Baptist Health South Florida

POLICY NO.: BHSF-6250
TYPE: Administrative

POLICY TITLE: Business-Related Verbal and Written Communications Policy

Responsible Department: Human Resources

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SUBMITTED BY (AUTHOR): Gary Lyew-Ayee
Title: Sr. Human Resources Site Consultant

APPROVED BY: Paula Allen
Title: Assistant Vice President, HR Leadership and Employee Communications

APPROVED BY: Adriene McCoy
Title: Corporate Vice President and Chief HR Officer

APPROVED BY: Ricardo M. Forbes
Title: Corporate Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer

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SUMMARY & PURPOSE:
The Greater Miami area is a dynamic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual community. Baptist Health South Florida reflects that diversity and is one of the most diverse organizations in the United States today – Baptist Health has consistently been recognized for diversity by Fortune 100 as one of Best Places to Work For in America. Baptist Health has fully embraced our multi-cultural, multi-lingual heritage.

Given our rich multicultural history it is important that we have a policy that embraces this awareness in the context of our focus on patient safety. Therefore, when performing work related duties, all Baptist Health South Florida employees are required to communicate (verbally and in writing) in language that will: ensure safety in situations where communication and understanding of directions is imperative; facilitate full communication between patients, customers, co-workers, supervisors and physicians, and enable leaders to direct and monitor the performance of employees whose job duties require communication with patients, family members, coworkers or customers.

English is the common predominate language and a reasonable level of English proficiency is an employment requirement for all positions at Baptist Health. To ensure full understanding, all written records and work related written communications must be in English. All verbal work related communication must also be in English unless it is agreed by all present that another language would facilitate understanding by all.

POLICY:
All Baptist Health South Florida employees are required to communicate in English, verbally and in writing, at all times during work time, unless (i) a patient, family member or customer with whom the employee is communicating does not speak English and the employee is able to communicate with the patient, family member or customer in that person's native language, or (ii) there is agreement by all present that verbal communication in a language other than English would enhance understanding. This policy is not intended to prevent employees

from communicating in a language other than English for business related matters with a patient, family member or customer with a non-English language preference. Nor is this policy intended to prohibit communicating in a language other than English while on a break, during meals or any other non-work time.

SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all Baptist Health South Florida regular employees, per diem employees, temporary employees and independent contractors ("employees"), and this policy is to be followed during all working hours. This policy does not apply during break or meal periods, or during any other non-working time.

PROCEDURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE:

- This policy applies to all business-related communications between employees and patients, family members, customers, co-workers, leaders and physicians.
- Employees are permitted to communicate in a language other than English for business related matters when a patient, family member or customer with whom the employee is communicating does not speak English and the employee can communicate in the other language. In that event, however, as necessary the employee is required to relate, in English, any information received from the patient, family member or customer to any co-worker, leader or physician who is also involved in this case, matter, or treatment of the patient.
- Only employees who are deemed competent in a patient's language can provide the patient with their clinical information in their native language. If staff deemed competent in the patient's native language is unavailable, employees are to use the Interpretation Service provided at their location.
- Failure to adhere to the guidelines described within this policy may subject the employee to corrective disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

SUPPORTING/REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION:

N/A

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ASSOCIATED FORMS:

- Diversity Resources Website - Lists of Competent Interpreters/Translators
- BHSF Administrative Policies – Human Resources
    - 5250 Employee Conduct
    - 5300 Corrective Action

ENFORCEMENT & SANCTIONS:

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to an including termination of employment.