CARLE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
# Table of Contents

- Letter from the President and CEO ................................................................. 1
- Carle’s Mission/Vision/Values ........................................................................ 2
- Application of this Handbook and the Standards of Conduct ....................... 2
- Carle Corporate Compliance Program ........................................................... 3
- Reporting Compliance Issues and Concerns ................................................. 4
- Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine .......................................................... 4
- False Claims against the Government ............................................................ 5
- Standards of Conduct Principles ................................................................. 6
- Ethical Business Practices ............................................................................. 8
- Employee Rights ......................................................................................... 9
- Patient Care and Rights .............................................................................. 11
- Conflicts of Interest .................................................................................... 12
- Accuracy of Patient and Business Records .................................................. 14
- Confidentiality of Information ..................................................................... 16
- Documentation, Coding and Billing Practices .............................................. 18
- Kickback ................................................................................................... 20
- Antitrust ..................................................................................................... 21
- Not-for-profit, Tax-exempt Status ................................................................. 22
- Marketing .................................................................................................. 23
- Health, Safety and Environmental Concerns .............................................. 24
- Safeguarding and Using Foundation Property ............................................ 25
- Government Investigations ......................................................................... 26
- Employee and Management Compliance Responsibilities ....................... 27
- Conclusion ................................................................................................. 29
Letter from The Carle Foundation President and CEO
Dr. James Leonard

Dear Colleague,

The leadership of The Carle Foundation recognizes there are many frequently changing professional, legal and regulatory guidelines that our organization must follow.

You are about to read a very important document called the Standards of Conduct handbook. It is a tangible expression of our organization’s values and the manner in which we expect our business to be conducted.

We believe our patients, customers, employees and the communities we serve have a right to expect that we will act within the law and conduct business with honesty and integrity.

We provide the handbook to every employee because we are all essential to building and supporting an organization that demonstrates accountability, high ethical standards and best practices. We expect each employee to act with the highest level of integrity and assume responsibility for encouraging others to do the same.

This handbook addresses many complex legal and business ethics issues and provides guidance and overall principles for our system. Although it cannot answer every question, the handbook serves as a starting point for understanding some of the most important laws and policies affecting our work as healthcare professionals. The handbook provides a broad overview of our Corporate Compliance program, which was created to assist all of us in meeting our legal and ethical obligations.

Please take the time to read each section, including the specific examples of real-life situations you may face. Your adherence to these provisions and the spirit of this handbook will help us avoid civil/criminal fines and penalties associated with violations of healthcare laws, prevent exclusion from federal healthcare programs, and most importantly, ensure the strength of our organization. If you have any questions or issues regarding the handbook, please do not hesitate to discuss them with your supervisor or our Compliance officer.

Thank you for your part in making The Carle Foundation a great organization.

James Leonard, MD
President and CEO
Mission
We serve people through high quality care, medical research and education.

Vision
We will improve the health of the people we serve by providing world-class, accessible care through an integrated delivery system.

Values
I CARE

Integrity – We think and act with honesty and in the best interest of our patients, visitors, co-workers and the Carle organization.

Collaboration – We work with our patients, each other and external partners to offer the highest quality healthcare in the region. We are part of an interconnected system in which all players have vital roles.

Accountability – People are able to trust that you will do your work, maintain the highest standards and follow through on assignments and promises.

Respect – We treat others with courtesy, compassion and kindness while maintaining their dignity and respecting their individual opinions and beliefs.

Excellence – Excellence is a passion for going beyond expectations in all that we do. It is a commitment to constantly improving our knowledge, skills and attitudes in the pursuit of care, service and quality.

Application of this Handbook and the Standards of Conduct

The Standards of Conduct and other provisions of this handbook apply to The Carle Foundation and its affiliates and subsidiaries (collectively, “Carle”), including but not limited to Carle Foundation Hospital, Carle Physician Group, Carle Hoopeston Regional Health Center and all employees of Carle. Compliance with the Standards is expected as a condition of each individual’s continued employment with Carle.

This handbook may be modified at any time at the discretion of Carle. In the event of a conflict between this handbook and a specific policy, the specific policy takes precedence.
Carle Compliance Program

Preamble
Carle is dedicated to conducting activities with integrity and in accordance with the highest ethical and legal standards. This is an essential part of Carle’s commitment to being a responsible corporate and community citizen.

In its continuing efforts to ensure this objective is achieved, Carle is committed to developing and implementing a proactive corporate compliance program developed by the Corporate Compliance Department with oversight by the Foundation’s Corporate Compliance Committee.

A summary of all Carle compliance policies are available on the Carle intranet (http://spscarle.carle.com/sites/policies/Pages/Home.aspx). If you don’t have access to the Carle intranet, you may gain access to the policies by contacting your manager, the hospital library, or Corporate Compliance.

Purpose of the Compliance Program
The purpose of Carle’s compliance program is to:
• Create an environment in which doing the right thing according to the rules is everyone’s job and everyone’s responsibility
• Assist management in establishing clear Standards of Conduct as well as other compliance-related policies and procedures designed to facilitate compliance with relevant laws and regulations
• Ensure all employees are appropriately aware of and trained regarding their personal responsibility to comply with such standards
• Establish open lines of communication throughout the organization so that all members feel comfortable raising compliance concerns without fear of retaliation of any kind
• Promptly investigate reports of violations of any law, regulation, or company policy and to recommend corrective action and/or appropriate discipline for any individual who fails to comply
• Continually review all Carle operations through a system of auditing and monitoring to prevent and detect areas of noncompliance
• Keep management and the Foundation Board informed of compliance activities and results of investigations through regular, periodic reports by the Corporate Integrity Officer, and
• Provide a central area of responsibility and documentation to assist outside regulatory agencies in understanding our compliance efforts.
Reporting Compliance Issues and Concerns

Health care is a complex business, and the rules and regulations that govern it are no less difficult. Because such complexities can create uncertainty as to how to handle different situations, proper communication up and down the chain of command is essential to resolving doubt. Thus, we encourage employees to voice their concerns and to seek answers to any questions they might have.

Furthermore, it is expected that any time an employee suspects a potential compliance violation, including any violation of any federal or state healthcare program requirement, he or she will report their concerns to the Corporate Integrity Officer or another appropriate individual.

Remember, if you are uncertain, it is always better to raise a question before taking an action. Carle has a strict no retaliation policy, so employees should feel comfortable raising an issue or concern to the appropriate person.

What Happens After a Concern Is Reported

• A preliminary investigation is made to determine the validity of any concern reported.
• Valid concerns will be thoroughly investigated to determine the cause and extent of all problems which are found to exist.
• Corrective actions will be taken to resolve all identified problems.

Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine (888) 309-1566 or https://carle.alertline.com

Any employee, physician or other person may call the external Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine or go to https://carle.alertline.com to ask questions concerning ethical or legal conduct, or to report any suspected non-compliant activity. This includes situations in which an employee, physician or other person is uncomfortable using other channels or needs more assistance.

What to Expect When You Call the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine

• Calls are answered by an external vendor so callers can report concerns confidentially, without fear of retaliation and without revealing their identity (who they are).
• Callers can receive confidential updates on the status and outcome of the investigation into matters they report.
• Calls to the AlertLine line are toll-free.
• Calls to the AlertLine line are not automatically traced and will not be traced.
• The AlertLine is confidential, easy to use, and always available.
False Claims against the Government

Although reporting suspected compliance violations to appropriate individuals within the organization is always the preferred method for communicating your concerns, there are certain circumstances when an individual may report a suspected compliance violation to the government and, in some cases, may actually bring suit on behalf of the government against the organization.

Specifically, the federal False Claims Act (FCA), 31 USC § 3729, authorizes federal prosecutors to file a civil action against any person or entity that knowingly files a false claim with Medicare or Medicaid or another federal healthcare program. However, the law also includes a whistleblower provision, referred to as the Qui Tam provision. This provision encourages individuals with actual knowledge of false claim activity to file a lawsuit on behalf of the U.S. government. Once the lawsuit is filed, the government can choose to intervene in the lawsuit or allow the individual, called a relator, to prosecute it alone on behalf of the government.

Examples of actions that may lead to false claims being filed include: billing twice for the same service, billing for services not rendered, billing for medically unnecessary services or falsifying certificates of medical necessity, unbundling or billing separately for services that should be billed as one, creating false medical records or treatment plans to increase payments, failing to report and refund overpayments or credit balances, physician billing for services rendered by medical students, interns, residents or fellows in teaching hospitals, and giving and/or receiving unlawful inducements to healthcare providers for referrals for services.

Individuals or entities who are found guilty of filing false claims face severe penalties, which can include repayment of three times the amount of the false claim, a fine ranging from $5,500 up to $11,000 for each false claim, and possible exclusion from participation in Medicare, Medicaid and other federal health care programs. If a prosecution is successful, the relator can receive between 15 percent and 30 percent of any recovery made from the healthcare provider as the result of their lawsuit.

The relator must, however, be the original source of the allegations. Thus, he or she cannot use published accounts of fraud allegation or information that has already come to the attention of the government. FCA whistleblowers are protected by the law from retaliation in any form as the result of their whistleblowing. These protections include reinstatement, back pay and other damages.
In addition to the federal False Claims Act, the Illinois False Claims Act, 740 ILCS 175/I, also provides penalties for healthcare providers who submit false claims to the state of Illinois. Under the Act, a person or entity may be liable to the state of Illinois, to the same extent and severity, for any actions committed against the state which could have formed the basis of liability to the U.S. government under the federal False Claims Act. Moreover, any private person may bring a civil action on behalf of the state of Illinois in the same manner as under federal law and, under Illinois law, will be afforded substantially the same rights and protections as under federal law.

**Standards of Conduct Principles**

The following Standards of Conduct are described in this handbook, along with references relating to these topics. Some of the topics apply to all Carle entities, while some apply only to certain entities. Of course, the handbook cannot cover every compliance issue or Carle policy, or provide direction for handling all concerns that may arise. An employee should always feel free to consult his or her supervisor or other Carle resources, particularly the Corporate Compliance Department, to address any concerns.

**Ethical Business Practices**
- Display good judgment and high ethical standards in your business decision making.

**Employee Rights**
- All Carle employees are to be treated with dignity and respect and in a fair, honest and equal manner.

**Patient Care and Rights**
- All patients must be provided with quality care compassionately delivered in an appropriate, respectful and cost-effective manner, and in a manner that protects their right to personal privacy.
- Patients have the right to make their own healthcare decisions after they are provided with all relevant information.

**Conflicts of Interest**
- Avoid conflicts of interest and things that appear to be conflicts of interest.

**Accuracy of Patient and Business Records**
- Prepare and maintain all patient, financial and other company records accurately and confidentially, and retain them for the periods required by law and Carle policies.
Confidentiality of Information
• Always keep patient information and Carle–owned information confidential. Do not share confidential business information with unauthorized persons.
• Observe copyrights, trademarks and licenses, and protect the intellectual property of Carle and those with whom we do business.

Documentation, Coding and Billing Practices
• Make sure the products and services we provide are accurately and completely documented, coded and billed.

Kickback
• Employees must never offer, pay or receive any money, gifts or services in return for the referral of patients or to persuade others to purchase our products or services.

Antitrust
• Compete fairly and avoid activities that reduce or stop competition, control prices, divide up markets or exclude competitors.

Not-for-profit, Tax-exempt Status
• Do not engage in any activity that threatens the tax-exempt status of Carle.

Marketing
• Represent Carle businesses fairly and honestly, stressing their value and the capabilities of our services and products.

Health, Safety and Environmental Concerns
• It is a Carle policy to provide a safe and healthy workplace and to obey all applicable health, safety and environmental laws and regulations.

Safeguarding and Using Foundation Property
• Carle property must only be used for business purposes.

Government Investigations
It is a Carle policy to cooperate with government investigations. Government investigations are a fact of life in today’s healthcare environment, and procedures for cooperating with them may be complex. If you become aware of an investigation, seek guidance from the Corporate Integrity Officer or the vice president of Legal Affairs.
Ethical Business Practices

Display good judgment and high ethical standards in your business decision making.

Conduct business with honesty, fairness and integrity. These qualities are shown through truthfulness, lack of deception or fraud, and respect for the laws that apply to our business. Acting with integrity is the responsibility of every member of the Carle team regardless of facility, location or job. Employees must follow both the spirit and letter of all laws that apply to Carle operations.

Questions & Answers

Q: If I suspect that a fellow Carle employee is disobeying a company policy or the law, whom should I contact?
A: The ability of Carle to uphold its ethical standards depends on employees taking action if they believe a violation is occurring. Use the chain-of-command process. If possible, start with your supervisor and explain the issue to her or him. If you don’t get the issue answered at this level, contact a more senior manager. Continue this process until you get an answer that makes sense to you. Or, contact Carle Corporate Compliance or Human Resources. If you are uncomfortable discussing the issue with someone at your location or wish to remain nameless, call the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine at (888) 309-1566 or visit https://carle.alertline.com

Q: My supervisor directed me to do something that I believe is against Carle policy and perhaps the law. I don’t want to do something wrong, but I’m afraid that if I don’t do as I am told, I may lose my job. What should I do?
A: Consider discussing the request with your supervisor to be sure you understand the facts and that he or she is aware of your concern. If you cannot comfortably discuss the situation with your supervisor or cannot resolve your concern at this level, ask a more senior manager. Or, contact Carle Corporate Compliance or Human Resources. If you are uncomfortable discussing the issue with someone at your location or wish to remain nameless, contact the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine at (888) 309-1566 or https://carle.alertline.com

Q: I found out that our competitors are providing illegal inducements to physicians and hindering our ability to compete. What should I do?
A: Improper behavior by a competitor does not justify the same behavior on our part. Notify your supervisor of this situation, providing him or her with any facts you know. It is your supervisor’s job to notify Corporate Compliance and/or executive management so that Carle can take appropriate action.
Q: I found money in a patient’s room after she left. What should I do with it?
A: You should tell your supervisor that you found the money, or follow the “lost and found” policy established by Carle’s Security. A copy of this policy, as well as Carle departmental and SBU policies are available on the Carle intranet. If you do not have access to the intranet, call Corporate Compliance or Human Resources for assistance.

Employee Rights

All Carle employees are to be treated with dignity and respect and in a fair, honest and equal manner.

Carle’s success is a direct result of the skills and efforts of its employees. It is the responsibility of every member of the Carle team to maintain a work environment where employees are treated with respect, diversity is valued, and opportunities are provided for development. Harassment or abuse of any kind is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Carle also prohibits discrimination in any work-related decision or matter on the basis of sex, race, creed, age, disability status, national origin or any other illegal basis.

Carle believes that direct and open communication between employees and supervisors is the best method for dealing with matters that affect employees. Nevertheless, any employee who believes he or she has been unlawfully discriminated against or otherwise treated unfairly should promptly report the facts of the incident to his or her supervisor or to Human Resources.

Questions & Answers

Q: I believe I was not selected for a promotion because of my age (or sex, national origin, color, disability status, etc.). What should I do?
A: You might want to discuss the situation with your manager to make sure you understand the qualifications needed for the position. Ask your manager to identify the areas in which he or she believed you did not meet the qualifications needed or areas in which the selected candidate was considered better qualified. If you are not satisfied with your manager’s explanation, contact your Human Resources representative.

Q: I know an employee who is sometimes offended by the language and humor the supervisor uses when speaking with employees. What should I advise the employee to do?
A: Advise the employee to tell his or her supervisor that he or she finds the language and humor offensive. If the employee is not satisfied with the results (or is uncomfortable speaking directly with his or her supervisor), then the employee must discuss the situation with the supervisor’s manager or a Human Resources representative.
Q: Our department recently hired a new manager. Since her arrival, I have been penalized for tardiness and absenteeism. There are other employees in my department with worse records than mine, and I don’t see them being treated in this way. I am concerned it is because of my race (or national origin, sex, age, disability, etc.). What should I do?
A: Carle prohibits unequal treatment of employees if such treatment is based on bias or discrimination. If you feel comfortable doing so, discuss your concerns with your supervisor. Provide examples of these incidents and state your concerns. Your supervisor may be counseling others but can’t tell you because of confidentiality for other employees. If you don’t feel comfortable talking with your supervisor or if you are not satisfied with his or her response, notify your Human Resources representative. Human Resources can tell you if others are being counseled but can’t tell you who or exactly what they are being counseled about. Unequal or unfair treatment from one’s supervisor is a legitimate concern, requiring management to investigate further.

Q: I recently saw a physician doing something I believe to be wrong. I believe I should tell someone about this, but I do not want to be a snitch or get into trouble for upsetting one of our leading admitters. What should I do?
A: Even if the physician is a leading admitter, you should raise your concerns through the proper channels. It is important for you to come forward with relevant information related to any possible wrongdoing by a Carle health team member. If you are comfortable doing so, you might want to discuss the situation with your immediate supervisor or the manager in charge of your area. If you do not feel comfortable approaching your supervisor or manager, you might contact your Human Resources representative, the Corporate Integrity Officer, or any other senior manager. You might also consider calling the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine at (888) 309-1566 or visit https://carle.alertline.com.

Claims of physician misconduct are usually handled through the medical staff process. While this process takes time, Carle is committed to resolving claims fairly against any Carle health team member.

Q: My supervisor has secretly taped conversations with his manager. This practice doesn’t seem right to me, but what can I do?
A: No employee should tape conversations without the express, written consent of the individual(s) being taped. To do so without permission is a violation of the other person’s right to privacy. Notify your supervisor’s manager, your Human Resources representative or a higher level Carle resource.
Patient Care and Rights

All patients must be provided with quality care compassionately delivered in an appropriate, respectful and cost-effective manner and in a manner which protects their right to personal privacy. Patients have the right to make their own healthcare decisions after they are provided with all relevant information.

Patient care must be proper and designed to meet the planned outcomes of the patient’s treatment plan. Patients must always be treated with understanding, respect and professionalism. Patients are entitled to quick and polite answers to their requests and to their needs for treatment or service, consistent with our abilities, stated mission and applicable laws. Patients also must be notified of their rights, according to Carle policy and state and federal law, including the right to file a grievance.

Patients must be informed of their right of self-determination. This right refers to the ability of competent adults to participate in and make their own healthcare decisions after receiving appropriate disclosure of their diagnosis, prognosis and treatment alternatives from their physicians. A patient has the right to accept or refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the possible medical effects of such refusal.

Treatment of patients shall be consistent with proper informed consent as determined by Illinois law. Questions about a patient’s competence or the right of another person to act for a patient must be handled according to Carle policy.

Employees must not discriminate against patients based on whether they exercise their right to self-determination, based on the substance of their specific healthcare decisions, their ability to pay, their insurance carrier, or their age, race, sex, religion, sexual orientation or handicap.

Questions & Answers

Q: I am a clerical employee working in a clinical setting. I noticed a pediatric patient who had an order to receive a DPT shot had actually received only a DT shot. When I mentioned this to the nurse, she seemed upset but said she would take care of it. Have I fulfilled my responsibility if I am still uncertain that proper follow-up has occurred?

A: If you are still uncertain the correct action has been taken, continue to follow-up on the issue. It is recommended that you tactfully follow up with the nurse regarding your concern about the shot. If you are not comfortable asking what follow-up occurred, speak to your supervisor and request that he or she follow-up for you. Mistakes can occur in even the best-managed clinical setting. Quality patient care requires everyone to stay alert.
Q: Health Information Services (Medical Records) occasionally receives calls from patients wanting copies of their medical records. Can we provide this information?

A: Generally, patients are permitted to receive copies or summaries of their records. However, there are exceptions to this rule (e.g., minors). If there is a question, get advice from Health Information Management before releasing medical record information.

Conflicts of Interest

Avoid conflicts of interest and things that appear to be conflicts of interest.

Employees must try at all times to promote and protect the interests of Carle and try not to take any action that may harm those interests. A conflict of interest occurs if a non-Carle interest or activity may influence or seem to influence your ability to be objective or meet your job responsibilities for Carle.

A good rule of thumb is that a possible conflict of interest exists any time a fair observer might think your actions are driven by things other than your responsibilities to Carle. The following rules deal with some of the situations that may occur:

Relationships with Vendors and Competitors

Employees who deal with contractors, vendors and competitors on behalf of Carle must not take advantage of their position to obtain benefit for themselves.

Gifts and Entertainment

Employees must not accept favors or gifts of more than a small value from any person or company that does business or wants to do business with Carle.

In no case should a Carle employee offer or give any gift, or anything of value, to anyone outside of Carle that may appear to be intended to influence such person’s fair judgment relating to any relationship with Carle. Again, a good rule of thumb is if you could not accept a gift within the Carle guidelines, do not offer one.

However, reasonable business entertainment, such as taking someone to lunch, in accordance with good judgment and customary practice is acceptable.

Extra caution should be taken when extending business to actual or potential referral sources to ensure compliance with the physician self-referral law, anti-kickback statute, as well as Carle’s policies. The Stark Physician Self-Referral law prohibits physicians from referring Medicare or Medicaid patients for certain
designated health services to entities in which the physicians or their immediate family members have a financial relationship, unless a legal exception is met. The federal Anti-kickback Statue prohibits anyone from knowingly and willfully offering, paying, soliciting or receiving any remuneration in exchange for referring an individual to another person or entity for any item or service that may be paid for by Medicare, Medicaid or other federal health care programs.

**Outside Employment and Other Activities**

Employees must not work on outside activities during working hours or use Carle equipment, supplies or information to perform these outside activities.

Self-employment or employment by others is permissible only if it does not negatively affect the employee’s job performance or create a conflict of interest.

**Questions & Answers**

**Q:** I have an outside business selling fitness products. May I use company bulletin boards or interoffice mail to advertise these products to other Carle employees?

**A:** No. Products and services not offered by Carle must not be advertised during working hours or on Carle property. Also, you may not use Carle’s name or resources (e.g., telephones or your work time) to sell non-Carle services or products. However, you are free to engage in an outside business on your own time, if the business does not pose a conflict of interest with your job at Carle.

**Q:** My supervisor is looking for a new coffee vendor for a coffee machine in our facility. My wife owns a coffee machine business. Would it be a conflict of interest if I recommended my wife’s company?

**A:** Generally, Carle avoids buying goods or services from family members of employees. Do not do anything that may seem like you are trying to influence a Carle buying decision in favor of a family member. As long as you and your wife stay out of the buying decision and let Carle know about the relationship, Carle will be able to reach a fair decision.

**Q:** Many airlines, hotels and rental car companies have frequent flier programs for free trips, car rentals or hotel stays for my personal use. Can I build up these points from Carle travel and use them for my personal travel?

**A:** Yes, you may use these credits as long as you follow these rules. Do not go on a trip just to earn these credits and do not take a longer route or more costly airline to earn more credits. The trip must be clearly necessary and use the most cost-effective airline, route and services. Employees must be able to explain the who, how, when, where and why of their trip.

**Q:** In thanks for our business, Carle vendors sometimes invite me to dinner or
sporting events. Is it acceptable for me to go?

**A:** You may accept such invitations as long as they do not violate Carle’s policies on receiving gifts and business courtesies from vendors and customers, and they are legal, in good taste, not too costly and not too frequent. You should also inform your supervisor of the situation and remember to consider how your actions may look to others.

**Q:** If I have been asked to speak at a conference and a fee is given to me for my effort, is that fee mine or does it belong to Carle?

**A:** The best action is to find out before you speak. Generally, if you are asked to speak as an employee of Carle, and if your trip or other expenses are being paid by Carle, then the fee should be paid to Carle. On the other hand, if you are asked to speak about something not related to your current or any past job at Carle and you prepare and present your speech without using Carle resources and on your own time, then the fee is most likely yours to keep. However, since every case is different, it is best to ask your supervisor or manager about the fee before you prepare or give your speech.

**Accuracy of Patient and Business Records**

Prepare and maintain all patient, financial and other company records accurately and confidentially, and retain them for the periods required by law and Carle policies.

Make sure all patient and business records for which you are responsible are accurate and complete.

Record all entries in Carle books and records accurately, honestly and fairly so they reflect the true nature and reason for the transactions. Books and records must not contain any false or misleading information.

Financial records must fairly and accurately reflect financial balances and the results of operations. They must also comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and with all government rules and regulations that apply. No unapproved changes or adjustments of the financial records or statements and no “off the books” transactions are permitted.

Patient records must conform to accepted standards for the upkeep of such records and must not contain false or misleading information.

Medical records may be amended or corrected as permitted by established policies and procedures but may not be erased or altered. For example, adding information left out of the record or adding more information to help explain a point is permitted. Changing information that has already been recorded is not permitted.
Questions & Answers

Q: I’m an accountant at Carle. A senior manager told me how to record a transaction, but the instructions were not in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles or Carle guidelines. What should I do?

A: Try to explain the accounting rules to the manager and the reason the transaction cannot be recorded as you were instructed. If you are unable to resolve the issue with the manager, contact your manager’s supervisor, Carle’s vice president of Finance, the Corporate Integrity Officer, or the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine.

Q: I just received a pay increase. My supervisor told me my new rate would be $12 per hour, but my first paycheck after the raise was at $21 per hour. What should I do?

A: Contact your supervisor immediately. Your supervisor will work with Payroll and Human Resources to correct the problem.

Q: I am a registered nurse (RN) in the hospital. A fellow RN called me from home after she completed her shift. She told me she forgot to enter an order for a change in a patient’s drugs the physician had phoned in at 9 a.m. The nurse asked me to log the change into the patient’s chart at the right time, 9 a.m. and to use her initials. She said charts are often updated in this way and no harm is done. Is this okay?

A: While the nurse did the right thing by calling to note the chart error, you should promptly report the error to the shift supervisor and complete an unusual occurrence report. You must never record an order you did not hear and must never sign someone else’s signature or initials. Even if no harm occurred in this case, the error needs to be reported by both yourself and the nurse who called you. If you fear retaliation from other nurses, tell your supervisor. Carle does not permit retaliation against employees who promptly report errors or oversights.

Q: I am a new analyst in Information Management and Analytics. I happened to review a draft of an official statement that was being completed and saw some of the data was wrong. Should I take for granted someone else will see this mistake or should I report it?

A: Immediately bring this information to your supervisor’s attention. If an official statement is published with incorrect information, there can be serious effects for Carle and those who prepare the document.
Confidentiality of Information

Always keep patient information and Carle-owned information confidential. Do not share confidential business information with unauthorized persons.

Observe copyrights, trademarks and licenses, and protect the intellectual property of Carle and those with whom we do business.

Never share confidential patient information with any unauthorized person. Information obtained, developed or produced by Carle and its employees, information supplied by outside consultants or vendors for the benefit of Carle, and information about Carle patients and customers is confidential. This information must not be shared with anyone outside of Carle - including friends, family, relatives, business or social acquaintances, customers, suppliers or others. Unless you have specific permission, do not share this information with other Carle employees except on a need-to-know basis and only if they agree to treat the information as confidential.

Employees may use confidential business information only for proper business purposes. A former employee may not use Carle’s confidential information for any purpose.

All Carle businesses will take reasonable steps to prevent the copying or unauthorized use of copyrighted or licensed materials and to ensure that all Carle owned or acquired information entrusted to them is safeguarded.

Questions & Answers
Q: I received a call from a former employee’s new employer asking questions about the employee’s performance while at Carle. Should I give out this information?
A: Information about employee performance is private. Refer all such calls to Human Resources.

Q: While working on the computer under my sign-on, another staff member asked to quickly review some lab results of a patient that I was not working with or knew of. What should I do if this happens again?
A: You should tell the other staff member that he/she may use your computer, but he/she must use his/her own sign-on. Sign off your computer and have the staff member sign on under his/her own name. When the other staff member is done, have him/her sign off so you can sign back on under your own name. Also, to preserve the confidentiality of patient information, you should not read the lab results or other patient information that the other staff member brings up on the computer screen.
Q: I was working with a patient in a curtained area when an employee approached the family of the patient in the next area and started discussing a sensitive issue with them. Is this proper, and what could I have done about it?
A: No, this was not proper behavior. When in a curtained or open area and before speaking to or answering questions from a patient or family member about a sensitive issue, you should always ensure the area is appropriate for a confidential discussion. If not, ask the patient or family to follow you or ask if you can take them to a private area. If you feel comfortable approaching a fellow worker who is not exercising caution, you may address it directly. If you do not feel comfortable addressing the issue with him or her directly, mention it to his/her supervisor or to your supervisor. Patients’ privacy rights should be respected at all times.

Q: A friend of my daughter’s was admitted to the hospital today. Is it okay for me to tell my daughter her friend has been admitted?
A: No, you should not share this information with your daughter or anyone else except on a strictly official, need-to-know basis. It is a breach of patient confidentiality, as well as Carle policy, to share confidential patient information, including who is currently in the hospital.

Q: Someone I know in another department has a computer program I need, but my manager said we don’t have the money in our budget to buy it. Can I copy the software from another Carle computer as a temporary measure, as long as I delete it later?
A: Copying software often violates copyright laws or licensing agreements. Illegally copying software is not permitted. Unless Carle has been granted specific permission by the software creator or seller, a program must not be loaded onto more than one personal computer at a time. For every workstation, multi-user system or mainframe that contains a program, a separately purchased software license is required. Installing freeware/shareware or software from a home computer or elsewhere violates Carle policy unless you have obtained specific permission to do so from the Information Technology department. This is necessary to protect Carle from computer viruses. Consult Information Technology department before installing or copying software on any Carle computer.

Q: A coworker who developed training materials (software program, audit process, etc.) for Carle is selling these materials on his own time to other companies. He intends to keep the proceeds for his own use. Is this permitted?
A: Generally, Carle owns all information including “intellectual property” (computer programs, training materials, processes or marketing strategies) created by employees while on the job or while using Carle resources. This is a complicated area, and you should raise this issue with your supervisor or another Carle resource. Carle information may not be used for personal gain.
Documentation, Coding and Billing Practices

Make sure the products and services we provide are accurately and completely documented, coded and billed.

It is Carle’s policy to bill only for services actually provided to patients. All services provided must be accurately and completely documented in the medical record in a timely manner to help make sure they can be correctly coded and billed and to help maintain the integrity of our medical database.

Always code and bill our services using the rule that if proper documentation has not been recorded, the service has not been provided.

All Carle employees responsible for documenting, coding or billing the products and services provided to our patients must be trained in the proper rules and procedures to be followed in doing these functions. The supervisors, managers and directors of these employees are responsible to ensure that such training is given.

All medical record, coding and billing data must be kept for the time periods required by law or by Carle policy, whichever is longer.

Examples of activities not permitted by law are:
• Billing for products or services not provided;
• Misrepresenting the services actually provided;
• Duplicate billing of services provided;
• Falsely stating that services were medically necessary; or
• Seeking to collect more, or less, than the co-payment and deductible amounts from a Medicare or Medicaid beneficiary who has authorized Medicare or Medicaid to pay Carle directly.

Questions & Answers
Q: Patients call our Billing Office asking what diagnosis the doctor used for a visit or laboratory test. How can I tell patients I am not allowed to discuss this information without annoying them and causing a customer service complaint?
A: In order to prevent giving out wrong or misleading medical information, it is a Carle policy that all medical information be provided by a clinical person. This is very important for patient safety but may be hard for patients to understand or accept. So in answering such calls, you should first say you would like to help but are not permitted to do so because such information must come from a clinical person. Offer to connect them to their healthcare provider or Carle’s Health Information Management (HIM) department and explain that they will need to speak to their provider or the HIM department to get this information.
Q: I’ve heard patients sometimes call physicians and ask them to change their medical coding (either CPT or ICD10) in order to obtain better insurance reimbursement. If a physician asks the Billing Office to make these changes, is this okay?

A: Coding changes are allowed only if the changes are proper corrections and the medical record documentation supports the requested changes. If you are not sure whether what you are being asked to change is right, have the patient’s medical record reviewed by your supervisor or a member of Health Information Management before making any changes.

Q: The supervisor of my billing department issued a memo stating that while it may be technically unlawful to bill for certain medical devices, he knows from a conversation with colleagues in neighboring hospitals that everyone is ignoring this Medicare regulation. I feel uneasy with these instructions. What should I do?

A: Ask your supervisor to explain any activity that you feel is “unlawful.” If you aren’t satisfied with his/her explanation or you don’t feel comfortable asking him/her about this, contact his/her supervisor. Keep asking questions until you get an answer that makes sense to you. Other Carle resources are also available to you, including the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine at (888) 309-1566 or https://carle.alertline.com.

Q: I am a newly hired nurse with Carle Home Care. I was told to make site visits to homebound patients of the agency, and I discovered that many of the patients I saw were capable of walking to and from the senior citizens center and grocery store. Should I report this?

A: Medicare requires that patients receiving home health services be certified as “homebound.” You must report your findings to your manager or supervisor immediately as it would appear these patients fail to meet the “homebound” requirement for services. If you are not satisfied with their response, raise your concern with another Carle resource or the AlertLine. If you think that services you are requested to provide are not needed or proper, take action to make sure they are not billed until your concern is resolved.
Kickbacks

Employees must never offer, pay or receive any money, gifts or services in return for the referral of patients or to persuade others to purchase our products or services.

Carle does not permit giving or receiving anything of value that may be viewed as a bribe or kickback. A “bribe” or “kickback” is any payment or offer of anything of value to someone for the purpose, or with the intent, of influencing his/her decision. Offering bribes, kickbacks or special privileges to physicians or other parties to influence the flow of referrals to any Carle business is strictly forbidden. Prohibited activities include such things as gifts of more than a small value, expensive entertainment, free or highly discounted services, or paying more for services than they are worth (i.e. more than fair market value) to persons in a position to influence patient referrals. Furthermore, providing any form of payments or free or discounted items and services to beneficiaries of federal health care programs, like Medicare and Medicaid, can be viewed as kickbacks under some circumstances and may be improper. Before any form of remuneration is offered to recipients of Medicare, Medicaid or other federal health care programs, consult with the Compliance officer.

Questions & Answers
Q: What should I do if a physician asks me for money in exchange for referrals to a Carle business?
A: Such a request is against our principles and may be illegal. Discuss the situation with your supervisor, a higher level manager or another Carle resource - such as the Corporate Compliance Department or the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine. Any supervisor or manager in receipt of such a report must notify the Corporate Compliance Department.

Q: I work in Accounting, and every month I process a check for a medical director. I recently learned from a friend that the physician never performs services as a medical director. What should I do?
A: When you learn of a questionable situation such as this, bring the information you have to the attention of your supervisor, a higher level manager or another Carle resource, such as the Corporate Compliance Department or AlertLine.

Q: I am responsible for auditing expense reports. I once saw a report covering the purchase of gifts totaling several hundred dollars bought for a physician who refers a lot of patients to us. Is that acceptable?
A: While such gift giving may have been common in health care at one time, any gift or thing of value that may appear to be an inducement for referrals is not allowed. Bring this situation to the attention of your supervisor, a higher level manager, or another Carle resource such as the Corporate Compliance Department or AlertLine.
Antitrust

Compete fairly and avoid activities that reduce or stop competition, control prices, divide up markets or exclude competitors.

The purpose of the antitrust laws is to protect all businesses from unfair trade practices, promote competition and preserve the free-enterprise system. So, while it is necessary to compete vigorously in order to succeed in today’s healthcare marketplace, we must never cross the line by competing unfairly.

It is unlawful to agree, either orally or in writing, or try to agree with competitors to fix prices, divide markets or otherwise reduce competition.

Sensitivity to antitrust issues is especially important for employees with purchasing, planning or marketing responsibilities and when pursuing agreements with other health care providers. Employees who enter into contracts with competitors, contractors or suppliers must do so on the basis of such factors as price, quality and service.

Employees who attend trade or professional association meetings or who come in contact with competitors in other ways must be especially careful not to do anything that could be seen as limiting free and open competition.

Questions & Answers

Q: I have a friend in the managed care department of one of our competitors. Her company has asked her to survey managed care prices in the region. Can I give her copies of price lists and bids?

A: No. In addition to violating business confidentiality, any sharing of pricing information with competitors that is not available to the public could be seen as, or legally treated as, an effort to fix prices or limit competition.

Q: I sometimes attend trade shows or professional meetings where I run into old friends who work for competitors of Carle. Are there subjects I should avoid discussing with them?

A: Yes, avoid anything that affects market competition, including prices, pricing policy, profit margins, or credit and billing practices. Trade shows, professional meetings and other gatherings can create problems when competitors “talk shop.” The most serious problems usually occur in casual gatherings (e.g., lunch or dinner after the meeting has ended). For business confidentiality reasons, it is best to stay away from any business discussions with competitors. Even if representatives from local competitors are not present, you should refrain from discussing these topics. Keep in mind, “competitor” does not just mean the healthcare providers in our geographic area. “Competitor” may include any individual or entity that offers the same product or service that we do.
Not-for-profit, Tax-exempt Status

Do not engage in any activity that threatens the tax-exempt status of Carle.

Carle and most of its major affiliates and subsidiaries are tax-exempt entities. Resources or property of tax-exempt entities cannot be used for private use or benefit. All transactions between Carle businesses and other businesses or individuals, should be made in the best interest of Carle, conducted at arm’s-length (i.e., where both parties are independent and on equal footing) and for fair market value. Employees involved in situations that seem questionable or who are aware of activities they think may violate the tax-exemption laws should ask their supervisor for guidance or report the situation to the Compliance officer or the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine at (888) 309-1566 or visit https://carle.alertline.com.

Tax-exempt entities such as Carle cannot be involved in any political campaign or give money to a political party, committee, organization or candidate for any federal, state or local office. Employees may make personal donations of their own funds to candidates of their own choice. Such donations are not reimbursable by Carle.

Questions & Answers

Q: I am often asked to give out our state sales tax exemption number. Is this okay to do?

A: Yes, since we are a tax-exempt facility, vendors will need to record our state sales tax exemption number or other evidence of exemption when conducting business with us. It is permissible to provide vendors with our sales tax exemption number. Note that the sales tax exemption number is different from our tax ID number, which may be required to be provided for some business purposes but is not adequate to establish Carle’s eligibility for a sales tax exemption.
Marketing

Represent Carle businesses fairly and honestly, stressing their value and the capabilities of our services and products.

Carle is seen as a reliable, authoritative source of information about medical care. We must keep in mind the trust the public places in us to provide correct, fair information.

Advertising and marketing information must be honest and accurate and, when presenting views on issues, must clearly distinguish opinion from fact.

Advertising must not badmouth, belittle or make fun of competitors, customers or patients.

Questions & Answers

Q: A recent government report ranked hospitals for their care of patients with a particular disease. We ranked high and our competitor ranked low. Should we inform the public of this information?

A: We may certainly refer to a good rating when discussing Carle and its services in advertising and informational materials. In doing so, we must decide whether we think the reporting agency is a dependable source. We should also ask ourselves what would we be saying about the report if our ranking had been lower?

Q: I was reading one of Carle’s patient information brochures and saw it had a statement which seems to disagree with my understanding of a healthcare regulation with which we must comply. What should I do?

A: You must bring this situation to the attention of your supervisor or report it to the Corporate Compliance Department.
Health, Safety and Environmental Concerns

It is Carle’s policy to provide a safe and healthy workplace and to obey all applicable health, safety and environmental laws and regulations.

Carle is dedicated to providing a work place that is free from known health and safety hazards. Employees must act in a manner that lessens such hazards and must notify their supervisors of any actual or possible unsafe working conditions or habits.

Carle employees handle hazardous chemicals, infectious agents, medical waste and low-level radioactive materials at various locations. All employees are expected to handle, store and dispose of such materials according to established control procedures. If you do not know the right procedure for handling, storing or disposing of any material, promptly ask your supervisor or contact the Carle infection control manager or safety officer. An employee who thinks that a violation of the environmental laws has happened must tell the Compliance Office.

Questions & Answers

Q: With all the rules and regulations about disposal of chemical waste, I am not entirely sure what I can pour down the drain. How can I find out what is allowed?
A: Most chemicals used in our facilities are not classified as hazardous waste. Information regarding the hazards, proper handling and disposal of chemicals is in the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) given to us by the manufacturer. These are kept in a binder for departments where hazardous materials are used and are also available on the Carle intranet. If you are not sure, ask your supervisor or the Safety officer before throwing away any chemical waste.

Q: How does Carle get rid of medical/biohazardous waste?
A: Carle contracts with licensed companies to take away and treat biohazardous waste to make it noninfectious. Biohazardous waste is put in designated containers, which are either red or have a bright orange and black biohazard symbol.
Safeguarding and Using Foundation Property

Carle property must only be used for authorized Carle business purposes and must not be used for personal reasons. This applies to physical assets such as office equipment, computers, software and supplies or medical supplies, as well as other types of property such as Carle records, patient information and customer lists. Carle property must not be removed from Carle facilities, unless it is necessary to do so to perform your job. If removed for job-related purposes, you must return the property to the Carle facility when it is no longer needed off-site for business purposes. All Carle employees are expected to maintain and properly care for Carle property.

Questions & Answers

Q: If I see an employee misusing or damaging Carle property on purpose, what should I do?

A: We all have a duty to treat Carle property and equipment with care and respect. This includes reporting any damage or breakdown of Carle property to the right staff member. If you are aware of anyone purposely or carelessly damaging Carle property or equipment, report what you see to your supervisor or another manager. Any supervisor or manager who receives such a report is required to look into the matter and take proper action.

Q: A Carle employee told me I could give a list of our clients or patients to any outside source. Is this true?

A: Client or patient lists are an important asset and must never be given to anyone outside of Carle without specific management permission. Ask your supervisor about any request you receive for a client or patient list.

Q: I am taking a continuing education class, and Carle is paying the tuition, since the course is designed to improve my job skills. May I use my portable computer from work to do homework for this class?

A: Yes, in some cases, your use of the computer is related to your job with Carle. Work with your supervisor to make sure the computer is not needed for Carle business during the time you are using it for schoolwork. Never take for granted that you may use or remove Carle property. Get clear approval in advance from your supervisor.
Government Investigations

It is Carle policy to cooperate with government investigations. Government investigations are a fact of life in today’s healthcare environment, and procedures for cooperating with them may be complex. If you become aware of an investigation, seek guidance from the Corporate Integrity Officer or vice president of Legal Affairs.

If an employee is approached by any person who identifies himself or herself as a government agent, the employee must contact the Corporate Compliance Department or Carle’s legal counsel immediately. Tell the person taking the call that you are calling about a possible government investigation. The Corporate Compliance Department or legal counsel will help you in verifying the credentials of the investigator, determining the nature of the investigation and following proper procedures for cooperating with the investigation.

Should a Carle employee receive a subpoena or other written request for information regarding Carle (such as a Civil Investigative Demand), the employee must contact Corporate Integrity Officer or Carle legal counsel before responding to the request.

In some cases, government investigators – or persons presenting themselves as government investigators – may contact employees outside of the workplace, during non-work hours, or at home. Employees should not feel pressured to talk with government investigators in such cases without first contacting the Corporate Integrity Officer, Carle legal counsel or their personal attorney. It is the legal right of employees to contact legal counsel before answering questions of an investigator.

Carle employees must never:
- Destroy or change any Carle document or record because they think it may be asked for by a government agency or court;
- Lie or make false or misleading statements to any government investigator; or
- Try to persuade another Carle employee, or any other person, to provide untrue or misleading information to a government investigator or to fail to cooperate with a government investigation.
Questions & Answers

Q: The local district attorney called and asked me to give a statement regarding Carle’s treatment of a particular patient. Should I respond?
A: We have a duty to protect patient confidentiality. Do not provide confidential patient information to the person who says he or she is a district attorney until you have spoken with the Corporate Integrity Officer or Carle legal counsel and received instructions regarding the proper way to proceed.

Q: What should I do if an FBI agent comes to my home and asks to talk to me about the activities of my department?
A: Carle cannot prohibit you from talking to a government investigator if you wish to do so. However, you may consult with the Corporate Integrity Officer, legal counsel or your personal attorney before answering any questions. Asking to speak with legal counsel before answering questions is your right and in no way means that you are not cooperating fully.

Q: I received a subpoena for copies of a patient’s medical records. Can I provide copies of patient’s records?
A: Subpoenas for medical records, which are related to personal injury, automobile accident or other lawsuits, should be forwarded to Health Information Management. If the subpoena is from a governmental agency, then the Corporate Integrity Officer must be notified immediately. A copy of such subpoena shall be faxed, emailed or hand delivered to the Corporate Compliance Department.

Employee and Management Compliance Responsibilities

As noted in the president’s letter at the beginning of this handbook, every employee has an essential role to play in ensuring that Carle demonstrates honesty, integrity, accountability, high ethical standards and best practices. The following paragraphs summarize not only the responsibilities of every Carle employee in carrying out the Carle compliance program, but also those additional responsibilities of the Carle supervisors and managers (collectively, “management staff”).

Adherence to Compliance Standards and Policies
All employees are responsible for following Carle’s Standards of Conduct, Carle’s policies and all of the laws and regulations governing Carle’s businesses.

Every employee is required to sign and return a statement acknowledging their receipt of and agreement to read and follow the Standards of Conduct handbook.
Compliance Training and Education
All employees are required to complete annual training on Carle’s compliance program and their compliance responsibilities. Completion of the annual compliance training is mandatory and a condition of every employee’s continued employment. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in disciplinary action. All management staff are responsible for ensuring their employees complete all mandatory training that is offered.

In addition, many employees need additional compliance training targeted to their specific areas of responsibility. It is then the responsibility of the management staff to ensure that all applicable employees are provided the additional training necessary to permit them to perform their job duties efficiently, effectively and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Compliance Reporting and Non-Retaliation
All employees are expected to report immediately any activity they believe is or may be a violation of the Standards of Conduct, Carle policies, or any law or regulation with which Carle businesses must comply. Reporting is an expected and protected behavior.

All management staff are responsible for ensuring that any reports of actual or possible compliance violations they receive are immediately reported to the Corporate Compliance Department or via the Alertline.

Subjecting employees to any form of retaliation, retribution, penalty or harassment for reporting a suspected compliance violation is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated.

Disciplinary Actions
Failure to follow the Carle’s policies, Standards of Conduct or applicable laws and regulations will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Employee Discipline and Misconduct Policy. All employees, regardless of their position, are subject to the same disciplinary action for similar offenses.

In addition, all management personnel will be subject to the disciplinary process for:
• Failing to properly teach their employees about their compliance responsibilities, or
• Failing to detect conduct by an employee that a reasonable person should know is criminal or otherwise improper and could reasonably be expected to detect.
Conclusion

This handbook sets forth Carle’s guidelines and expectations about proper job-related conduct. However, the Standards of Conduct set forth in this handbook cannot foresee and cannot cover every situation that an employee may face.

Therefore, an employee should ask his or her supervisor for guidance if this handbook does not give enough direction or if the employee is being forced to compromise his or her behavior, whether by another employee, a physician, a supplier, a competitor or a patient. If an employee is not able to settle his or her concerns with his or her supervisor, the employee should contact a higher level manager, another Carle resource (such as Human Resources), the Corporate Compliance Department or the Carle Corporate Compliance AlertLine (888) 309-1566 or https://carle.alertline.com.

No employee’s concern is too small or unimportant if it involves a possible violation of these Standards of Conduct or other applicable law or policy. You will find that by seeking help, a solution can be found that will address your concerns and be consistent with the Standards of Conduct.
The Carle Foundation

Carle is a not-for-profit, locally owned and operated healthcare system.

For more than 75 years, Carle has stayed true to its mission of improving the health of our central Illinois community by providing compassionate, patient-centered health care, coupled with state-of-the-art medical treatment, life-saving emergency services and proactive health education programs.