal and state governments. Claims for payment can be made only for medically necessary services that were actually performed. Claims cannot contain false or misleading information. Diagnostic, procedural and billing codes are used to tell the payer what services were performed. The payer uses the codes to determine how much money to pay to Houston Methodist. Therefore, the codes assigned must accurately represent the services provided. Medical records are used as evidence to support the bills Houston Methodist submits. Making a false statement in a medical record used to support billing can be a crime. Medical record documentation must follow all regulatory and accreditation requirements and conform to professional standards.

Under the federal False Claims Act and Texas false claims laws,⁶⁰ any person who knowingly submits, or causes someone else to submit, illegal claims for payment of government funds is subject to government fines and penalties. It is also a false claim to retain money that you should not have received. These fines and penalties can range from \$11,000 to \$22,000 per claim and can be accompanied by penalties for triple the actual damages.

Private parties known as qui tam relators may bring actions on behalf of the government under the False Claims Act and Texas law. These qui tam relators may share in 15 percent to 30 percent of the proceeds from a false claims action or settlement.

You should report suspected illegal claim activity to the Houston Methodist Business Practices officer (**713.383.5124**) or through Houston Methodist's Business Practices *EthicsLine* (**1.800.500.0333**), or through Web reporting at **tmhs.myethicsline.com**. The Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General and Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Office of Inspector General also accept reports of illegal claim activity.

Employees who report illegal claim activity in good faith are protected from retaliation by Houston Methodist's Business Practices Procedure BP07 and by federal and state laws. The False Claims Act provides for

certain remedies for retaliation against qui tam relators. These include reinstatement with comparable seniority, two times the amount of any back pay, interest on any back pay, and compensation for any special damages sustained as a result of the discrimination, including litigation costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

Q&A

Is a diagnosis code necessary on orders for ancillary services?

Yes. A diagnosis code justifies medical necessity and ensures proper payment.

A patient asked me to change a bill for a service rendered to list a procedure covered by their insurance rather than one that is not. Can I change their bill?

No. Changing their bill in this manner constitutes fraud and could create legal problems for you, the patient and Houston Methodist.



SAFETY AND EMPLOYEE HEALTH

Safety is a top priority at Houston Methodist and we commit substantial resources to providing the safest possible physical environment for all.

The success of our safety program depends on employee commitment to safety. You can help promote safety by focusing on these key areas:

- **AWARENESS** — You are expected to be aware of fire, disaster and safety policies and procedures.
- **PREVENTION** — It is up to you to look for unsafe conditions, report them, and see that they are corrected. This also includes maintaining your own optimal health to reduce risk of injury or illness for you and our patients.
- **PREPAREDNESS** — When an emergency does arise, you must know how to act to prevent or reduce injuries, damage and loss.⁶¹

EMPLOYEE HEALTH SERVICES

Ongoing Health Assessments

Government health regulations require employees working in certain departments to participate in regular (usually annual) employer-sponsored, medical surveillance programs. These programs may include, but are NOT limited to, TB screening, radiation monitoring, physical examinations, and/or laboratory tests. All employees are required to take an annual TB test and flu shot. Employees who fail to comply with the annual TB testing, flu shot campaign or other required health screenings will be placed on unpaid suspension and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees must quickly respond to testing notification so as not to exceed the anniversary of the previous testing date.

Employee Health Services is available to all employees for services, such as post-offer physical exams, TB testing, vaccines, counseling for illnesses and injuries, first aid and follow-up of work-related illnesses or injuries.

If You Become Ill While on the Job

If you become ill while you are on the job and are unable to do your work, please tell your supervisor right away. You must tell your supervisor before

you leave your work area. Your supervisor may send you to the Employee Health Clinic for evaluation before allowing you to leave before the end of your shift.

Your Return to Work

If you are off work due to a work-related injury or any type of medical leave of absence, you must:

- Have a written return-to-work release from your doctor allowing you to return to work, and
- Visit the Employee Health Clinic when you return to work. Please remember to bring your doctor's note with you when you go to the Employee Health Clinic.

If you were ill or injured, but not on a medical leave of absence, your supervisor may still ask you to visit the Employee Health Clinic to make sure you are well enough to do your job. This is for your own safety as well as for the good of our patients.

All employee health records retained in the Employee Health Clinic are strictly confidential. This means that your records may not be released from the hospital (unless allowable or required by law) without your written permission.



ACCIDENTS AND INJURY REPORTING

If you see anyone injured, give assistance and get help. Always report any accidents, injuries or unusual incidents to your supervisor immediately. Employees who have an on-the-job accident, no matter how minor, are required to notify their immediate supervisor at once. The supervisor will see that the proper action is taken. Employees who contract an illness that they suspect may be job-related must notify their supervisor within 24 hours of discovery or diagnosis.⁶¹

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The mission of Houston Methodist reflects a social responsibility to the community to protect the environment and minimize the environmental impact of its operations. Houston Methodist strives to comply with environmental laws and regulations and will implement other appropriate environmental strategies that do not unreasonably increase the cost of health care.

FIRE PLAN

While Houston Methodist buildings have been constructed to be as safe as possible, effective response to any fire depends in great measure on employee preparedness. In the event of a fire or fire drill, you should know and carry out appropriate procedures.

Fire safety and prevention are responsibilities of all employees. An easy-to-remember acronym, **RACE**, is a guide that helps prevent panic and avoid catastrophe in a fire emergency.

Rescue. Rescue anyone in immediate danger.

Alarm. Pull the nearest fire alarm. Pull stations are usually located near elevators, stairwells and nurses stations. Call an emergency number such as 911 or your entity's internal emergency number.

Contain. Contain fire and smoke by closing doors.

Extinguish. Extinguish the fire if it can be done safely.

SAFETY TRAINING

Trained and motivated employees are Houston Methodist's greatest resource. Houston Methodist conducts a comprehensive safety-training program that is continuously monitored for its effectiveness. Safety training for employees includes orientation programs for corporate-wide and departmental safety information and procedures. Each Houston Methodist entity is uniquely specialized and varied in terms of procedures, equipment and materials. Recognizing these individual conditions, each department conducts safety orientation to familiarize its employees with safety policies and procedures particular to its area.

SEVERE WEATHER AND EMERGENCIES

In case disaster strikes or threatens Houston Methodist or the community, each individual department has a disaster plan that employees are to review and be prepared to follow. Find out from your supervisor what your department expects from you during an internal or external disaster.

REFERENCES

The references below refer to Houston Methodist policies and procedures and to federal and state laws that Houston Methodist must follow. The policies and procedures are posted on the Houston Methodist intranet at **tmh.tmc.edu**. You can find the laws listed below on the Internet. Contact Human Resources, your entity's Business Practices officer or the Houston Methodist Business Practices Office for more information.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT RECEIPT

This Employee Handbook has been prepared for your information in order to help answer some of your employment questions on personnel topics such as policies, procedures and benefits of Houston Methodist. This handbook is also a practical summary of how to conduct business operations and patient care activities in compliance with the law, and Houston Methodist values and organizational ethics. Please read it carefully. Upon receipt of this handbook, please sign the statement below and return as directed by your New Employee Orientation facilitator.

I, _____, have received the handbook, and understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it. I also understand that failure to abide by the provisions in the handbook may lead to disciplinary action as identified in Houston Methodist's Managing for Performance Policy (Human Resources-01), or other enforcement action under applicable law.

I will familiarize myself with the contents of this handbook. By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept and agree to comply with the information found in this handbook. I understand that this handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during my employment, but is a guide to the goals, policies, practices, benefits and expectations of Houston Methodist.

I understand that I have a personal duty to bring all real or suspected violations of the law, and Houston Methodist's values and organizational ethics to the attention of my supervisor, Human Resources, my entity's Business Practices officer, and/or the Business Practices officer or to call the Business Practices *EthicsLine*. I understand that I cannot be punished or retaliated against for upholding the provisions in the handbook or for obeying the laws and regulations that apply to my job.

Houston Methodist reserves the right to modify or terminate any or all plans, rules, policies and procedures at any time and without notice. Houston Methodist policies and procedures are published on the Houston Methodist intranet. The website **tmh.tmc.edu** will contain the most current revision of this Employee Handbook and a link to Policy Tech, the document control system that contains the most current version of all new and existing policies and procedures. In the event of any conflict between hard copy and intranet procedures, the intranet procedure will take precedence.

I understand that the Houston Methodist Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment.

Houston Methodist retains all its rights under the employment-at-will doctrine.

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

EMPLOYEE PRINTED NAME

ID NUMBER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT RECEIPT

This Employee Handbook has been prepared for your information in order to help answer some of your employment questions on personnel topics such as policies, procedures and benefits of Houston Methodist. This handbook is also a practical summary of how to conduct business operations and patient care activities in compliance with the law, and Houston Methodist values and organizational ethics. Please read it carefully. Upon receipt of this handbook, please sign the statement below and return as directed by your New Employee Orientation facilitator.

I, _____, have received the handbook, and understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it. I also understand that failure to abide by the provisions in the handbook may lead to disciplinary action as identified in Houston Methodist's Managing for Performance Policy (Human Resources-01), or other enforcement action under applicable law.

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EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

EMPLOYEE PRINTED NAME

ID NUMBER

HOSPITALS

Houston Methodist Hospital

6565 Fannin St.
Houston, TX 77030
T: 713.790.3311
T: 713.441.7465

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital

4401 Garth Rd.
Baytown, TX 77521
T: 281.420.8600

Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital

18300 Houston Methodist Dr.
Houston, TX 77058
T: 281.333.5503

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital

16655 Southwest Fwy.
Sugar Land, TX 77479
T: 281.274.7170
T: 281.242.7465

Houston Methodist West Hospital

18500 Katy Fwy.
Houston, TX 77094
T: 832.522.1000

Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital

18220 State Hwy. 249
Houston, TX 77070
T: 281.737.1900

Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital

17201 Interstate 45 S.
The Woodlands, TX 77385
T: 936.270.2000

Long-Term Acute Care Hospital: Houston Methodist Continuing Care Hospital

701 S. Fry Rd.
Katy, TX 77450
T: 281.599.5700

EMERGENCY CARE CENTERS

Houston Methodist Cinco Ranch Emergency Care Center

26000 FM 1093
Katy, TX 77494
T: 832.522.6070

Houston Methodist Cypress Emergency Care Center

27560 Hempstead Hwy.
Cypress, TX 77433
T: 281.737.2424

Houston Methodist Kirby Emergency Care Center

2615 Southwest Fwy., Suite 140
Houston, TX 77090
T: 713.441.3724

**Houston Methodist Pearland
Emergency Care Center**

11525 W. Broadway St.
Pearland, TX 77584
T: 713.441.3724

**Houston Methodist Sienna
Plantation Emergency
Care Center**

8200 Hwy. 6
Missouri City, TX 77459
T: 713.441.3724

**Houston Methodist Emergency
Care Center in Spring**

5303 FM 2920 Rd.
Spring, TX 77388-3006
T: 936.270.4640

**Houston Methodist Voss
Emergency Care Center**

1635 S. Voss Rd.
Houston, TX 77057
T: 713.441.3724

**Houston Methodist Emergency
Care Center in The Woodlands**

3759 FM 1488 Rd., Suite 500
The Woodlands, TX 77384-4178
T: 936.270.4750

IMAGING CENTERS

**Houston Methodist
Imaging Center in Bellaire**

5505 W. Loop S.
Houston, TX 77081
T: 713.363.8650

**Houston Methodist
Kirby Breast Care Center**

2615 Southwest Fwy., Suite 104
Houston, TX 77090
T: 713.441.PINK (7465)

**Houston Methodist
Imaging Center**

83333 Katy Fwy.
Houston, TX 77024
T: 713.797.9729
T: 713.441.8940

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