



Compassionate and Reliable Nurses and Home Health Aides

# Employee Handbook

Welcome to our Team. This booklet will serve as a reference tool for your employment with Aquinas Healthcare. Any topic not addressed or which needs further clarification in this document should be brought to the attention of Aquinas Healthcare Management.

## **Mission Statement**

Our team of professionals at Aquinas Healthcare is committed to providing the most compassionate and reliable care possible. Our Nurses, Home Health Aides and Companions are dedicated to ensuring the health, well being and dignity of each patient. We to strive to respect and care for each patient as we would our own loved ones given their physical, emotional, and social needs.

## **Aquinas Healthcare Organization**

Welcome to Aquinas Healthcare! You are now a member of a team of highly dedicated health care professionals. Delivering top quality service is paramount to our organization. Whether in the office or in the field, our customers come first. We will do our best to make our organization the best in the industry.

At Aquinas Healthcare we believe excellent communication is key to efficient service delivery and a satisfying work environment.

Do not hesitate to ask questions you may have as Aquinas Healthcare management is interested in your success and growth in the company. We are always interested in your ideas that may help improve our delivery of any service we provide to our customers.

## **Reporting Structure**

Once you have completed orientation, you are considered an employee of Aquinas. You may receive job assignments as they become available. Based on your availability and skills Aquinas Healthcare will contact you by phone with the specifics of your assignments. Before accepting any assignments, please determine your ability to fulfill your commitment to our client:

1. Understand what you will be required to do. If there is an aspect of the assignment you feel you cannot

handle please communicate these issues to Aquinas Management.

2. Know the exact schedule of the assignment. Do not change the schedule unless you obtain approval from the Aquinas Healthcare administration. All changes in your schedule must go through Aquinas Management.
3. Know the address, phone number and how to get to your assignment. If you are unsure, contact Aquinas Healthcare administration for directions and a plan of care. Upon arrival at a clients' home, immediately locate the Aquinas Healthcare folder which will provide all of the client's information.

Consistent phone and or email communication is essential between you and Aquinas Healthcare Administration. Notify Aquinas Healthcare of your availability weekly. If circumstances change, notify the office immediately. Failure to notify the

office of your availability may result in removal from that case and prohibit you from receiving future assignments.

## **Continuous Quality Improvement**

Quality Improvement Programs, Staff Development Programs, and clinical supervision assure the team that our commitment to providing comprehensive quality oriented health care is being met.

As part of the Aquinas Healthcare team you may be asked to participate in Quality Improvement studies. Aquinas Healthcare's Quality Improvement Program involves; evaluations of areas to improve service, amending training information to the ever changing needs of our clients and analyzing the effectiveness of our organization.

## **Equal Opportunity Employment**

Aquinas Healthcare does not discriminate in its hiring practices with regards to race,

creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, age, veteran status or any other personal characteristics protected by federal, state, or local law or rules or ordinance.

Employees are assigned to patients without regard to race creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, age, veteran status or any other personal characteristics protected by federal, state, or local law or rules or ordinance.

Aquinas Healthcare hires, evaluates and promotes staff members on the basis of qualifications, merit and job performance. We will do our best to find a suitable job assignment which will take full advantage of your qualifications and experience; however, we cannot and do not guarantee employment.

Aquinas Healthcare will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee with a disability

unless the accommodation would negatively affect the level of care a patient receives or jeopardizes the reputation of Aquinas Healthcare.

Aquinas Healthcare recognizes every employee's right to not participate in aspects of care or treatment that are in conflict with cultural values or religious beliefs. If an employee assigned to care for a patient finds that aspects of the patient's care violate the employee's cultural, moral, or religious beliefs, the employee is to immediately notify Aquinas Healthcare management. Aquinas Healthcare will do its best to take steps to reassign the employee.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1974, Aquinas Healthcare will not, directly or through contractual arrangements,

discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex or age in its provision of services and benefits. Further, Aquinas will attempt to service all patients regardless of intensity of service need or location of the patient. Our ability to service our clients is dependent upon Aquinas Healthcare's ability to have proper staffing to specifically meet our patient's needs.

## **Orientation**

Before being assigned a case, each employee must sit through the Aquinas Healthcare orientation program. This program will familiarize the employee with the company's employee benefits, jobs responsibilities, administrative procedures, patient care, and personnel policies of Aquinas Healthcare.

A 90 day probationary period is in effect following orientation during which a new employee may be terminated for any reason. Every Aquinas Healthcare employee is an "at will employee". In the State of NJ, at

will employees can be terminated for any reason. If such a termination occurs the employee is entitled to any wages earned up to the date of said termination. They will not be entitled to any future wages, compensation or benefits.

Every employee must submit to a background check. This may include DMV, federal or local criminal, Office of Inspector General – Health and Human Resources, a credit check and an Aquinas internal assessment. If there are any prior conditions or incidents that may affect employment or care of our clients it is the candidates responsibility to immediately advise that you let Aquinas Healthcare management know immediately. During your employment with Aquinas, if your legal matters, bankruptcies, arrests or personal issues which could potentially affect your employment with Aquinas you must immediately advise Aquinas management.

## Work Hours

We provide services to patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our Springfield, NJ office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The employee will be advised of their specific working hours for each case to which they are assigned. Employees doing administrative functions in the office are expected to work 9 am to 5 pm, unless otherwise advised by management. In the case of employee illness or an emergency, the employees must contact the offices main number **973-467-8502** and speak with the Manager on Duty. If you do not speak with a manager you must leave a message with your phone number where you can be immediately reached. The Manager on Duty must acknowledge your absence, so your case can be reassigned in a timely manner. Do not call the patient or client directly.

## **Pay Periods**

Our work week is Sunday through Saturday. Paychecks are issued Bi-weekly for Hourly employees and Bi-Weekly for Salaried employees. Paychecks may be picked up after 12 pm on Friday, not earlier, no exceptions. You may also have your check directly deposited into your bank account. Aquinas Healthcare will utilize a Telephone based time clock solution. In the event that service is down, employees are responsible for completing a time slip. All time slips and notes must be submitted to the office no later than Tuesday by noon in order to be processed for payment by that Friday. Aquinas management will communicate our holiday pay schedules.

Only those deductions which are authorized by law or which the employee has authorized in writing can be deducted from your paycheck.

Depending on your job assignment, you may be eligible for overtime pay at a rate of time

and one half regular rate pay. All overtime must be approved in advance by Aquinas Healthcare Management.

In the near future, Aquinas Healthcare will publish a quarterly newsletter. This will become the primary tool for management to communicate with employees in the field and other office personnel. Once this newsletter is published, each employee will be responsible to read each monthly news letter. If for some reason you do not receive the newsletter, please contact the Aquinas Administration. The newsletter will highlight upcoming events, changes in any established Aquinas Healthcare policies, as well as including various pertinent information regarding client care. Each employee will have the choice to receive the newsletter, with their paycheck or via Email. If your home address, phone number or emails address changes you must notify the Aquinas Healthcare administration.

## **Attendance**

All employees are expected to report to their work as assigned. If there is a conflict you must notify management immediately. If you are unable to make your work assignment, you must call the office or Manager on Duty (after office hours) at least six hours in advance of a scheduled assignment.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the office or Manager on Duty (after hours) by telephone prior to the scheduled time of the work. You must also notify when you will be able to return to work.

All employees are expected to arrive and leave their assignment as scheduled. Allowances for transit delays and personal errands must be made to accommodate timely arrival. If you forget to call the 800 number when you originally arrive at the case location, Aquinas Healthcare administration or management may confirm with the client/patient. Then your time card

will manually adjust your assignment start time. If you forget to clock out you will not be paid over time. Excessive adjustments to your telephony timecards may result in termination. Administrative employees working in the office may face termination for; poor performance, excessive absence or tardiness. Unacceptable work performance includes excessive cancellation, tardiness and “no call” or “no shows.” Any employee who fails to call in or show up for the work assignment may be terminated. If your work performance falls below Aquinas Healthcare high standards, you will be subject to discipline such as being removed from a case.

## **Benefits - Insurance**

Aquinas Healthcare covers each employee for:

1. Workers’ Compensation
2. Malpractice
3. Comprehensive Liability
4. Fidelity Bond/Surety Bond

## **Workers Compensation**

Workers' Compensation is a benefit designed to protect workers for legitimate on-the-job injuries or illnesses. It is intended to compensate for lost wages as well as medical expenses. The exact benefits vary from state to state. If you are injured while performing your assigned responsibilities, the office or the Manager on Duty is to be notified within 2 hours. An Incident Report is to be completed by the employee immediately. There are other steps that the employee must take to insure that appropriate and complete coverage will be provided.

## **Direct Deposit**

Another convenience offered by Aquinas Healthcare is for you to have your paycheck deposited weekly directly into your bank account. The payroll coordinator will have the necessary forms and information for you to take advantage of the Direct Deposit

program. Please allow at least two pay periods for the direct deposit to take effect.

## **Holidays**

Holidays and holiday pay rates vary. Check with the Aquinas management for a list of holidays. Never assume that your hourly pay rate will change when you work on a holiday. Any increased holiday pay rate must be communicated by Aquinas Healthcare management.

## **Jury Duty**

An employee receiving a notice to report for jury duty must submit notice to the Administrator immediately upon receipt. If you are an hourly employee your case(s) will be re-assigned.

## **Dress Code and ID Tag**

Aquinas Healthcare expects employees to dress appropriately to promote a professional image and ideals the Aquinas team represents. Direct care staff will dress as follows when providing care whether in a patient's home or a facility:

1. Uniform shirts will be provided by Aquinas Healthcare. Scrubs for nurses and golf shirts for HHA and Companions. Uniform shirts are required for each day of employment. If the employee loses a shirt they may pay for a new shirt or order additional shirts. Shirts must be neat and un-wrinkled during work hours.
2. Shoes must have enclosed toes. Nonskid soles are encouraged.
3. Clean, pressed lab coats may be worn.
4. Jewelry is to be worn sparingly. No dangling or hoop earrings, long chains, or necklaces. No intricate patterned rings, watches or bracelets.

5. Fingernails are to be clean and short to minimize injury to the patient and transmission of infection.
6. Employees must display their Aquinas issued IDs during work hours at each assignment. If your ID is lost, expired or damaged the employee must come into the office for a replacement. If the ID is lost more than 3 times in a 12 month period, the employee will pay a \$10 replacement fee for each subsequent ID issued.

## **Code of Ethics**

To enable Aquinas Healthcare to conduct its business effectively and to foster confidence in the integrity of its employees, the highest standards of ethics and loyalty must be maintained.

As an Aquinas Healthcare team member you are expected to:

- Function within the limits set by the Company's policies and procedures.

- Never use foul language or slang in communicating with patients, peers or supervisors.
- Be considerate and courteous in when in contact with patients, family and other persons.
- Treat patients with respect and recognize their need for privacy of both person and property.
- Ensure confidentiality with respect to the patient's condition, history, and behavior
- Never accept gratuities from patients or their family.
- Maintain a calm and reassuring attitude when dealing with patients and other persons.
- Be tactful in manners and attitudes when dealing with patients and other persons.
- Arrive at and leave assignments at assigned times.

- Never discuss your personal problems, religious or political beliefs with the patient or client.
- Never assume control of any financial or personal affairs of the patient. This also applies to a patient's estate including power of attorney, conservatorship or guardianship.
- Never accept payment directly from a patient, their families or a facility.
- Never reside with a patient in either the patient's or employee's residence.
- Never consume alcohol or take drugs, other than those prescribed by your physician, in the patient's home or prior to service delivery.
- Never bring other persons, children, or pets to the patient's home.
- Never consume the patient's food or drink, except water.
- Never smoke in the patient's home.
- Never use the patient's phone for personal use.

- Never accept additional work directly from a patient, family or a facility.
- Never drive a patient, in their car without the proper transportation release (The signed release forms must be on file with Aquinas Healthcare administration)
- Cell phones are to be silenced and used at a minimum (i.e. personal or family emergencies)

## **Confidentiality/HIPAA**

Any information you access, collect or receive regarding a patient, internal systems, processes and procedures are considered confidential. You may not share this information outside Aquinas Healthcare without the written approval of the patient and Aquinas Healthcare management.

## **Patient Bill of Rights**

As a member of the Aquinas Healthcare team you are obligated to honor each

patient's Bill of Rights. This applies to all patients regardless of where the service or care is provided, whether it be in the home, an institution or in public. These Rights provide for the patient's privacy of both person and possessions; information about their care and services are to be kept confidential. This also applies to the patient's clinical records and information. Violating a patient's rights is a very serious offence and is grounds for termination. A copy of the Home Health Bill of Rights is available from the Aquinas Healthcare Director of Nursing.

## **Open Door and Grievance Policy**

A grievance is a complaint, a view or opinion. A grievance can be expressed or filed due to employment conditions,

relationships between an employee and supervisor or other employees or clients.

All personnel are encouraged to discuss any issue or grievance with their Aquinas Healthcare supervisor as soon as possible for an early resolution.

Problems or complaints are to be first discussed with the appropriate supervisor. In many instances, the supervisor will be able to work out a satisfactory solution. If the immediate supervisor is unable to resolve the problem or complaint all employees are encouraged to contact a member of the Aquinas management team. The management of Aquinas Healthcare is responsible for conducting fair and impartial investigation and making a decision within (30) working days of receiving the complaint.

## **Advance Directives-DNR Policy**

An Advance Directive is a document giving information about the type of medical

treatment the patient wishes to have or not have if he/she ever becomes unable to make decisions for himself or herself.

During the initial assessment visit, home care patients are provided with information about Advance Directives and asked whether he/she would like to create one.

If a patient has developed an Advance Directive, a copy is requested for inclusion in the clinical record. The Director of Nursing is responsible for notifying staff of the existence of an Advance Directive and its contents. This information should be found in the patient's home chart.

A "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) order is developed between the patient and their physician and refers to the withholding of CPR in the event of cardiac arrest.

If a patient has executed a DNR order this will be properly documented in the patient Plan of Care and patient folder located in each patients residence.

## Documentation

A clinical record is maintained for each patient as required by law. This documentation is necessary to ensure continuity of care and as evidence of the services delivered and billed.

Visit Notes, Skilled Progress Notes, MARs, Care and Treatment Records, Vent Flow Sheets, Service Reports, evaluation and assessments are to be submitted to the office on a weekly basis. Unless this documentation is completed and turned in, you have not completed your assignment.

Failure to submit the signed required documentation in a timely manner may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

The Director of Nursing or other senior nurse will review all clinical documentation and will contact you if there are any issues, inconsistencies or clarification needed regarding your work.

If you have any questions or concerns on how to properly complete any documentation you are required to discuss such issues with the Nurse Supervisor immediately.

## **Employee Supervision**

Supervision is intended to assist you in developing and improving your patient care skills. The Director of Nursing or designee will be making supervisory visits to the patient's home to evaluate the effectiveness of the care being provided and if all patient needs are met. During these supervisory visits, the Registered Nurse may also provide additional instruction in certain aspects of the patient's care requirements.

If your assignment is in a hospital, assisted living facility or nursing home you are under the supervision of that institution.

# **Incident Reports and Patient Complaints**

An “incident” is any undesirable, unplanned or abnormal occurrence or event during the course of care which falls outside of the Plan of Care. An incident may involve any of the following:

- Patient fall or injury during or after service hours
- Medication error
- Infection
- Property damage or theft
- Medical equipment failure or malfunction
- Suspected abuse and or neglect of the patient by anyone

Patient incidents are reported to the Director of Nursing and Nurse Supervisor as soon as possible after the incident occurs.

Employee incident or injuries sustained during the course of delivering care to Aquinas Healthcare patients are also

reported as soon as possible to the Director of Nursing.

## **Emergency and Disaster Plans**

Aquinas Healthcare is responsible for providing services whenever possible during a natural disaster or labor dispute. In order to ensure continuity of care and the well-being of our patients, Aquinas Healthcare will make every effort to continue to meet the patient needs.

It is the responsibility of Aquinas Healthcare to declare whether the Emergency/Disaster Plan is to be implemented. Employees will be notified by either the Director of Nursing or a manager at the Aquinas Healthcare office to ascertain the patient's condition and inform the employee of the plans for continuing care.

If you are at home and an emergency is declared, you should contact the office before proceeding to your next scheduled assignment.

If you are not at a patient assignment or at home, contact the Aquinas Healthcare to inform management of your whereabouts and availability to assist in the emergency.

## **Performance Evaluations**

Each employee will be evaluated at the end of the three month probationary period. During this introductory period you will be able to determine whether this position is right for you and whether you will be happy as part of the Aquinas Healthcare team. At the same time, Aquinas Healthcare will be able to evaluate your ability to perform the required job duties and responsibilities.

Even after the successful completion of the probationary period, your performance and conduct will be expected to meet Company standards. You will receive a written performance evaluation no less frequently than every 12 months after your date of hire.

For those assigned to hospitals, assisted living facilities or nursing homes;

information is provided from that institution's administration on the employee's job performance.

## **In-service Education**

In-service education programs are offered by Aquinas Healthcare approximately once per month. These programs are provided to assist each employee in obtaining current knowledge of procedures and services regarding the proper care of our patients.

Aquinas Healthcare Aides are required to complete 12 units of in-service education per calendar year. Personal Care Aide in-service education requirements vary. The Orientation Coordinator will discuss these requirements with each employee during orientation. If you have further questions please contact Aquinas Healthcare management.

## **Case Conferences**

Patient care case conferences are held by the Director of Nursing or Nurse Supervisor

and the professional staff providing services at home. It is the responsibility of each to attend scheduled case conference. The Director of Nursing will inform you of the day and time the conference occurs and the patients to be discussed. If you are unable to attend, notify the Director of Nursing immediately so other arrangements can be made.

## **Standard Precautions**

Each employee is required to follow standard precautions in all interactions with patients. Annually each employee will be provided with an in-service program on standard precautions, Blood-borne Pathogens and Infection Controls.

Home Health Aides will be provided with personal protective equipment deemed appropriate for the patient care setting to which they are assigned. If these needs change you must notify Aquinas Management. Aquinas Healthcare's Director of Nursing will be able to address any

questions or concerns you raise regarding the precautions being taken in any situation.

If you become exposed to biohazardous material, notify the Director of Nursing or Aquinas Management team and follow instructions completely. This is for the safety of yourself, the patient and your family.

## **Personal Safety**

Personal and workplace safety is about avoiding being the victim of a crime. To do this law enforcement advises to trust your instincts; avoid dangerous situations; stay alert for signs of trouble and stay calm and assess a situation before acting. Aquinas Healthcare is very concerned about the personal safety of each employee. Every precaution should be taken to never compromise any employee or patient's safety.

If you are concerned about a perceived risk or an unsafe work environment, discuss the

matter with the Director of Nursing or member of the Aquinas Healthcare Management team. If no accommodation can be made, you have the right to refuse an assignment without any repercussions.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

We are pleased to have you on the Aquinas Healthcare team. We know you will do an excellent job, not only for us, but for yourself as well.

When you are on assignment, please do your best to make us shine in the community. Together we will provide the most compassionate and reliable care possible.

# NOTES

## Employee Signature

I \_\_\_\_\_

have read this Employee Handbook in its entirety. I promise to uphold the ideals Aquinas Healthcare stands for. After reading this book I understand what is expected of me as a member of the Aquinas Healthcare team. I realize it is my responsibility to raise any future issues or concerns with Aquinas Healthcare management.

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