

# MA Association of Community Health Workers

## The Massachusetts Community Health Workers Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics (“Code”) shall serve as a guide to Community Health Workers (“CHWs”) for day-to-day decision making while practicing public health worker. Its purpose is to clarify the mission, values, and principles of the profession and to link these to specific standard of professional conduct. This Code shall complement, rather than replace, other employer policies.

Adherence to the Code is expected for:

1. The admission and continues membership in the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (“MACHW”)
2. The maintenance of Certification from the MA Board of Certification of CHWs at the MA Department of Public Health.

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1. **Client Advocacy.** I will:

- a. advocate for and support all clients, so that their rights and safety are protected and maintained;
- b. respect my clients’ values and beliefs;
- c. incorporate my clients’ values and beliefs into the care I provide; and
- d. strive to gain and maintain the trust of my clients.

2. **Scope of Care.** I will:

- a. be truthful to my clients and employer about my skills, qualifications, and certifications, including any limitations on the services I can provide;
- b. refer clients to other qualified professionals for services I cannot provide.

3. **Confidentiality.** I will:

- a. respect and maintain the confidentiality of all clients, including information shared verbally, as well as information in client's records; and
- b. follow all local, state, federal, and employer regulations regarding confidentiality.

4. **Professionalism.** I will:

- a. maintain professional boundaries at all times;
- b. not participate in any illegal activity;
- c. not engage in ay sexual or romantic relationship with a client or a client's relative;
- d. not accept money, gifts\*, or any compensation from a client for services performed; and
- e. not accept compensation for client referrals.

\*you may accept homemade gifts, as they are expressions of gratitude in many cultures.

5. **Expanding Knowledge and Education.** I will:
  - a. actively network with other professionals and organizations, in order to best match my client's preferences and needs to health and social services in their region/city/town/neighborhood; and
  - b. strive to expand my professional knowledge base and competencies through education and participation in professional development programs.
  
6. **Care of Everyone.** I will:
  - a. respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all people; and
  - b. never deny services to someone due to that person's race, religion, nationality, culture, gender, physical characteristics, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
  
7. **Committing to Community Health Work.** I will
  - a. be loyal to and advocate for CHWs and the work they do at the local, state, national, and international levels.
  
8. **Medical Interpretation.** I will:
  - a. be honest with my employer and clients about my skills to provide medical interpretation and only interpret two-way conversations between a client and a provider if I am trained as a medical interpreter.\*

\*medical interpretation is defines as converting information from one language to another verbally-between a non-English speaking patient and a health care provider.
  
9. **Wellness and Safety.** I will:
  - a. be honest with myself and my employer when a client requires care that is too emotionally difficult for me; and,
  - b. strive to maintain a safe environment for myself, my colleagues and those I serve.
  
10. **Employer's Policies.** I will:
  - a. support my employer and all of my employer's policies and regulations. If a conflict arises between my employer and this Code of Ethics, I will appropriately raise my concerns with my employer.