



Monterey County Health Department

Policy Title: Code of Ethics

Effective Date: [Redacted]



Accreditation Standard:

Not applicable

Policy Number:

11.1.2.A.1 Ethical Health Decision Making

[Redacted]

I. PURPOSE:

The national mandate to ensure and protect the health of the public is an inherently moral one. It carries with it an obligation to care for the well-being of communities, and it implies the possession of an element of power to carry out that mandate. Exercising power to ensure the health of populations while avoiding abuses of such power are at the crux of public health ethics.

MCHD’s Code of Ethics clarifies the distinctive elements of public health and ethical principles that our communities can rely upon as we carry out our work. It further demonstrates accountability and transparency to the public we serve.

II. DEFINITIONS:

None.

III. DISCUSSION:

The national standards for decision making relative to ethical issues requires a strategic deliberative process for consideration and resolution of ethical issues. MCHD’s Code of Ethics outlines the intent and spirit with which MCHD solicits input from individuals, groups, and communities on matters of health equity through the resourcing, sharing, and advocacy of health information with decision makers. The application of ethical principles must be deliberate, documentable, and provide accountability in the resolution of ethical issues.

IV. Principles:

Monterey County Health Department’s Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health are these:

1. MCHD strives to principally address the fundamental causes of disease and requirements for health, aiming to prevent adverse health outcomes.
2. MCHD strives to achieve community health in a way that respects the rights of individuals in the community.
3. MCHD strives to develop and evaluate policies, programs, and priorities through processes that ensure an opportunity for input from community members.
4. MCHD strives to advocate and work for the empowerment of disenfranchised community members, ensuring that the basic resources and conditions necessary for health are accessible to all people in the community.
5. MCHD strives to seek the information needed to implement effective policies and programs that protect and promote health.

6. MCHD strives to provide governmental agencies with the information needed for decisions on health policies, initiatives, and activities, and advocates for community awareness prior to implementation.
7. MCHD strives to act in a timely manner on health information within the resources and the mandate given to them by the public.
8. MCHD programs and policies strive to incorporate a variety of approaches that anticipate and respect diverse values, beliefs, and cultures in the community.
9. MCHD strives to implement policies and programs in a manner that most enhances physical and social environments.
10. MCHD strives to protect the confidentiality of information that can bring harm to individuals or groups if made public. Exceptions must be justified on the basis of the high likelihood of significant harm to the individual or others.
11. MCHD strives to ensure the professional competence of its employees.
12. MCHD strives to engage in collaborations and affiliations in ways that build the public's trust and the institution's effectiveness.
13. MCHD zealously guards against conflicts of interest or its appearance.
14. MCHD prevents all forms of mismanagement of public funds by establishing and maintaining strong fiscal and management controls.

Monterey County Health Department's values to achieve ethical decision making are these:

1. MCHD's core values were developed with input from staff of all levels in formally adopted that same year. Our core values are provided to all new employees in the onboarding process and are displayed on our main website page here: <https://www.mtyhd.org/index.php/about/>
 - A. **Integrity** – We conduct our work in a trustworthy and dependable manner.
 - B. **Respect** - We value the strengths, experiences, and perspectives of others.
 - C. **Innovation** - We search for creative solutions, manage resources wisely, and lead the way.
 - D. **Health Equity** – We cultivate activities, programs, and policies that equalize opportunities for communities to be healthy.
 - E. **Excellence** – We promote quality outcomes through learning and continuous performance improvement
2. Staff Competencies
MCHD uses the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals, a comprehensive set of skills for the broad practice of public health, as its standard for ethical practices, specifically items 1.3 (analytical assessments), 6.7 (public health science skills), and 8.1. (leadership and systems thinking).

3. Ethics Training

Annual ethics training is required for all employees, contracted employees, temporary staff, interns, and volunteers. Administration Bureau staff will identify a suitable ethics training and track employee compliance.

4. Confidentiality:

Annual privacy training is required for all employees, contracted employees, temporary staff, interns, and volunteers. A 1.5 hour training is available through the Learning and Development Network and compliance will be tracked by the Privacy Officer.

Functional-specific confidentiality training is augmented for staff of these units: communicable disease; Public Health Laboratory; Preparedness; Emergency Medical Services; Clinic Services; Women, Infants, and Children program; Children's Medical Services; Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health; Public Health Regional Teams; Human Resources; and Public Guardian. These hour-long, in-person trainings occur and are required annually.

Note that the Behavioral Health Bureau's Law and Ethics Class fulfills this requirement and Behavioral Health Staff should not take this course as well.

V. REFERENCES:

Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health, Version 2.2. 2002. Public Health Leadership Society, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Public Health Leadership Society.

Retrieved April 2015 from <http://phls.org/CMSuploads/Principles-of-the-Ethical-Practice-of-PH-Version-2.2-68496.pdf>

The 10 Essential Public Health Services. 1994. The Essential Public Health Services Work Group of the Public Health Functions Steering Committee. Retrieved April 2015 from

<http://www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/essentialservices.html>

VI. Appendix: Correspondence of the 12 Ethical Principles with the 10 Essential Public Health Services

Essential Public Health Services	Principles of the Ethical Practice
1. Monitor the health status to identify community health problems	5. collect information 7. act on information
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community	5. collect information
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues	4. advocacy and empowerment 6. provide information
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems	12. collaboration
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts	1. protect and promote health; address fundamental causes of health risks 3. processes for community input 5. collect information
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety	2. achieve community health with respect for individual rights 3. feedback from the community 7. act upon information
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable	4. advocate for and empower; basic resources available to all 8. incorporate diversity
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce	11. professional competence
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services	3. community feedback 5. collect information
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems	5. collect information
No corresponding essential public health service	9. enhance physical and social environments 10. protect confidentiality

VII. ORIGINATOR: Monterey County Health Department, Administration Bureau, PEP (Planning, Evaluation, and Policy) Unit.

Appendix A: Signature Page

Originator: MCHD Administration Bureau - PEP	Frequency of Review:
Approved by:	

Approved and signed: _____		Date:
Ray Bullick, Director		

Policy Numbered, Posted, and Distributed _____		Date:
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Revisions:

<i>Author</i>	<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Revision #</i>	<i>Date Released</i>

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