



# Code of Conduct





# About Us

## Mission, Vision and Values

Our mission, vision and values are the key elements that define Asante. These principles guide the decisions we make about whom to hire, what technology to invest in, how to design our facilities, and what kind of care we ultimately provide.

## Our Mission

Asante exists to provide quality health care services in a compassionate manner, valued by the communities we serve.

## Our Vision

To be your trusted health partner for life — every person, every time.

## Our Values

*Excellence*, in everything we do

*Respect*, for all

*Honesty*, in all our relationships

*Service*, to the community and each other

*Teamwork*, always

*A message from our president and CEO*



Dear colleagues,

Our Values are five very important concepts: *excellence, respect, honesty, service and teamwork*. By living these Values, we uphold high ethical standards.

Our patients, their families and our fellow workforce members expect us to act with integrity. To help us uphold our Values, our compliance program developed this booklet so every workforce member may understand some of the complex legal and ethical issues we face every day.

We are all responsible for complying with the standards outlined in this booklet and for reporting possible violations. Please carefully read each section, along with the real-life examples.

I hope this booklet helps you address the legal and ethical issues you face in your work, and I thank you for making Asante an organization of which we can all be proud.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Kelly'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Scott Kelly  
*President and CEO, Asante*

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# Understanding our Code of Conduct

## Introduction

At Asante, we want to serve our communities by delivering high-quality care with compassion and respect. We also want to maintain our reputation for high ethical standards.

Our Code of Conduct will help you fulfill Asante's obligations to our patients, our community and one another by helping you understand our core Values, beliefs and ethical culture. It also provides information to help you avoid violating laws and regulations and to enable you to detect when this may be occurring, as well as direction on how to bring forward any concerns.

It's impossible to anticipate every ethical dilemma or define every possible scenario; however, this Code of Conduct provides a framework to help you make decisions that align with our Values. You are expected to act with honesty, follow Asante policies and ask questions if you are unsure how to proceed.

## Scope

Every person who works for or on behalf of Asante is required to follow all applicable laws, policies and this Code of Conduct. This includes board members, officers, employees, physicians, students, interns, temporary employees, volunteers and contracted individuals (collectively referred to as our workforce). Consultants and vendors (collectively referred to as agents) are expected to read, understand and adhere to this Code of Conduct. Health care practitioners who are granted privileges at Asante are governed by medical staff bylaws and must follow them. These bylaws provide a process for resolving ethical and compliance matters related to the practice of medicine at Asante.

## Workforce member responsibilities

You are responsible for following the law and Asante policies as you conduct business on behalf of Asante. This Code of Conduct will help you become familiar with many of our policies; however, it does not supersede them or act as a substitute for reading each policy that applies to your specific job or service responsibilities.

Asante workforce members are expected to:

- Comply with this Code of Conduct
- Act ethically, responsibly and honestly
- Follow the law and Asante policies
- Participate in required compliance training and education
- Ask questions if you're unsure about what to do or have questions about the Code of Conduct
- Cooperate with investigations of potential violations
- Cooperate with all external and internal audits
- Report any known or suspected violations

**Please read this Code of Conduct. You'll be asked to acknowledge your commitment to adhering to these standards.**

## Additional responsibilities of Asante leaders

If you're a leader at Asante, you have additional responsibilities. You must lead by example and take steps to promote compliance. You must also report any suspected or known violations.

Leaders can fulfill their responsibilities by:

- Encouraging a culture of compliance and ethical behavior

# Understanding our Code of Conduct

- Fostering an environment in which workforce members know they are expected to follow Asante policies and procedures
- Holding workforce members accountable to completing required training on time
- Reporting potential or known violations responsibly and promptly

When workforce members raise concerns, respond in a way that makes them feel at ease and secure. Our culture must encourage everyone in the organization to raise concerns, and we must not sacrifice ethical and compliant behavior in pursuit of business objectives.

## Policies and procedures

For purposes of this document, the term “Asante policies” includes all policies, standards, procedures and other governance documents.

Asante’s policies — in addition to this Code of Conduct — provide guidance to Asante workforce members regarding job performance responsibilities and appropriate legal and ethical behavior.

All approved and current policies are located on *myAsanteNET*. Speak with your leader if you have a question about a policy.

## Disciplinary action

Failure to comply with Asante’s Code of Conduct, policies or applicable law will subject workforce members to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment to the extent permitted by law. Disciplinary measures may also be applied to leaders when they fail to properly acknowledge and address misconduct.



## Patient relations: Patient care and preserving trust of patients

### Quality

At Asante, we define “quality” as the degree to which health services increase the likelihood of desired outcomes and are consistent with professional knowledge. We promote ethical, innovative, professional and compassionate care within an environment that nurtures our patients’ physical, social and emotional needs. Clinical care is based on identified patient health care needs, not on patient or organizational economics.

We believe that all health care should be:

- Safe, to avoid injuries to patients from the care that is intended to help them
- Timely, to reduce waits and potentially harmful delays for those who seek care
- Effective, in that we match care to science to provide appropriate treatment
- Efficient, by avoiding waste to maximize value
- Equitable, to ensure that care does not vary in quality, regardless of patient characteristics
- Patient- and family-centered, to honor the individual and respect choice

### Diversity

Asante’s privilege of serving a diverse population comes with the responsibility of respecting our patients’ cultural needs and values. Asante aims to deliver unbiased, culturally appropriate health care that incorporates our patients’ diverse health beliefs, practices and communication preferences. Patient discrimination, abuse or neglect is not tolerated. Asante does not discriminate against patients on the basis of sex, disability, gender, gender identity, age, economic status, educational background, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status or source of payment. (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, self-pay, etc.).

**Example:** *It’s challenging to have patients whose family and friends speak another language. Can I ask them to speak English?* No. Our patients have the right to speak in their preferred language. When patients speak in their preferred language, they may be able to communicate the care or help they need more clearly than if required to speak in English. If needed, offer interpretive services to ensure that you and the patient understand each other. Asante’s language access and interpreter policies must be followed.

### Patient rights and patient choice

Asante respects the rights of patients and their families to participate in health care decisions and will inform them of their rights as required by law. Patient rights include, but are not limited to, the right to make decisions regarding medical care, the right to accept or refuse treatment and the right to formulate advance directives. We welcome patient involvement in all aspects of their care, and we seek informed consent for treatment. In certain instances, a patient’s decision regarding care may conflict with Asante’s policies. These kinds of ethical issues should be reviewed under Asante’s policies and procedures and applicable state and federal laws. Patients also have the right to file a grievance when they are not satisfied with the care they receive. Asante’s Risk Management Department oversees patient grievances and ensures that they are reviewed and responded to within 30 working days.

## Patient relations: Patient care and preserving trust of patients

### Charity care and discounts

Financial assistance is available to patients in the form of financial need discounts or charity care. It is provided in a manner that addresses the patient's individual financial circumstances, supports Asante's Mission and complies with the eligibility criteria set forth in Asante's Financial Assistance Policy.

**Example:** *I've seen some of our regular patients struggling financially. A few of them have asked if I can waive the copay. I don't want to be responsible for a patient not coming in because they can't afford it. What should I do?* If a patient cannot make their copay at the time of service, follow Asante's policies regarding copay collection or contact your immediate leader. Inform the patient of available medical financial assistance programs.

### Patient gift giving and receiving

Asante maintains high ethical standards concerning gifts. Offering or accepting personal gifts may influence our decisions or the decisions regarding the offering and acceptance of others and may constitute a conflict of interest. The appropriateness of offering or accepting gifts depends on the specific circumstances of the gift and who is offering and receiving it. The following information provides general guidance on this topic. Consult with the Compliance Department for specific advice if you are offered a gift or are considering giving a gift.

**Gifts from patients and family members to our workforce:** Occasionally, patients may wish to give gifts of appreciation to Asante

workforce members. Tokens of non-cash gifts of appreciation of modest value may be accepted from patients and their families provided the gift may be shared with other members of the recipient's department or unit and the gift is not related to past or anticipated preferential treatment. Please refer patients and their family members who wish to make grateful giving or charitable contributions to Asante Foundation. An Asante workforce member must not solicit a gift from a patient.

**Gifts from our workforce to patients and family members:** Asante may not induce patients to use our services by offering gifts that would likely influence patients to obtain services from our organization. Inexpensive gifts of modest value that are not cash or cash-equivalents are permitted.

### Emergency care

Asante will provide all individuals with necessary emergency medical treatment regardless of citizenship, legal status or ability to pay in accordance with the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act. We screen and provide stabilizing treatment to everyone who comes to an Asante hospital requesting examination or treatment for an emergency condition. We do not delay medical screening exams or stabilizing care to request patient financial information. We transfer emergency patients only when they request a transfer or when we lack the capability or capacity to provide appropriate treatment and only after administering the appropriate stabilizing care.



## Patient relations: Patient care and preserving trust of patients

### Privacy and security of patient information

Asante collects information about a patient's medical condition and history to provide the best possible care. All patients' personal health information, including name, Social Security number, diagnoses and treatment, constitutes protected health information (PHI) regardless of whether it is verbal, written or electronic.

Asante is committed to maintaining patient confidentiality. We do not release or discuss patient information with others unless it's necessary to serve the patient, required by law or related to a necessary business function such as billing. Asante workforce members must never disclose information that violates the privacy rights of our patients. No one has a right to access patient information other than what is necessary to perform their job.

To ensure confidentiality of patient information, all Asante workforce members are prohibited from accessing their own and family members' medical records through Asante's electronic health record, Epic, unless there is a legitimate business reason.

All suspected incidents related to inappropriate disclosure, use or access to PHI are investigated by Asante's Compliance and Human Resources departments. Substantiated violations are subject to Asante's Confidentiality Standards and Sanctions Policy, which could include termination. Asante has a Zero Tolerance policy for intentional inappropriate disclosures, use and access of PHI. Intentionally inappropriate disclosure, use or access of PHI will result in immediate termination of employment.

*Example: My coworker has missed a lot of work lately, and I'm concerned about his health. Is it OK for me to check his medical record in case I can help?* No. All patients have a right to privacy. It's against the law to look at a medical record unless you need the information to do your job. Accessing a patient's personal health information for any other reason may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including employment termination. Asante regularly checks electronic logs of data that have been accessed. Physicians and employees who have accessed PHI inappropriately have been identified and disciplined — some have lost their jobs. If you access medical records inappropriately, both you and Asante could face fines and penalties.

### Accuracy of medical records

Medical records must be accurate and complete to ensure patient safety, quality of care and correct billing procedures in accordance with state and federal laws. To achieve this, Asante workforce members must only add information to medical records as permitted by job responsibilities and ensure that the information is accurate, truthful and complete. Workforce members must never delete information from a medical record. Changes to a medical record are only permitted in accordance with Asante policy and approved through the Asante amendment process.

If you are unsure of how to handle a situation involving medical records, you must ask for help by reaching out to Asante's Medical Records/Health Information Services (HIS) Department.

## Workplace relations

### Employment practices

Asante is committed to providing a work environment that encourages productive activity, a just culture and mutual respect. Asante complies with all laws, regulations and policies related to nondiscrimination in our personnel actions. Such actions include, but are not limited to, hiring, promoting, demoting, staff reductions, transfers, terminations, evaluations, compensation and corrective action. If an Asante workforce member believes that improper or unfair conduct is occurring in the workplace, they should bring this to the attention of leadership in Human Resources, Compliance or Legal.

### Discrimination-free and harassment-free workplace

Asante recognizes that excellent care is best delivered in a work environment that follows Asante's Behavioral Standards. It is the responsibility of all Asante workforce members to foster a work environment in which diversity is valued and employees are treated with respect.

Asante prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment due to a person's race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran's status, sex, marital status or disability, or any other protected status prohibited by applicable federal, state or local law. Asante also prohibits bullying.

Bullying is an act of repeated aggressive behavior that intentionally hurts another person, physically or mentally. Bullying is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person. Behaviors may include name calling, verbal or written abuse, exclusion from activities, exclusion from social situations, physical abuse, and/or coercion.

Discrimination, harassment and bullying are not tolerated. All workforce members share the responsibility of preventing discrimination, harassment and bullying and should report any witnessed instances of such conduct.

Degrading or humiliating jokes, slurs, intimidation or other harassing conduct is not tolerated. Any form of sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors in conjunction with employment decisions. Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment is prohibited. Harassment also includes incidents of workplace violence, which include but are not limited to assault, battery, other person-to-person physical crimes, stalking, violence directed at the employer or another employee, hate crimes and domestic violence.

As part of our commitment to a safe workplace, Asante prohibits the possession of firearms, other weapons, explosive devices or other dangerous materials on its premises.

**Example:** *Two of my coworkers constantly engage in overt flirtatious behavior. While I think this is more talk than action, it makes many of us uncomfortable. Our leader just laughs about it and says it's harmless. What should we do?* Report it. These two employees are causing an uncomfortable work environment that could have a negative impact on your team's effectiveness. Raise your concern with the Compliance or Human Resources department.

## Workplace relations

### Recognition

Our knowledge and skills, together with our Values, help us achieve our Vision and realize our Mission.

To recognize an Asante employee for service or behavior that exceeded your expectations and reflected our Values, submit a Values in Action form on our intranet or at [asante.org](http://asante.org).

The Values in Action program recognizes employees who demonstrate our Values of excellence, respect, honesty, service and teamwork. Recognition may come from employees, leaders, physicians, patients and community members.

### Appropriate use of funds and assets

Asante assets should be used for the benefit of Asante and may not be used by workforce members or others for personal gain. Assets are more than equipment, computers, software, medical supplies, inventory, funds and office supplies. Assets include medical records, concepts, financial data, intellectual property rights, research data, business strategies, plans about Asante's business activities, planned projects, expansion plans, employee information, capital investment plans, projected earnings, changes to Asante's management and all Asante systems.

All Asante systems, records and information are the property of Asante, regardless of how they are marked or labeled. Company property must not be removed from company premises unless it is necessary to do so to perform your job. If you remove property, you must return it to the company as soon as it is no longer needed off-site for business purposes. The occasional use of items, such as telephones for local calls or use of Asante Wi-Fi, where cost to Asante is insignificant, is permissible.

Generally, you should not expect any confidentiality or privacy when using Asante systems. Asante may at its sole discretion inspect your files and messages (including emails) and monitor your internet use at any time without advance notice or consent. Use of an Asante system constitutes consent to inspection, monitoring and access by Asante, as permitted by law.

**Examples:** *My coworker has a family-owned business. I often see him using his work computer to communicate with his customers.*

**Is this OK?** No. Asante information systems, including computers, cannot be used for personal benefit. While it's understandable that you may need to handle a personal matter during work hours from time to time, such as scheduling appointments or following up with teachers, it's not acceptable to use Asante information systems to promote or maintain a personal business.

**There are a lot of office supplies in our department storage closet. Can I take extras home for personal use?**

No. Asante property includes office supplies. Those supplies are intended for Asante work-related use only.

### Travel and entertainment

Travel and entertainment expenses must be consistent with the needs and resources of Asante. Workforce members are encouraged to participate and attend educational workshops, seminars, conferences and training sessions. They are expected to be good stewards of Asante resources when participating in approved business travel or when seeking

## Workplace relations

reimbursement of approved business expenses. Workforce members are expected to follow all policies related to travel approval and business expenses.

### Entering Asante facilities

Asante facilities are very busy, with people constantly in motion. We rely on our workforce members to help keep areas secure. To protect the safety and security of our patients, workforce and assets, Asante requires that workforce members always wear their assigned identification badge. Workforce members are to access Asante facilities only for legitimate business purposes and during the hours in which they are authorized to have access. If you see people without identification or without an escort in a restricted area (e.g., an area that requires badge access, has a locked door), you should offer to escort them to their destination or find an authorized person to assist them. If appropriate, report the person to Security.

### Protection of the workplace and the environment

Asante is committed to providing a safe workplace, using natural resources responsibly, minimizing waste and developing innovative ways to protect the environment. We follow all rules for storing hazardous materials and for disposing medical waste and dangerous or poisonous materials. Asante files all required reports with state and federal environmental and workplace safety agencies.

Asante requires that all workforce members report all confirmed or suspected dangerous or unsafe conditions in the work area, which include but are not limited to injury, exposure, hazard, illness and unsafe storage or disposal activities.

Workforce members are required to learn and understand the policies that apply to their specific job. With questions or concerns,

workforce members should seek advice from their leader, the facility safety officer or the Asante safety officer.

### Drug and alcohol use

To protect the interests and safety of workforce members, visitors and patients, we are committed to an alcohol- and drug-free work environment. All workforce members must report to work free of the influence of alcohol or drugs. Violating this policy may be grounds for immediate termination. We may use drug testing as a means of enforcing this policy. Asante workforce members may responsibly consume alcohol at Asante-sponsored events if they are not required to report to and perform work on behalf of Asante.

**Example: An employee in my department has arrived at work appearing intoxicated. What should I do?** Alcohol and drug use in the workplace jeopardizes the health and safety of employees and our patients. An employee who appears intoxicated should be reported immediately to your leader or Human Resources.

### Family, relationships and work

Asante workforce members may develop friendships and relationships both inside and outside the workplace so long as the relationships have no negative impact on work. Any relationship that interferes with the company culture of teamwork, the harmonious work environment or the productivity of workforce members will be addressed. An employee's family members or related persons may be employed by Asante when such person is the most qualified candidate for a position.

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To eliminate actual or perceived conflicts of interest arising in the workplace, Asante does not permit a current employee to be in a position of unequal authority over a family member or related person unless an exception has been formally approved by Human Resources. A direct reporting relationship could influence decisions involving a direct benefit (e.g., initial employment or rehire, promotion, salary, performance appraisals, work assignments or other working conditions) to the family member or related person and therefore is not allowed.

When there is a change in circumstance during the course of employment that establishes a conflict with this and the Employment of Family Members/Non-Fraternization Policy (e.g., colleagues become related as a result of marriage, dating or living together, or an employee is transferred resulting in their being in a position of unequal authority over a family member or related person), the workforce members involved must report the potential conflict of interest to their leader or Human Resources. Both affected family members or related persons must take steps to eliminate the potential or actual conflict within a reasonable time. The workforce members may work with their leader and Human Resources to consider possible resolutions. If the workforce members are unable to eliminate the potential or actual conflict of interest in a manner acceptable to Asante, Asante has sole discretion to determine an appropriate resolution, including the transfer or separation of one or both of the involved workforce members.

**Example:** *I have an open position on my staff for an administrative assistant. I think my niece would be perfect. Can I hire her?* If the position reports directly to you, no; you cannot hire your niece. You must follow the Human Resources hiring process and applicable policies when you fill the position.

### Contractors and vendors

All independent contractors, subcontractors and vendors (agents) conducting business on behalf of Asante are expected to adhere to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Entities are expected to establish appropriate safeguards for patients' protected health information, including PHI in electronic form. Entities are encouraged to establish their own compliance programs and are expected to adhere to Asante's Code of Conduct, policies and patients rights and responsibilities.



## Business relations

Agents providing care on Asante's behalf are required to demonstrate proof of licensure or the appropriate equivalent certification required for their particular field. Agents are expected to provide documentation that their employees do not have criminal convictions and that the employees and the entity itself are not prohibited from working in Asante facilities under federal law. Further, all agents providing care on Asante's behalf are required to undergo appropriate health care screening and provide proof of immunizations.

### Fraud, waste and abuse

Asante takes health care fraud, waste and abuse very seriously. Our policy is to provide information to workforce members about federal and state fraud, waste and abuse laws (including false claims acts), along with remedies available under these acts and how Asante's workforce members may use them. Whistleblower protections are available to anyone who reports a possible violation of these laws. Asante advises workforce members of the measures Asante has in place to detect and avoid health care fraud, waste and abuse.

### What do "fraud, waste and abuse" mean?

- Fraud generally means an intentional deception or misrepresentation by an individual or entity that knows the deception or misrepresentation could result in an unauthorized benefit to that individual or another individual or entity. The deception or misrepresentation may be written or verbal.
- Waste generally means an overuse, underuse or misuse of resources and typically is not a criminal or intentional act. Examples of waste include a workforce member making excessive medical office visits or accumulating more prescription medications than necessary for the treatment of specific conditions; for a provider, it includes ordering excessive or unnecessary tests.

- Abuse generally refers to health care provider practices that are inconsistent with sound fiscal, business or medical practices that result in an unnecessary cost to federal programs such as Medicare and Medicaid; reimbursement for services not medically necessary; or failure to meet professionally recognized standards for health care.

To combat fraud, waste and abuse, Asante has policies in place to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Asante has implemented external and internal auditing and monitoring tools to ensure that we maintain high ethical standards and financial integrity. Asante provides annual training to our workforce on state and federal laws, such as the Federal False Claims Act.

### What is the federal False Claims Act?

The federal False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. Sections 3729–3733, combats fraud, financial waste and abuse and governs the federal government's ability to recover funds. This law provides any individual or entity that knowingly or intentionally submits a false claim to the government, causes another entity or individual to submit a false claim to the government or falsifies a record or statement to receive payment from the government is subject to civil, criminal and administrative penalties. False claims submitted to federal health care programs such as Medicare and Medicaid are prohibited under these laws and could result in a health care provider's prohibition in participating in and receiving reimbursement from these programs.

Examples of false claims include but are not limited to:

- Making a false statement regarding a claim for payment
- Falsifying information in medical records, financial reports, technical reports or requests for payment

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- Double-billing for items or services or unbundling services for higher payment
- Requesting payment for unallowable costs
- Billing for services not performed or finished
- Submitting claims that involve violations of other laws or rules, such as the anti-kickback laws

Federal false claims laws permit private citizens to file an action on behalf of the government against an individual or entity committing a prohibited action under these laws. Additionally, the False Claims Act and state whistleblower laws, as well as Asante policies, prohibit retaliation against an individual who files a claim or reports a suspected violation.

Suspected violations of false claim laws should be reported to Asante's compliance hotline: (866) 340-7788.

### Proper billing practices

Asante is committed to accurate reimbursement and billing practices. Asante devotes considerable resources to preventing and correcting billing errors to Medicare, Medicaid and other payers.

Asante workforce members understand that:

- Inappropriate submission of claims, such as intentionally submitting for payment services that are not covered or were not rendered, may be perceived as a false or fraudulent claim, which can result in significant fines and/or penalties.
- Falsifying time sheets, work logs or any other misrepresentation of effort that may in any way be used to construct a cost report on behalf of Asante or its workforce members may be considered a violation of the False Claims Act or fraud, waste and abuse laws.

- Medical services provided to patients must be documented in the medical record in a timely manner to support the claims for services submitted.

Workforce members who suspect billing errors have an obligation to report them to their leader or the Asante Compliance Department immediately.

#### **Example: I'm an Asante nurse.**

*I believe that a colleague reported and billed for several visits on days they didn't see the patient. What should I do?* Reporting and billing for services not performed is a serious offense, putting both the organization and the individuals involved at risk. Immediately report your concerns to your leader and the Asante compliance officer. You may also report anonymously by calling the compliance hotline at (866) 340-7788.

### Relationships with physicians and other referral sources

If your work responsibilities include interactions with physicians or other persons or organizations that may refer patients to Asante, it is important that you are aware of the requirements of laws and regulations that apply to these relationships. These include the federal Anti-Kickback Law, Stark Law, laws that apply to tax-exempt organizations, and similar state laws. Asante has established specific policies and procedures addressing financial relationships with physicians and other referral sources. These policies are based on two key principles that apply to all such relationships:

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- 1) We do not pay for referrals. Patient referrals and admissions are based solely on an individual's medical needs and our ability to render the needed services. No one at Asante is allowed to pay or offer payment to anyone for the referral of patients.
- 2) We do not accept payments for referrals. No one at Asante is permitted to solicit or receive anything of value, directly or indirectly, in exchange for the referral of patients to an Asante facility. We do not consider the value or volume of referrals made to us when making referrals to other health care providers.

Failure to properly structure and administer financial relationships with physicians and other referral sources can result in unintended violations of the law and significant legal and financial consequences to Asante, and potentially to the individuals involved. Please contact the Asante Legal Department or Compliance Department if you have questions as to how these laws and regulations apply to your work responsibilities or to obtain additional information on Asante policies and procedures.

### Excluded individuals and entities

Asante will not knowingly be affiliated or do business with individuals or entities that have been sanctioned from participating in government health programs. The federal government has the authority to exclude individuals and entities from federally funded health care programs (Medicare, Medicaid and other federally sponsored health care programs) pursuant to Sections 1128 and 1156 of the Social Security Act of 1935. Exclusions are imposed for a number of reasons, including criminal convictions. Asante shall ensure that all workforce members and contracted vendors are screened against the applicable exclusion lists.

Asante workforce members are expected to immediately report to management or the Compliance Department if any issue or legal action is pending or taken against them that may result in exclusion from participating in government health programs. Asante workforce members are also expected to report any confirmed or suspected individual or entity doing work for Asante who has been sanctioned, disciplined or is being investigated by any government health program.

### Business records

Asante is committed to maintaining high ethical standards of business conduct and keeping accurate records of its business activities. Asante workforce members are expected to ensure that all information entered into a business record is accurate and truthful to the best of their ability. Asante workforce members are never to omit relevant information from a business record and are expected to retain all information in accordance with internal record retention schedules or longer if instructed by their leader or the Legal Department.

### Financial integrity and financial reporting

Financial records serve as a basis for managing our business and are necessary to meet our obligations to patients, employees, suppliers and others. They are also necessary for compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and financial reporting requirements. Financial information must reflect actual transactions. The basis for any exceptions from generally accepted accounting principles must be documented and disclosed. Our business involves reimbursement under government programs that require the submission of certain reports related to our costs of operation.

Asante has a responsibility to provide full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable



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disclosure in reports and documents that are filed with government and regulatory agencies. Asante workforce members must keep accurate, true and complete records. You must ensure that reports and documents that Asante submits to government and regulatory agencies are full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable. You must cooperate fully with Asante's independent public accountants and never take any action to manipulate or mislead them.

### Antitrust laws

Antitrust laws are established to promote free and open competition in the marketplace. Asante workforce members are prohibited from participating in any discussions, understandings, agreements or plans, whether formal or informal, with any competitor or potential competitor that could restrict competition.

Examples of actions that could violate antitrust laws include but are not limited to:

- Discussing prices with competitors
- Discussing how various pay levels are determined
- Disclosing the terms of supplier relationships
- Allocating markets among competitors
- Agreeing with a competitor to refuse to deal with a supplier
- Any agreement that improperly reduces competition

It is not unusual to obtain information about other organizations, including competitors, through legal and ethical means such as public documents and presentations, magazine articles and other published and spoken information. It is not acceptable, however, to obtain proprietary or confidential information about a competitor through other, improper means.

### Proprietary information and trade secrets

Asante takes reasonable steps to protect its confidential information, its intellectual property and all information related to its business. Workforce members must safeguard Asante proprietary information and trade secrets.

“Proprietary information” is information about our organization's strategies and operations and is a valuable asset. Although you may use proprietary information to perform your job, it must not be shared outside Asante unless the other party has a legitimate reason to know and agrees to maintain the confidentiality of the information. Examples include but are not limited to financial data, planned projects, supplier information, expansion plans, workforce member information, capital investment plans, projected earnings, changes in management and information security.

All proprietary information is classified as confidential. Discuss proprietary information with others only on a need-to-know basis. Disclose proprietary information to persons outside Asante only in consultation with the Legal Department, which can provide appropriate disclosure agreements. Do not inadvertently discuss confidential information or trade secrets in either social conversations or routine business communications.

#### **Example:** *I need to send confidential data to a vendor doing work for Asante. What should I do?*

First, obtain approval from your leader, who needs to make sure appropriate protections are in place with the outside company, institution or individual before confidential information can be revealed. Contact the Compliance Department if you have questions.

## Business relations

### Media relations

Asante workforce members should always exercise care not to disclose confidential, proprietary information through public or casual discussions with the media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, trade publications, radio, television or other external sources seeking information about Asante or its patients).

Requests for official comment on behalf of the organization should be referred to Asante's senior public relations specialist or director of Communications and Marketing.

Asante's standard policy is to respond to external inquiries in an honest and transparent manner; some responses may be limited by confidentiality or other legal concerns.

### Marketing and advertising

Asante uses advertising to inform the community of the value and availability of our products and services and to provide educational information about personal health. We present only truthful, informative, non-deceptive information in our materials and announcements.

**Example:** *I want to let patients know about a new support group at our medical center. I can easily make a flyer and post it in the waiting area, but I'm told we need to go through the Communications and Marketing Department. Why the bureaucracy?*

Our Communications and Marketing team is trained to comply with the wide variety of regulatory requirements governing patient communications, which include flyers, posters, brochures and other means of communication. Asante has invested significant resources in building and promoting our brand. All external communications must be consistent regardless of what they are communicating.

### Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest exists if you have an outside activity or personal interest that interferes, or appears to interfere, with your responsibilities at work or that may affect your judgment when working on behalf of Asante. Asante workforce members have a responsibility to put the interests of Asante and our patients ahead of any other personal or business interests.

Some situations that may give rise to a conflict of interest include but are not limited to:

- An Asante employee accepts outside employment from or contracts with an organization that does business with Asante or is an Asante competitor. While certain employees, such as nurses, are not prohibited from working shifts at other facilities, this additional work must be disclosed to leaders and should not interfere with the employee's work commitment to or job performance at Asante.
- An Asante employee or immediate family member has a material financial interest in a firm either that does business with Asante or is an Asante competitor, and the employee's financial interest may affect their decisions or actions.

Potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed to leaders upon hire or as they occur. Asante also conducts an annual conflict of interest survey for all board members and employees with managerial authority (e.g., supervisors, directors, managers, executives), purchasing agents, buyers, and employed and contracted medical directors. Conflict of interest survey results are reported to the Board Audit and Compliance Committee. All reported conflicts must be reviewed by the Compliance and Legal departments.

A conflict of interest includes any additional employment you have accepted while

## Business relations

working for Asante. Potential conflicts of interest that are not approved or ratified by the Compliance and Legal departments may subject the individual to appropriate action, up to and including termination of employment.

When in doubt, it is best to disclose and seek resolution of a potential conflict of interest before taking a potentially improper action. If you have a question about a potential conflict of interest, talk to your leader or the Asante compliance officer.

**Example:** *I'm organizing a retirement party for my leader using approved Asante funds. My wife is a co-owner of a catering business and has provided catering services to other Asante departments. Can I use my wife's business to cater the retirement party?* As someone with authority or influence over selecting vendors, you are responsible for prioritizing Asante's interests over your own. In this situation, you must disclose to Asante's Compliance Department or your leader your wife's co-ownership in the business and recuse yourself from the contracting decision while that business is being considered.

### Business courtesies, gifts and vendor interactions

It is Asante policy to select agents solely on the basis of appropriate business, medical and clinical criteria, such as quality and cost-effectiveness. Asante will not select, or be influenced to select, vendors on the basis of past, present or future gifts to, or for the benefit of, Asante or Asante workforce members.

Workforce members are prohibited from soliciting gifts and generally prohibited from accepting any gifts from agents. Prohibited gifts include cash and gift cards, gift certificates and extravagant entertainment. Gifts of nominal value extended as a business courtesy — such as sales promotion items (e.g., coffee mugs, pens, key chains), perishable gifts given to an entire department on a special occasion, or meals of modest value — are permitted.

Sometimes an agent will offer training and educational opportunities that include travel and overnight accommodations at no cost to the workforce member or Asante. There may be circumstances in which you are invited to an event at an agent's expense to receive information about new products or services. Agents may also offer to sponsor an Asante event. Prior to accepting any such invitation or offer, you must receive approval from the Asante Compliance Department.

Individuals with questions that may arise about business courtesies and gifts or this Code of Conduct should consult their immediate leader or the Compliance Department.

**Example:** *A vendor gave me a \$50 gift certificate to a local store to thank us for the business. I know the business courtesies policy says gifts of cash or cash equivalent cannot be accepted. What should I do?* Thank the vendor for the work and the gift but tell them that you cannot accept the gift certificate. You may also want to provide the vendor with a copy of Asante's business courtesies policy to explain your response.

## Business relations

### Social media

The internet and social media (e.g., blogs, tweets, online communities, social networks and all forms of social media) promote interactive discussions and multiple avenues to share information; however, there are potential drawbacks that could affect Asante's goal of providing high-quality care and treatment with integrity. Language posted on social media can negatively affect patients, agents and the community's perception of Asante's delivery of care, treatment and reputation. Asante is committed to ensuring that the use of social media upholds our Values and dedication to promoting a positive and respectful work environment and providing excellent care to our patients and surrounding communities. In addition, the use of social media by workforce members could pose a risk to Asante's duty to maintain confidential information if certain considerations aren't met.

To avoid legal risks, loss of productivity and distraction from job performance, Asante has established policies and procedures that address the appropriate use of electronic devices and technology. These policies are located on *myAsanteNET*. Protecting patients' confidential and privileged medical information is essential to fulfilling our Mission. Workforce members are expected to know and adhere to these policies. As new technologies and social network tools emerge, our policies will evolve.

Asante has guidelines for how to conduct yourself within the social media environment; these include:

- When you use social media, you must maintain patient privacy and not share confidential information about Asante.
- Write in the first person. When your connection to Asante is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself

and not on behalf of Asante. In those circumstances, you should include this disclaimer: "The views expressed on this site are my personal opinions and do not reflect the views of Asante." Consider adding this language in an "About me" section of your blog or social media profile.

- Your social media activities should meet Asante's high standards of professional conduct. Be professional, use good judgment and be honest and accurate in what you say. Unprofessional language or behavior reflects poorly on Asante.
- Be respectful of patients, colleagues, business partners and Asante's competitors.
- The use of social media must not interfere with your work commitments.
- Asante strongly discourages "friending" patients on social media. Staff members in patient care roles generally should not initiate or accept friend requests except in unusual circumstances, such as when an in-person friendship predates the treatment relationship.
- Asante discourages staff members in leadership roles from initiating friend requests with employees they manage. Leaders may accept friend requests if initiated by the workforce member and if the leader believes that it will not have a negative impact on the work relationship.

### Political interests

Asante's political participation is limited by law. Asante's funds or resources cannot be used on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. Organizational resources include financial and nonfinancial donations, such as using work time and telephones to solicit for a political candidate or the loaning of Asante property for use in a political candidate's campaign.

## Business relations

Following state and federal guidelines, Asante can participate in limited activities designed to generally influence legislation. As an individual, you may participate in the political process on your own time and at your own expense.

To comply with the appropriate Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations, it is important to separate personal and corporate political activities.

### Accreditation

Hospitals caring for Medicare or Medicaid patients must comply with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

conditions of participation. Hospitals can meet these requirements in two ways: through a state survey or by paying a private accreditation agency to certify the hospital.

Asante has selected DNV GL–Healthcare to certify that our hospitals meet CMS conditions of participation. Working with DNV GL provides an added benefit due to its continuous improvement methodology. DNV GL surveyors visit Asante annually to review our hospitals' processes and ensure that we are staying on track with standard requirements.



## Government relations

### Government requests and investigations

Asante's policy is to comply with all reasonable and lawful requests for information and documents from federal, state and local government agencies. While it is Asante's policy to comply with valid requests, federal law does not require the disclosure of certain information, such as:

- Patient information protected by state privacy laws and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
- Documentation and information related to quality assurance
- Certain information collected as part of Asante's peer review process of health care providers

You must notify Asante's Legal or Compliance Department immediately if a government agency or other third party asks you for information regarding a suspected violation of law or if you learn that an agency is investigating Asante.

In some cases, government investigators may contact employees outside the workplace, during non-work hours. Do not feel pressured to talk with the person under such circumstances without first contacting Asante's legal officer or your personal attorney. It is an employee's legal right to contact counsel before responding to questions from an investigator.

Under no circumstances should you lie or make misleading statements to any government investigator. Never destroy or alter any document or record in anticipation of a request for the document or record by a government agency.

### Community obligations (Community Health Needs Assessment)

Every hospital in the United States is required to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment, or CHNA, every three years. The Internal Revenue Service encourages hospitals to collaborate with other health care providers in the region to conduct jointly sponsored CHNAs to identify and prioritize community health needs.

In 2019, Asante joined 13 public health departments, hospitals, coordinated care organizations, Federally Qualified Health Centers and other health care provider organizations in Jackson and Josephine counties to conduct a regional CHNA under the auspices of Jefferson Regional Health Alliance.



## Professionalism

### Training and education

Asante recognizes that continued training and education are necessary to ensure that our providers are able to administer high-quality care to patients, our organization continues to implement accurate billing practices and we maintain ethical and legal business operations. Asante has established onboarding processes to ensure that new workforce members receive appropriate training for compliance and privacy and understand our Mission, Vision, Values and ethical standards. Asante requires that all workforce members undergo annual training as well as department or practice-specific training that covers policies, environment of care plan, disaster plan, hazardous communication program, performance expectations and other important areas.

### Licensure and professional certifications

To deliver on Asante's commitment to providing excellent care, many of our workforce members maintain professional licenses and certifications (e.g., MD, NP, PA, PharmD, RN, CPA, CISA and JD). Anyone

holding a professional license or certification has a personal responsibility to maintain it in good standing through timely renewals and (where required) the attainment of the appropriate level of continuing education. Asante workforce members must immediately report to management and Human Resources any disciplinary action that is taken or pending against them by any licensing body in any jurisdiction.

### Acting with integrity outside Asante

Part of providing high-quality care to patients involves establishing relationships with the outside community and external entities. Asante is the largest provider of health care services in Southern Oregon, and our ability to provide excellent care relies on our trusting relationships within the communities we serve. This is achieved by exhibiting professionalism and integrity as representatives of Asante in our daily interactions outside the Asante community.



# Accountability

## Compliance program

The Asante Board of Directors established the Asante Corporate Compliance Program in 1994. The program is intended to demonstrate the absolute commitment of Asante to high standards of ethics and compliance. This commitment permeates all levels of the organization. The Compliance Department is responsible for implementing Asante's Compliance and Privacy Program, which promotes the prevention, detection and resolution of conduct that does not conform to law and Asante's compliance and privacy policies. The Audit and Compliance Committee of the Asante Board of Directors provides oversight of the program.

The Compliance Department is available to receive all reports of suspected violations of laws and Asante compliance and privacy policies. The Legal Department is also available to help with questions about how to comply with the law. The Compliance Department conducts internal investigations into reported concerns about potential compliance violations and assists management with taking steps to prevent a recurrence.

The compliance officer and department staff are resources for questions and concerns about compliance. They work with leaders and committees at each entity to help ensure

compliance with law and Asante compliance and privacy policies. The compliance officer and staff members provide education for Asante workforce members and conduct compliance auditing, monitoring and other compliance and privacy program activities.

The adoption and implementation of Asante's compliance program helps prevent fraud, waste and abuse in health care while furthering our Mission. This Code of Conduct seeks to address many of the complex legal and ethical issues we face and provides guidance and overall principles for our organization.

## Disciplinary action

Failure to comply with Asante's Code of Conduct, policies or applicable law will subject workforce members to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment to the extent permitted by law. Disciplinary measures may also be taken when leaders fail to properly acknowledge and address misconduct.

For information about the Asante Compliance and Privacy Program, call **(541) 789-5104** or e-mail [compliance@asante.org](mailto:compliance@asante.org).





## Reporting

### Personal obligation to report

Each of us plays a critical role in helping meet Asante's high standards for compliance with laws and Asante policies. You are required to report any activities that could be harmful to a patient, family member or workforce member; that are illegal or unethical; or that violate this Code of Conduct or Asante policies. You must also report suspected violations of any state or federal health care program requirements. It is not acceptable to overlook actual or potential wrongdoing. Concerns should be pursued until addressed appropriately. This means if you make a report to someone and nothing is done, you must keep reporting upward until you are confident that the concern is being addressed.

Reporting your concern is an important part of the effectiveness of Asante's Compliance and Privacy Program. You can make a difference by telling the appropriate person at Asante if you know of a problem or suspect something is wrong. At Asante, we value honesty. Through open communication and reporting, we can continue to provide high-quality care to our patients and strive to provide excellence with every patient encounter.

### How to report a concern

Reporting a concern can be unsettling and even intimidating, but Asante is committed to maintaining a safe work environment that encourages employees and others to raise issues that they feel should be addressed.

Asante offers many avenues to raise a concern:

- Discuss the issue with your leader. Most issues can be dealt with efficiently by taking this first step.
- Discuss the issue with another member of management, such as a higher-level leader, a safety officer, a risk manager or Human Resources.

- Complete an incident report form accessed through the Compliance page on *myAsanteNET*. The incident report is forwarded to the Compliance Department for follow-up. You have the option to remain anonymous when using the incident report form or calling the compliance hotline (see the following section).
- Call Asante's compliance officer at **(541) 789-5104**.
- Call Asante's compliance hotline at **(866) 340-7788**.

### Anonymity and confidentiality

Part of fulfilling our Mission includes maintaining open channels of communication and positive work environments. Asante encourages workforce members to notify their immediate leader of potential illegal or unethical practices and behaviors, as well as violations of the Code of Conduct or any Asante policy. If a workforce member is uncomfortable, or it is inappropriate to notify an immediate leader, the workforce member can call Asante's anonymous compliance hotline, **(866) 340-7788**, or use the online reporting system on *myAsanteNET*. Both the compliance hotline and the online reporting portal are available all day, every day.

To ensure anonymity, Asante's compliance hotline and online reporting portal are managed by independent third-party vendors.

If you make a hotline report, you can call the Compliance Department support line at any time during the process to request follow-up information. If you choose to submit an anonymous report through the online reporting system, please retain your incident number. You may call back to check the status of your concern. Please be aware that we may be limited in what information we can share with you.

# Reporting

## No retaliation

Reporting concerns about compliance or business ethics is important to the success of Asante's Compliance and Privacy Program and ability to provide high-quality patient care. Retaliation, retribution, intimidation or harassment of anyone who makes a good faith report regarding unethical or illegal behavior, or a possible violation of this Code of Conduct or our written policies, will not be tolerated. Any workforce member who conducts or condones retribution, retaliation or harassment in any way will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

If you experience retaliation, report it immediately to a leader or the Compliance Department; you can also file an anonymous report using the Asante compliance hotline or online reporting tool so that the incident can be investigated and appropriately addressed.

## Internal investigations

Asante is committed to investigating all reported concerns promptly and confidentially to the extent possible. All members are required to cooperate with internal investigations. Asante prohibits destroying or altering any documents (written or electronic) associated with an investigation. Asante prohibits lying to or misleading an investigator or obstructing an investigation by hindering the collection of evidence.

The Compliance Department coordinates findings from an investigation and recommends corrective action or changes that need to be implemented.

## External mandatory reporting

Asante is committed to providing high-quality care and upholding ethical standards. In addition to internal tools for reporting suspected illegal behavior or violations of applicable laws, regulations and internal

policies, any individual who has concerns regarding the safety and quality of care may report these concerns to state or federal agencies.

State law requires that health care providers report certain violations of law, such as the abuse and neglect of children and incapacitated adults. As mandatory reporters, health care providers have a duty to report suspected incidences of abuse and neglect to the appropriate state agencies. Asante has policies to guide individuals to appropriate reporting agencies, which can be found on *myAsanteNET*.

## Resources

Adhering to this Code of Conduct includes seeking help when you need it. If Asante policies do not provide enough direction, ask your leader for clarification. If you are uncertain about the ethics or legality of an issue, seek additional guidance before proceeding.

When you have a question or need advice about topics discussed in this Code of Conduct or about compliance in general, multiple resources are available:

- Your direct leader
- Asante Human Resources
- Office of Compliance and Privacy: (541) 789-5104
- Office of the General Counsel/ Legal: (541) 789-5668





## Asante

2825 E. Barnett Road | Medford, OR 97504

**(541) 789-7000 | [asante.org](https://www.asante.org)**

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