



# STANDARDS OF CONDUCT



**ST. CROIX<sup>®</sup>**  
HOSPICE

## LETTER FROM THE CEO

Welcome,

Thank you for choosing St. Croix Hospice. The care you provide impacts our patients, families, caregivers, and countless others every day. We are proud to have you as a team member.

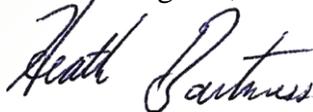
Our commitment to our patients and families, team members, healthcare partners, and payers is to provide high quality care while remaining compliant with the rules and laws that govern our practice. Our organization, including the Board of Directors, employees, contractors, and vendors are part of the compliance team and are expected to honor the Standards of Conduct.

These Standards commit all of us to the highest level of ethics, morals, and compliance. Our overarching Standards of Conduct includes our Mission, Vision, and Values.

We recognize that every team member has an important role in our efforts to maintain the highest ethical standards. These Standards of Conduct will provide you with guidance including how to confidentially report concerns without fear of retaliation.

Our focus on patients, families, caregivers, and each other is the foundation of St. Croix Hospice. The commitment you make will match our commitment and will allow us to join in the final journey in our patient's lives. Thank you again for choosing St. Croix Hospice and for the care you provide.

Warmest Regards,



Heath Bartness, CEO

St. Croix Hospice

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## OUR MISSION

St. Croix Hospice will provide the highest quality of patient/family centered care that affirms the hospice and palliative philosophy, which addresses the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of care as an integrated whole.



We strive to create an environment of teamwork and participation, where, through continuous performance improvement, people pursue excellence and take pride in their work, the organization, and their personal development.

# OUR VISION AND VALUES

## Our Vision

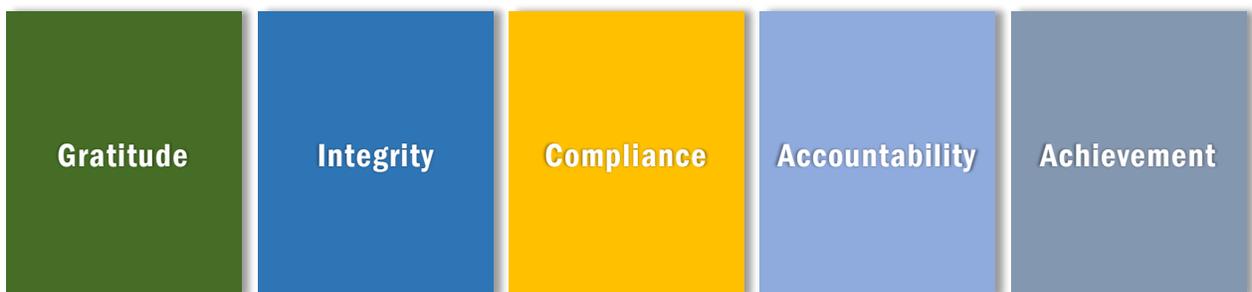
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St. Croix Hospice will raise the standard of quality care provided to the patients and families that we serve by our commitment to the growth and development of the team.



## Our Values

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# ST. CROIX'S COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

All St. Croix Hospice governing body members, officers, managers, employees, clinicians, contractors and other agents are required to comply with St. Croix's Standards of Conduct and policies and procedures. All must also comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including all federal health care program requirements. Contractors and vendors are encouraged to have their own compliance programs and are also expected to comply with St. Croix Hospice's Standards of Conduct.

St. Croix Hospice's Compliance Program is designed to promote a culture of ethics and compliance while detecting and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse. In order to meet this goal, St. Croix Hospice has based their program on the Office of Inspector General's Compliance Program Guidance which includes:

- Policies, Procedures, and Standards of Conduct: To guide us in our day-to-day activities.
- Compliance Officer and Compliance Committee: To support the goals of St. Croix Hospice.
- Training and Education: To support team member knowledge and confidence.
- Auditing and Monitoring: To ensure compliance efforts are effective.
- Open Lines of Communication: To provide our team members with the resources they need to remain compliant.
- Disciplinary Guidelines: To ensure team members are treated fairly and consistently.
- Responding Promptly to Violations: To prevent further harm.

## ST. CROIX HOSPICE COMPLIANCE GUIDELINES

### Compliance is the Job of Everyone.

St. Croix Hospice's Corporate Compliance Program continuously monitors corporate compliance within our clinical, financial, and marketing practices. St. Croix Hospice provides education through support and encourages all employees to maintain a continuous vigilance on potential risks.



# DUTY TO REPORT

Team members are a critical part of the compliance program at St. Croix Hospice. It is the **responsibility of all of us** to report suspected violations of our standards, policies and procedures, and the laws, regulations, and rules that govern us.

Reports are confidential and the identity of the team member making a report will be protected to the extent possible, but there may be some situations where the identity of the reporter becomes known.

Failure to report suspected violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees may seek clarification from the compliance officer/committee in the event of any confusion or question with regard to any policy, practice, or procedure.

## HOW TO REPORT A CONCERN



### CONCERNS AND POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE COMPLIANCE OFFICER.

- By reporting to your supervisor, who has an obligation to take the information to the Compliance Officer.
- By contacting the Compliance Officer directly.
- By calling the *St. Croix Hospice Compliance Hotline* at: **844-810-9521**
- By reporting online to: [www.stcroixhospice.ethicspoint.com](http://www.stcroixhospice.ethicspoint.com)

The *St. Croix Hospice Compliance Hotline* is provided through an external vendor and is available 24 hours per day. Reports made through the *St. Croix Hospice Compliance Hotline* may be made anonymously. Regardless of how you report, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

# OBLIGATION TO COOPERATE WITH INVESTIGATIONS



All employees, contractors, vendors, directors, volunteers, and agents of St. Croix Hospice have an obligation to cooperate with internal investigations. St. Croix Hospice prohibits lying to or misleading an investigator, or obstructing an investigation by hiding, altering, or destroying documentation related to an investigation.

## NON-RETALIATION

All employees and others are encouraged to raise serious concerns internally so that the organization can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. The organization requires board members, directors, officers, employees and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the organization, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

No employee shall, in any way, retaliate against another employee for reporting an act of non-compliance.

Acts of retaliation should also be reported and will be investigated by the Compliance Officer or his/her designee. Any confirmed act of retaliation shall result in discipline. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

## CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

All levels of employees are subject to the same types of disciplinary action for the commission of similar offenses. Supervisors and managers are held accountable for reporting violations that they are aware of or should have been aware of through the normal course of their duties.

Disciplinary action will be taken on a fair and equitable basis and may be appropriate where an employee's failure to detect a violation is attributable to negligence or reckless conduct.

There are significant sanctions for intentional or reckless non-compliance ranging from oral warnings to suspension, termination, or financial penalties, as appropriate.

## DISCIPLINARY PROTOCOLS

The normal progression of disciplinary action is described below; however, depending upon the nature of the misconduct, action may be taken at any point in the process.

1. Discussion of Problem
2. Verbal Warning
3. Written Warning
4. Final Warning/Suspension
5. Termination

Subsequent violations will result in a higher level of discipline. Violations of St. Croix Hospice policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action including demotion, transfer, suspension without pay, or termination of employment.

## COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS

### PREVENTING FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

St. Croix Hospice is committed to complying with the requirements of our payers including all state and federal regulations and conditions of participation. Violations of Federal or State False Claims Acts can result in fines, imprisonment, loss of licensure, or exclusion from participation in healthcare programs.

Compliance terms:

- CIVIL MONETARY PENALTIES LAW: A punitive fine imposed by a civil court on an entity that has profited from illegal or unethical activity including but not limited to submitting claims for services not provided or submitting claims with false information.
- FALSE CLAIMS ACT: Also known as the “Lincoln Law” is a federal law that makes it a crime for any person or organization to knowingly make a false record or file a false claim regarding any federal health care program, which includes any plan or program that provides health benefits, whether directly, through insurance or otherwise, which is funded directly, in whole or in part, by the United States Government or any state healthcare system. Knowingly includes having actual knowledge that a claim is false or acting with “reckless disregard” as to whether a claim is false.
- LCDs: Local Coverage Determination used to determine hospice eligibility.

St. Croix Hospice, LLC **does not:**

- Submit claims for services not rendered or not medically necessary according to the Local Coverage Determinations.
- Misrepresent the type or service rendered.
- Submit claims for non-covered services.
- Bill for services provided by vendors, ambulatory services, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, physician services, pharmacies, durable medical equipment, hospitals or hospice aides.
- Misrepresent a diagnosis in order to submit hospice claims.
- Discriminate on the basis of a patient's inability to pay for hospice services.
- Discriminate against any patient or employee on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion or national origin.

## PROHIBITING KICKBACKS, INDUCEMENTS, AND SELF-REFERRAL

Care is taken to strictly adhere to marketing, sales, and community awareness practices that are allowable and consistent with the Anti-Kickback statute, the Stark Law, the Civil Monetary Penalties Law, and the OIG Program Guidance for Hospice agencies.

Compliance terms:

- **ANTI-KICKBACK:** The term “kick-back” is defined as the giving of remuneration, which is interpreted under the law as anything of value. The Anti-Kickback statute is a criminal law that prohibits knowing and willful payment to induce or reward patient referrals or the generation of business involving any item or service payable by the Federal health care programs.
- **ANTITRUST:** Antitrust laws are designed to create a level playing field in the marketplace and to promote fair competition. Prohibiting such activities as “unfair methods of competition” and agreements in “restraint of trade.” Antitrust laws prohibit any employee, under any circumstances, the authority to approve a violation of law. Relationships with patients and suppliers can also raise antitrust issues. The Compliance Officer should be consulted prior to relationship agreements.
- **INDUCEMENTS:** Include anything of value and can take many forms besides cash, such as free rent, expensive hotel stays and meals, and excessive compensation for medical directorships or consultancies. The statute covers those who offer payment as well as those who ask for or receive payment.
- **REMUNERATION:** Payment or compensation received for services. This can include bonuses or other economic benefits that an individual receives for services.

- **STARK LAW:** Is a physician self-referral federal law which prohibits physician self-referral, specifically a referral by a physician of a Medicare or Medicaid patient to an entity providing designated health services if the physician (or an immediate family member) has a financial relationship with that entity.

St. Croix Hospice employees, contractors and representatives that interact with patients, potential patients, relatives of patients, physicians, hospitals, discharge planners, contractors, and assisted living, nursing, and other care facilities will interact within the rules and regulations by ensuring that **we do not:**



- Accept an item or service of value in exchange for a business decision or to influence referrals.
- Solicit, accept, or offer of any gifts of more than nominal value by or between organization employees, to or from clients/patients.
- Solicit or receive items of value in exchange for providing a supplier access to clients'/patients' medical records and other information needed to bill any payor.
- Enter into any joint ventures with entities that supply goods and services to the organization designed to induce referrals.
- Engage in improper solicitation or high-pressure marketing with patients.

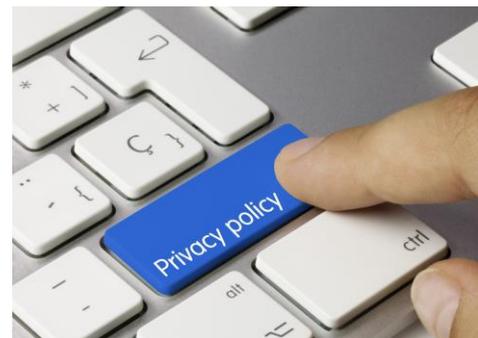
Penalties for violations involving Kickbacks, Inducements, and Self-Referral Laws include fines, jail terms, and exclusion from participation in the Federal health care programs.

## MAINTAINING PATIENT PRIVACY

St. Croix Hospice will respect and safeguard all protected health information of the patients it serves. Each patient will be provided with information about his/her privacy rights at the time of admission.

### **Patient's Privacy Rights include a right to:**

- Adequate notice of the uses and disclosures of protected health information that may be made by St. Croix Hospice.
- Request privacy protection for protected health information.
- Access to inspect and retain a copy of his/her protected health information.
- Request that the organization amend protected health information or a record about the individual in a designated record set for as long as the protected health information is maintained in the designated record set.



- Receive an accounting of disclosures of protected health information made by St. Croix Hospice in the six (6) years prior to the date on which the accounting is requested.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Using any knowledge or information acquired through one's professional relations with one's patients, or in the conduct of organization business, to one's own advantage or profit.

All St. Croix Hospice personnel, including Governing Body and Professional Advisory Committee members, will be conducted in accordance with the highest standards of integrity.

There can be no deviation from complete honesty in business transactions.

Use of organization funds or internal business information for improper purposes and dishonest practices is absolutely forbidden. St. Croix Hospice is concerned with conflicts of interest that create actual or potential job-related concerns, especially in the areas of confidentiality, customer relations, safety, security, and morale.

### **St. Croix Hospice will ensure that:**

- Ethical patient care issues will be referred to the ethics committee.
- All marketing literature will be reviewed to ensure that services promoted are provided.
- Billing practices will be monitored for accuracy to ensure that only services provided are billed.
- If a patient requires transfer to another organization, he/she will be informed of any financial benefit to the organization, and provided the option to choose a provider of their choice.

### **St. Croix Hospice Governing Body and executive personnel will:**

- Act in the course of their duties solely in the best interests of the organization without consideration to the interests of any other organization with which they are associated, and to refrain from taking part in any transaction where such person(s) do not believe in good faith that they can act with undivided loyalty to the organization.
- Disclose any material, financial or other beneficial interest to any entity engaged in the delivery of goods or services to the organization or its members.

- Refrain from utilizing any inside information as to the business activities of the organization for the benefit of themselves, their immediate families or any entity with which they may be associated.

### **Examples of situations which could lead to a conflict of interest might include, but not be limited to:**



- A St. Croix Hospice employee or family member has a financial interest in a company which conducts business with St Croix Hospice. This financial relationship may impact the decision-making or actions of the St. Croix Hospice employee.
- A full time St. Croix Hospice employee accepts additional employment or contract work with a competitor who offers similar services within the geographic location of St. Croix Hospice. This additional employment must be disclosed to the St. Croix Hospice supervisor and must not interfere with the responsibilities of the St. Croix Hospice full time responsibilities.

## **PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**

St. Croix Hospice team members will always strive to conduct our business activities in an honest, open, and fair manner. Even the mere appearance of non-compliant or unethical acts can have a detrimental effect on our success.

The care provided by St. Croix Hospice is deeply personal to our patients and families. Part of the respect that we show those at the end of life is to maintain professional boundaries.

### **Team members agree to:**

- Uphold standards of care.
- Protect the power gained from the professional role and the patient's vulnerabilities.
- Abstain from personal gain at the patient's expense.
- Never ask the patient, family, or primary caregiver to attend to my emotional needs.
- Remain neutral in the patient's personal relationships.
- Promote the patient's autonomy and self-determination by recognizing and supporting the patient's strengths and competence.
- Recognize that hospice is a team approach by making calls and visits within normal working hours or within the individualized care plan, and documenting all interactions with patients and caregivers appropriately.

- Work within a job description to avoid the promotion of exclusive relationships and not assume the role of the patient's caregiver.
- Acknowledge that soliciting or accepting a loan, money, or any object of material value from patients or family members is strictly prohibited.
- Never allow private interests to conflict with those of the patient's.
- Never create a disturbance in a patient's home.
- Abstain from obscene or indecent conduct.
- Never perform banking or other financial transactions for patients or caregivers.