

CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL
POLICY

SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE REQUEST TO BE EXCUSED FROM CLIENT CARE DUTY

ANNUAL REVIEW MONTH: January

RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW: Chief Nurse Executive

LAST REVISION DATE: January 2008

I. POLICY

The hospital will carefully evaluate employee requests to be excluded from client care or treatment responsibilities which present a conflict with the employee's personal values and/or beliefs. When appropriate, staffing adjustments will be made in such cases. Due to staffing limitations, it must be recognized that it may not always be possible to grant such a request. Employees may, in certain circumstances, be encouraged to apply for vacant positions in other work areas in which conflict of care issues are less likely to occur.

II. PURPOSE

This policy establishes a procedure which avoids any interruption or compromise to the care and treatment of the clients, if and when an employee requests to be excused from participating in certain aspects of client care. Such situations may arise when the services to be provided present a conflict with employee's cultural values, or ethical or religious beliefs. In accord with the mission of the hospital, services will be provided to all persons in need without regard to disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, lifestyle, or ability to pay.

III. PROCEDURE

This procedure is followed in those situations where client care services provided may be in conflict with an employee's values and/or beliefs. Such client care services include but may not be limited to 1) withholding treatment such as nutrition/medications, and 2) a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order.

A. **Employee Responsibility**

In such situations, it is the responsibility of the employee to immediately notify his/her supervisor of his/her concerns. The request to be excused or relieved must be in writing. The written request must include the specific aspects of care from which the employee is requesting to be relieved or excused and the reasons for making the request.

B. **Supervisory Responsibility**

Based on the nature of the request and resources available, the immediate supervisor may grant temporary (up to 8 hours) permission to be excused from the activity causing the conflict. The supervisor must be able to assure that client care is not compromised. The supervisor will then contact the Service Director, Nurse Executive or Service Chief. The request will be evaluated and reviewed before making a longer term plan or realignment of duties. If the employee is not in agreement with the management decision, a written request may be forwarded to the Service Chief, with a copy to the Director of Human Resources.

C. **Responsibility for Continuity of Client Care**

The requesting employee is responsible for providing appropriate client care until alternate arrangements can be made. Refusal to provide care will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. In no circumstances will a request be granted by the supervisor if it is felt that doing so would negatively affect the care of clients. When approval of a request is granted, the supervisor(s) must make appropriate accommodations to assure that the services from which the employee was excused are provided.

D. **Review and Monitoring**

Requests for adjustments in the delivery of care as a result of an employee's values and/or beliefs will be forwarded to the hospital's Ethics Forum for informational and review purposes.

E. **Employee Request for Religious Holiday/Time Off**

An employee, upon request to the CSH DDO or designee at least seven days in advance, shall be given priority consideration for time away from work for observance of religious holidays not usually recognized by the State of Georgia. Any paid time for such religious holiday observance shall be charged to compensatory time, accrued

annual leave or personal leave available to the employee at the time of the holiday observance. No more than three workdays in each calendar year will be claimed for priority consideration. A request by an employee for time away from work to observe a religious holiday shall not be denied unless:

1. The employee has inadequate compensatory time, accrued annual leave, or personal leave to cover such period of absences; (The supervisor may grant L.W.P. if he/she deems appropriate); or
2. The duties performed by the employee are urgently required and the employee, in the judgment of the supervisor, is the only person available who can perform the duties.

F. Other Rules/Policies

Rules of the State Personnel Board and the Department of Human Resources, as well as Central State Hospital (CSH) policies and procedures dealing with employee rights and responsibilities and unlawful discrimination are not abridged or otherwise expanded or limited by this policy. If an employee is not satisfied with how his/her request to be excused or relieved from duty is handled, he/she is encouraged to review and follow DHR Policies 1501 - Grievance Procedure for Classified Employees and 1502 - Grievance Procedure for Unclassified Employees.

Approved:

This policy has been approved by the CEO and CMO in March, 2008