



Employee Handbook
Effective November 1, 2024

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SOUTHCOAST HEALTH EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION TO SOUTHCOAST HEALTH

Welcome

Welcome to SouthCoast Health (or “SouthCoast”). We are a multi-specialty group with over 100 providers throughout the greater Savannah area.

Our mission is to provide compassionate, quality and cost-conscious healthcare to every patient.

The key to our success lies in giving patients excellent service in a professional environment. This mission can only be accomplished through employees that are committed to this goal.

We are glad that you have joined SouthCoast Health and we look forward to working with you.

John Marrero
CEO

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT

* * * * *

This employee handbook is designed to acquaint you with SouthCoast and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read and understand all provisions of the handbook. It describes your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by SouthCoast to benefit you.

This handbook is merely a guideline and does not constitute a contract of employment, nor does it change the employment-at-will policy permitting you or SouthCoast to end our relationship for any reason, at any time. No employee or SouthCoast representative, except for the Board of Managers, has the authority to bind SouthCoast to any employment contract with any employee, either verbally or in writing. Nothing in this handbook guarantees you any specific terms, conditions, or length of employment.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policies. SouthCoast reserves the right, should the need arise, to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portions of the handbook from time to time, as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. However, no future revision or modification of this handbook will change the employment-at-will relationship. You will be notified of such changes to policies and the handbook from time to time.

Purpose of Handbook

This handbook is intended for informational purposes and contains a general outline of SouthCoast's policies, practices, and procedures. Individual departments may have established departmental policies and procedures necessary for their specific operational needs. Please refer to your department's Policy and Procedure manual for a detailed listing of these departmental specific policies.

The purposes of this handbook are:

- To provide management with the information necessary to fulfill its responsibilities to its employees;
- To provide for consistency and equity in the treatment of employees; and
- To provide employees with information regarding the policies and procedures that pertain to their employment.

It is expected that managers will become familiar with the contents of this handbook so that they will be able to answer employee questions as they arise and apply the appropriate policies and procedures, as the occasion requires. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that the employees that work for them are informed of these policies and procedures, understand them and abide by them. Questions about application, interpretation, or clarification regarding any specific policies or procedures are to be directed to your supervisor or to the Director of Human Resources.

Employment Definitions

Full Time Employees: Employees who consistently work 32 hours or more per week on a year-round basis. Employees in this classification are entitled to company benefits. Benefit eligibility will be in accordance with provisions stated in the Plan.

Part Time Employees: Employees who consistently work less than 32 hours per week on a year-round basis. Employees in this classification are not entitled to company benefits. Under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) health benefits will be offered to employees that work a minimum of 30 hours per week on a consistent basis for at least 12 months.

Full Time Non-Exempt Employees: Non-exempt employees are employees whose positions are subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"). It is not permissible under the FLSA provisions for a non-exempt employee to work any hours for which they are not compensated. These employees will be paid overtime pay at a rate of time and one-half their regular rate for hours worked in excess of 40 per week. Management reserves the right to prohibit overtime.

Full Time Exempt Employees: Exempt employees are those exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA under one of the approved categories for executive, administrative, learned professions or computer professionals.

Initial Employment Period: All newly hired employees of SouthCoast Health will be required to successfully complete an initial ninety (90) day evaluation period. At or near the conclusion of this initial evaluation period, a performance review will be conducted before a decision is made whether to continue the new hire's employment. At that time, if the employee's performance indicates further training is needed, the evaluation period may be extended for a maximum of sixty (60) additional days and a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) may be issued at SouthCoast's option.

Employees who are reassigned to a different job (including promoted/demoted/transferred) will be subject to the same initial evaluation period in their new job. Employment will continue to remain at-will.

Transfers: Newly hired full or part time employees who have not successfully completed the ninety (90) day initial employment period may not be considered for transfer. Newly hired PRN employees are eligible to transfer within the first ninety (90) days. Employees who have received a written disciplinary action or PIP within the past three (3) months are not eligible for transfer. No employee may be considered for a transfer without (i) applying for an open position and (ii) advising his/her current supervisor of the desire to transfer. A successful internal candidate selected for a position must provide a two (2) to four (4) week notice from date of selection.

Both department managers will communicate with one another upon (i) employee expresses an interest to interview with another department or (ii) a manager is interested in recruiting an employee from another department/location.

If an employee is selected for an open position both managers must agree on a transfer date for the employee. The manager losing the employee to a transfer, must work diligently to have the position backfilled in a timely manner. In the event an agreed upon date cannot be reached, HR will intervene with a decision.

Reinstatement: An employee who terminated employment and is re-employed within a six (6) month period will have their original hire date restored and length of service credit will be given. A full-time employee that returns to full time status within 30 days from termination or change of employment status will have their insurance benefits, vacation, holiday and sick time reinstated on the first day or rehire. Per the ACA, a full-time employee who returns in less than 13 weeks will be treated as a continuing employee for health insurance purposes and will be allowed to resume the stability period as if they had not left.

A full-time employee that returns after 30 days but prior to six (6) months will have, upon rehire or change of employment status, a 60-day waiting period for insurance benefits (other than health, if they return in less than 13 weeks) and a 90-day waiting period for vacation, holiday and sick time to become effective. After the completion of the waiting period, vacation and sick time will accrue at the rate based upon original hire date.

Rehire: An employee who terminated their employment and is rehired at any time after a six (6) month break in service will have a new service date. No credit will be given for previous service. This candidate will be expected to successfully complete all background screenings.

EMPLOYMENT

Equal Employment Opportunity

Equal Employment Opportunity has been, and will continue to be, a fundamental principle at SouthCoast Health, where employment is based upon personal capabilities and qualifications without discrimination because of sex, pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, genetics, religion, creed, national origin, age, disability, military, veteran, or disabled veteran status, veteran of the Vietnam Era, or any other protected characteristic established by law.

Equal Employment Opportunity and nondiscrimination will prevail throughout every aspect of the employment relationship, including but not limited to advertisement, recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, demotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, discipline, furlough, layoff, and termination.

The Human Resources Department has overall responsibility for this policy and will assure that SouthCoast's employment practices are in accordance with internal policy and state and federal laws. Employees' questions or concerns should be referred to the Human Resources Department.

Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken against any employee willfully violating this policy.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

It is SouthCoast's policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities and to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants or employees with disabilities in all employment practices. Employment opportunities will not be denied to an otherwise qualified applicant or employee because of the need to make reasonable accommodation to the physical or mental impairment(s) of such individuals.

When a qualified candidate with a disability applies for employment, transfer or promotion, he/she will be interviewed according to SouthCoast policy. If the candidate can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations, the candidate will be given equal consideration for the job along with all other qualified candidates.

The procedures used by SouthCoast to ensure compliance with the ADA are not exclusive of other employment-related inquiries that SouthCoast, in its discretion, may make as permitted or required by local, state or federal law and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Employment-At-Will

Nothing contained in this policy handbook or in any other materials or information distributed by SouthCoast creates a contract of employment between an employee and SouthCoast Health. Employment is on an at-will basis. Employees have the right to terminate their employment at any time for any reason, and SouthCoast retains the same right. No representative or employee of SouthCoast Health, with the exception of the Board of Managers, has the authority to enter into any agreement to the contrary, and then only if such commitment is a signed written document addressed to a specific individual.

Hiring Policy & Procedure

Due to the risks associated with working in a healthcare facility, SouthCoast Health has a policy against hiring any individual less than 18 years of age for full-time positions.

Previous employees who desire re-employment will receive consideration provided they left in good standing as determined by the Human Resources Department and a vacancy exists for which they are qualified.

Policy Regarding Hiring of Relatives

It shall be the policy of SouthCoast Health to consider hiring relatives of employees on the basis of their qualifications and under conditions that promote a fair, harmonious, reputable and productive work environment. Job candidates who are relatives of current employees may not be hired for positions in which they would directly or indirectly report to or supervise that relative. Exception to this policy may be made for special projects, PRN staff, and it must be approved as designated below.

Relative/Family Member: Spouse, parent, step-parent or parent-in-law, in loco parentis, brother, step-brother or brother-in-law, sister, step-sister or sister-in-law, child, stepchild, grandparent, grandchildren, first cousins and any other significant relation defined by senior management.

All job candidates shall be required to indicate whether they have relatives who are employed with SouthCoast Health. If the applicant is a relative of an employee, the supervisor/manager shall be responsible for evaluating any potential conflicts to this policy.

The CEO or Board of Managers must approve conflicts or exceptions for exempt staff and HR will approve for non-exempt staff.

When two employees become related by marriage, and as a result a direct or indirect reporting relationship is created, a reasonable effort will be made to transfer one of the employees. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the employees will be permitted to determine which of them will resign.

Outside Employment

SouthCoast employees may hold outside jobs as long as they can satisfactorily perform their SouthCoast job and there is no interference with our scheduling demands.

All employees will be held to the same standards of performance and scheduling expectations, regardless of any outside job. If we determine that outside work is impacting your performance or the ability to meet our requirements, which may change over time, you will be asked to terminate the outside job in order to stay employed at SouthCoast.

We prohibit outside employment that constitutes a conflict of interest. Further, you may not receive any income or material gain from individuals outside SouthCoast for materials produced or services rendered while performing your job. Questions about this policy should be addressed with the Director of Human Resources or the CEO.

Employment Verification

It is the policy of SouthCoast to validate dates of employment, job title, and last salary amount and if the employee is eligible for rehire. Personal references are prohibited. All calls to verify current or past employment should be referred to the Human Resources Department.

Open Communications

At SouthCoast Health we believe that communication is at the heart of good employee relations. Employees should share their concerns, seek information, provide input, and resolve work-related issues by discussing them with their supervisors until they are fully resolved. It may not be possible to achieve the results an employee wants, but the supervisor needs to attempt to explain in each case why a certain course of action is preferred. If an issue cannot be resolved at this level, the employee is welcome to discuss the issue with the Director of Operations and/or the Director of Human Resources. The supervisor should set up a time for both of them to meet with the Director(s).

If an employee has a concern about discrimination, harassment, bullying and/or violence, SouthCoast has set up special procedures to report and address those issues. The proper reporting procedures are set forth in SouthCoast Health's Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying and Violence Prevention policy.

Personnel Files

In collecting, maintaining, and disclosing personnel information, SouthCoast Health makes every effort to protect employees' privacy rights and interests and prevent inappropriate or unnecessary disclosures of information from any worker's file or record. While complying with its governmental reporting and recordkeeping requirements, SouthCoast strives to ensure that it handles all personal and job-related information about employees in a secure, confidential, and appropriate fashion.

SouthCoast collects and retains only such personal information as it needs to effectively conduct business and administer its employment and benefit programs. Wherever possible, SouthCoast notifies affected employees if it needs additional personal information and gives these employees an opportunity to supply the requested data. To ensure that personnel files are up-to-date and contain accurate, complete information, employees are asked to notify their supervisor or the Human Resource department of any changes such as address, phone number (emergency contact #'s also), and email address. Employees may log onto Sage Employee Self Service (ESS) and make these types of changes themselves. Further, all employees should inform SouthCoast of any additional certification or training the employees receive, whether issued by SouthCoast or some other entity.

All employee electronic records that are stored online are secured by the Information Technology (IT) Department in which they have given rights only to the human resources staff to access such records. All paper-based documents relating to the personnel record system are kept in secure, locked files in the Human Resource department. These files are accessible only to authorized Human Resource department staffers and executives, managers, and supervisors who have a valid, demonstrable need to obtain specific information from an employee's personnel file. When information from an employee's personnel file is to be released or disclosed within the organization, SouthCoast will notify the employee of such a disclosure if the Human Resource department views the disclosure as possibly intruding on the employee's privacy. However, routine or ordinary employment procedures, including, but not limited to, performance appraisals, merit increase reviews, promotion and transfer consideration, and disciplinary investigations, normally are not subject to this notification procedure.

Review of Personnel Files

Employees also are granted access to their personnel files; however, no materials are to be removed or copied from the file by the employee except as specifically authorized by Management. SouthCoast reserves the right to remove certain sensitive documents, including letters of reference and management planning documents such as succession or promotion plans before granting review of the file. To prevent abuses of this access privilege, SouthCoast also reserves the right to limit the number of times an employee can access his or her file during a 12-month period. Employees who are interested in reviewing the contents of their personnel file should contact the Human Resource Department and provide at least two days' notice of their desire to schedule a mutually convenient time for an appointment. Personnel files are property of SouthCoast Health and will remain at SouthCoast as part of the permanent records.

The Human Resource Department makes copies of specific information requested in writing to those individuals or agencies, only as specifically authorized by the SouthCoast management, who have a demonstrable need to review it. SouthCoast Health ordinarily honors subpoenas demanding production of information with respect to any employee, but usually advises an employee of the subpoena and nature of the information requested, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

Medical Information

All medical information relating to an employee is kept in the separate Medical Records System files maintained by the Human Resource Department. Access to these medical files is tightly controlled. Ordinarily, medical information about an employee is supplied only to the worker's designated physician in accordance with the worker's written specific request, unless it is workers' compensation records, which are supplied to the contracted carrier and physician.

Employment Background Checks

SouthCoast Health has established the following guidelines to provide consistency in the selection process, according to applicable federal and state laws. We believe that hiring qualified individuals to fill positions contributes to the overall strategic success of SouthCoast Health. Background checks are an important part of the selection process. This type of information is collected as a means of promoting a safe work environment for current and future employees. Background checks also help obtain additional applicant related information that helps determine the applicant's overall employability, ensuring the protection of current people, property, and information of the organization.

Human Resources will have the responsibility of obtaining all background check information and will ensure that information collected is in compliance with federal and state laws. SouthCoast Health will use a third-party agency to conduct some background checks. In conducting its background checks, SouthCoast will comply with all requirements of the Fair Credit Reporting Act ("FCRA") and applicable state laws.

Office of Inspector General for Excluded Personnel (All Staff)

Any applicant listed on this website will not be considered a candidate for employment.

Georgia Board of License Verification

Failure to obtain proof of a valid Georgia state licensure or Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (NP, PA, RN, LPN, PT, PTA) will result in failure to successfully complete the employment background check process. The contingent job offer for a licensed position will be rescinded by Human Resources.

Only appropriate Human Resource personnel will have access to this information.

Immigration Law Compliance

It is Company policy, as mandated by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, as amended, that all new employees show proof of identity and eligibility for employment and can be terminated for falsification or failing to provide the necessary documents within three (3) business days of employment. SouthCoast uses the federal E-Verify program to validate a new employee's identity and eligibility to work in the United States.

COMPENSATION

Timekeeping

All nonexempt employees are required to clock in when beginning their scheduled shift, clock out for any scheduled breaks, and when the shift ends.

Employees are instructed not to clock in prior to their scheduled start time and employees must clock out at the end of scheduled shift. Employees are expected to adhere to their scheduled shift unless they receive approval from their manager to continue to work.

All individual employee payroll information is confidential, and is protected by the confidentiality agreement. Falsification of time, entering time on behalf of any other employee, or instructing an employee to enter time on your behalf is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Attendance and Punctuality

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential responsibility of an employee of SouthCoast. Excessive absenteeism is defined as absence from work on more than two (2) separate occurrences within a thirty (30) day period, provided the employee is not on approved FMLA or leave of absence. A pattern of absences will be disciplined according to the Progressive Discipline Policy.

An employee who clocks in past their scheduled start time will be considered tardy. A pattern of tardiness (2 or more times within 30 days) is considered excessive and will be disciplined according to the Progressive Discipline Policy.

Excessive missing punches to a timecard is defined as more than 2 missing punches per pay period. A pattern of missing punches will be disciplined according to the Progressive Discipline Policy.

Time Verification

All employees are encouraged to carefully review their time sheet and/or paycheck to ensure that she/he has been paid for all hours worked. If the paycheck or time sheet does not accurately reflect working time, inform the Payroll Department immediately.

Payroll

It is the policy of SouthCoast Health to establish the guidelines necessary to prepare, process, and distribute pay in an efficient and timely manner. SouthCoast will process payroll according to all pertinent federal/state laws.

SouthCoast Health processes payroll for all employees on a biweekly cycle. This cycle starts on Monday and ends two weeks later on Sunday. Pay day is on the Friday following the end of the pay cycle. Pay checks may be viewed and/or printed through the employee portal-Employee Self Service on SouthCoast Health website. The most current pay detail may be viewed on Thursday after 5 p.m. If the payday falls on a company holiday, the payday will occur on the day prior to the holiday.

SouthCoast has the ability to automatically deposit the employee's paycheck into his/her bank account. Please note Direct Deposit may take one additional day to process into an account. If direct deposit is desired, the employee must sign a Direct Deposit Authorization form (Form #HR106) and attach a voided check or information from the banking institution that includes the account and routing number. If the employee is unable to open a bank account, payroll will issue a pay card. The employee's payroll will then be Direct Deposited onto the pay card.

SouthCoast will comply with all federal and state laws pertaining to garnishments.

Overtime

There may be times when SouthCoast cannot meet its requirements or other needs during regular working hours. If this happens, we may schedule employees to work overtime hours. When possible, we will try to let you know in advance of a mandatory overtime assignment.

It is our policy that no overtime can be worked without the approval and authorization of the supervisor. We try to distribute overtime assignments fairly among all employees who are qualified to perform the required work.

All nonexempt (hourly) employees will be paid overtime compensation in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. For this reason, time off for sick leave, vacation, holiday, and other paid or unpaid leaves of absence is not considered hours worked for the purpose of calculating overtime pay.

Nonexempt (hourly) employees are not to work off the clock at any time; it against federal law and Company policy. If tasks are unable to be completed and overtime may be anticipated, the employee must get approval before working overtime hours. Management reserves the right to prohibit overtime hours. If you work overtime without receiving your supervisor's prior authorization, you may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

Merit Pay Increases

The Board of Managers each year may designate a percentage of the annual budget to be used for merit pay. The Board of Managers reserves the right to either approve or disapprove such increases or to delay them in any given year based on the financial condition of the organization. Promotional pay increases will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

PAID LEAVE

Paid Vacation Policy

The SouthCoast Health's Paid Vacation plan provides for the accrual of a specified amount of time each year that an employee may be absent from his/her job and still receive his/her regular rate of pay. An employee's paid vacation may be used for vacation, personal business or emergencies, illness of a family member, and religious observances which requires the employee to be absent from the job.

This does not include bereavement leave, jury duty, or holiday pay, or furlough. Requests for the use of Paid Vacation will be approved consistent with the operational needs of the department.

Eligibility: All full-time employees who have completed ninety (90) days of service are eligible for Paid Vacation.

Rate of Pay: Vacation is paid at one (1) time the employee's regular rate of pay.

POLICY:

Paid Vacation is accrued each pay period after satisfactorily completing the 90-day initial evaluation period. The maximum accrual is calculated on all hours paid, excluding overtime hours, and based upon the employee's length of service. Accrued vacation hours must be used in the following year or forfeited.

The maximum number of hours that can be carried forward will be the maximum hours accrued during anniversary year. All excess hours will be forfeited.

The schedule below shows the annual hours and days accumulated by a full-time employee:

Year	Maximum full- time PTO Hours Annually	Full-time PTO Days Annually	Carryover hours allowed at each anniversary
0 through 5 years	80	10	80
5 years 1 hour through 10	120	15	120
10 years 1 hour and above	160	20	160

Utilization: All Paid Vacation must be accrued prior to being used and cannot be advanced. Paid Vacation will be used in not less than fifteen (15) minute or twenty-five hundredths (0.25) of an hour increments. If an employee's normal workday is eight (8) hours and a day of vacation is requested, they will be deducted eight (8) hours from their accrual bank.

When an employee exhausts available Sick Time due to reasons stated in the Sick Time policy, available Vacation Time will be used.

If a holiday falls during scheduled vacation, the employee is entitled to an additional vacation day off. This may be taken to extend the vacation or as a separate day off depending on the needs of the department.

The use of all Paid Vacation, except for personal emergencies, must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor/manager. As a general rule, an electronic request for Paid Vacation should be initiated no less than two (2) weeks prior to the date requested. Except for personal emergencies, all Paid Vacation requests will be considered based upon the needs of the department, the employee's current job performance, absenteeism pattern, and length of service with the department. During low business demands, a manager may direct the employee to clock out and go home. Upon such occurrence, employee may use paid vacation in lieu of unpaid time off.

Employees are responsible for requesting and reporting their Paid Vacation through the time and attendance software system. Refer to the Reporting of Absence section at the end of this policy.

Unpaid Vacation: An employee may request unpaid time off; however, an employee must use accrued paid time off first. The request will be reviewed by the manager and based upon the department/location's business needs and adequate staffing, time off may be denied. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Donation of vacation hours: Employees may donate vacation hours to other full time or part time staff members that have either exhausted all their paid time off or do not have any benefits while they are on approved FMLA, Leave of Absence, or Bereavement. Participation by an employee as a donor is strictly voluntary. There shall be no solicitation of donations either by an employee or on behalf of an employee who needs assistance.

A donor must maintain a balance of forty (40) hours in his/her account and only hours in excess of 40 are eligible for donation.

Donated vacation hours will be given to the recipient at the dollar value of the donor's vacation hours being donated. The dollar value of this donation is then divided by the recipient's current hourly rate to determine the number of hours to be paid to the recipient. All taxes will be the responsibility of the recipient. Recipients may not receive pay for more than 100% of their regularly scheduled hours per pay period as their base rate (overtime will not be included).

Donated vacation hours will be paid in the regular payroll cycle. Staff may not donate sick, bereavement, or emergency pay. The department/provider from whom the hours are being donated must approve and sign the hours of transfer on the Vacation Time Donation Form (Form #HR130).

Transfers

Full Time to Part Time: When a full-time employee is transferred to a part time or PRN position within SouthCoast, the employee may use the earned vacation hours, but will cease to accrue vacation time from the transfer date forward.

Part Time, Temp, or PRN to Full Time: When an employee becomes full time, he/she is eligible for paid time off benefits after completing ninety (90) days of service in his/her full-time status.

Reinstatement: An employee who terminated employment and is re-employed within a six (6) month period will have their original hire date restored and length of service credit will be given. A full-time employee that returns to full time status within 30 days from termination or change of employment status will have their insurance benefits, vacation, holiday, and sick time reinstated on the first day of rehire.

Per the ACA, a full-time employee who returns in less than 13 weeks will be treated as a continuing employee for health insurance purposes and will be allowed to resume the stability period as if they had not left.

A full-time employee that returns *after* 30 days but prior to six (6) months will have, upon rehire or change of employment status, a 60-day waiting period for insurance benefits (other than health, if they return in less than 13 weeks) and a 90-day waiting period for vacation, holiday and sick time to become effective. After the completion of the waiting period, vacation and sick time will accrue at the rate based upon original hire date.

Cash Conversion Option: Cash conversion will be on a case-by-case basis as determined by the CEO. If patient volume and workload is such that vacation cannot be taken, this may result in a cash conversion.

Termination of Employment:

Unused Leave: Upon notification of termination of employment, neither vacation nor sick leave will be approved and all unused vacation and sick leave will be forfeited. A manager reserves the right to rescind or withdrawal prior approved vacation hours when an employee hands in their resignation notice and wishes to use vacation hours during the last two (2) weeks (non-exempt employee) or four (4) weeks (exempt employee) of employment.

Prior Service Credit: All employees who join SouthCoast Health due to a practice being acquired will be given length of service credit in regards to Paid Vacation.

Paid Sick Time Off (PSTO)

SouthCoast Health's Paid Sick Time Off (PSTO) plan provides for a specified amount of time that an employee may be absent from his/her job due to illness or injury each year and still receive his/her regular rate of pay. PSTO is available for absences from scheduled work due to the illness, injury or a doctor's appointment of an employee, spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, in loco parentis or while on approved FMLA. Employees must use available sick time when absent for the above reasons. If an employee has exhausted sick time hours, available vacation hours will be paid when an employee is absent due to any of the above reasons.

Employees may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Progressive Discipline Policy if they (i) exceed the number of allowed sick hours per year, (ii) do not provide a doctor's note for absences greater than two (2) consecutive days, or (iii) not on an approved Family Medical Leave or Personal Leave of Absence.

Eligibility: All full-time employees who have successfully completed their ninety (90) day initial employment period are eligible for PSTO.

Rate of Pay: Sick Time is paid at one (1) time the regular hourly rate.

Policy- Date of Hire to End of Year: Upon successful completion of the ninety (90) day initial employment period, the employee will be awarded a maximum of thirty-two (32) hours of paid sick time to be used during year. This will be prorated on a calendar year basis as shown below.

<u>Month Hired In Current Year:</u>	<u>PSTO Hours for Current Calendar Year:</u>	<u>PSTO Hours for Next Calendar Year:</u>
January	32	48
February	29.25	48
March	26.75	48
April	24	48
May	21.25	48
June	18.75	48
July	16	48
August	13.25	48
September	10.75	48
October	0 until completion of 90 days	32 awarded in Jan
November	0 until completion of 90 days	32 awarded in Feb
December	0 until completion of 90 days	32 awarded in Mar

At the end of the calendar year any unused PSTO may not be carried over to the following calendar year but will be paid out to the employee at the rate of fifty (50%) percent of the balance of Paid Sick Time. This will be paid at the employee’s rate of pay as of December 31st and will be subject to any applicable payroll taxes. Unused PSTO is not payable upon separation from SouthCoast Health.

Policy - 1st Day of Next Calendar Year: On the first day of the next calendar year and each year thereafter, employees who were hired in January to September of the previous year will receive 48 hours of PSTO. Any unused PSTO from the prior year will be reduced to zero. Employees hired in October, November, December, of the previous year, upon completion of the ninety (90) day Initial Employment Period will receive a prorated portion of PSTO as outlined above.

Utilization: 1) To receive PSTO for an illness or injury of greater than two consecutive days, employee must provide a physician’s note. 2) Employees are responsible for reporting their sick time through the time and attendance software system. Refer to the Reporting of Absences section below. 3) PSTO will be used in not less than fifteen (15) minute or twenty-five hundredths (0.25) of an hour increments.

Accumulation: PSTO is not an accumulated benefit.

Transfers

Full Time to Part Time: When a full-time employee is transferred to a part time or PRN position within SouthCoast, the employee will forfeit any unused PSTO.

Part Time, Temp, or PRN to Full Time: When an employee becomes full time, he/she is eligible for paid time off benefits after completing ninety (90) days of service in his/her full-time status. The employee will be awarded sick time according to the table above, using the date of transfer to full time status, as the “month hired”.

Reinstatement: An employee who terminated employment and is re-employed within a six (6) month period will have their original hire date restored and length of service credit will be given. A full-time employee that returns to full time status within 30 days from termination or change of employment status will have their insurance benefits, vacation, holiday and sick time reinstated on the first day of rehire. Per the ACA, a full-time employee who returns in less than 13 weeks will be treated as a continuing employee for health insurance purposes and will be allowed to resume the stability period as if they had not left.

A full-time employee that returns *after* 30 days but prior to six (6) months will have, upon rehire or change of employment status, a 60-day waiting period for insurance benefits (other than health, if they return in less than 13 weeks) and a 90-day waiting period for vacation, holiday and sick time to become effective. After the completion of the waiting period, vacation and sick time will accrue at the rate based upon original hire date.

Cash Conversion Option: At the end of the calendar year any unused PSTO may not be carried over to the following calendar year but will be paid out to the current employee at the rate of fifty (50) percent of the balance of Paid Sick Time. This will be paid at the employee’s current rate of pay and will be subject to any applicable payroll taxes. Unused PSTO is not payable upon separation from SouthCoast Health.

Termination of Employment:

Upon notification of termination of employment, sick time will not be approved and all unused sick time will be forfeited.

Holidays

SouthCoast recognizes the following holidays for pay:

- New Year’s Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

If a provider elects to take an unrecognized holiday off and closes his/her schedule for patient visits, the office will not be considered closed and will remain open for business. Staff may be reassigned to another workstation.

Eligibility: Upon successful completion of the 90-day Initial Employment Period, all full-time employees are eligible for Holiday Pay.

Employees must work their scheduled day before **and** after the holiday in order to be eligible to receive holiday pay, unless on pre-approved time off. A holiday that occurs during a vacation is an exception to this requirement. An appeals process will be available to those who can demonstrate their unapproved absence was caused by a medical emergency. Medical emergencies must have supporting documentation and approval will be on a case-by-case basis. If a holiday falls on a Saturday the holiday will be observed on Friday and if the holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on Monday.

Rate of Pay: Holiday Pay is paid at one (1) time the employee's regular hourly rate.

Jury Duty

SouthCoast recognizes the importance of an employee's civic duty to serve on a jury. Upon receiving a summons for jury duty, the employee must notify his/her supervisor immediately.

Eligibility: All full-time employees who have successfully completed their ninety (90) day Initial Employment Period are eligible for Jury Duty Pay.

Rate of Pay: Jury Duty is paid at one (1) time the employee's regular hourly rate.

Procedure: A copy of the summons for jury duty must be provided to the supervisor. Upon receipt of verification of jury service from the court, SouthCoast Health will pay an employee his/her daily regular earnings for a maximum period of three (3) days. A Request for Time Off Form (Form # HR109), with the verification from the court attached, must be completed in order to receive Jury Duty Pay. If court verification of length of time served is not received, the employee will not be paid for jury duty.

If an employee is required to serve longer than three (3) days, the employee may choose to use his/her paid vacation or to go unpaid. For extended jury duty, refer to Personal Leave Policy.

When an employee serves one-half (1/2) day or less of jury duty, the employee must return to work on that day. When completion of jury duty is 2:00 PM or later, SouthCoast will consider jury duty served as a full day. Paid leave for jury duty will not be paid in less than fifteen (15) minute or twenty-five hundredths (0.25) of an hour increments.

It is the responsibility of the employee to keep the supervisor advised daily of his/her jury duty schedule and availability to work regularly scheduled hours.

Witness Duty

When an employee is required to appear as a witness in court on behalf of SouthCoast as it relates to the employee's performance on the job, time off *with pay* will be granted.

When an employee is required to appear as a witness in court not involving SouthCoast, *unpaid* time off will be granted. The employee must provide notification to appear in order for the absence to be granted. The employee may use Paid Vacation as available.

Refer to the Reporting of Absence section below.

Voting Leave

SouthCoast will grant a maximum of two (2) hours paid leave time to any employee scheduled to work on a day of a local, state, or federal election in which the employee desires to vote.

Eligibility: An employee will not be entitled to voting leave if the employee's scheduled shift begins at least two (2) hours later than, or ends at least two (2) hours earlier than the poll closes.

Notice: All employees are expected to provide, where possible, two (2) days advance notice of his or her intent to take leave to vote.

Bereavement

SouthCoast recognizes that death in the immediate family necessitates absence, by the employee, from scheduled work hours.

Eligibility: Full and part time employees who have successfully completed the ninety (90) day initial employment period are eligible. See below for full time or part time employee benefits.

Rate of Pay: Bereavement is paid at one (1) time the employee's regular hourly rate.

Full Time Employees: In the event of death of a Family Member, full time employees, (who consistently work 32 hours or more per week) will be granted up to three (3) days absence from scheduled duty with pay. In the event of death of Other Relative, full time employees will be granted one (1) day of absence from scheduled duty with pay. In the event that travel is required further than 200 miles one way to attend the service, the employee may be granted two (2) additional days without pay for travel. If Bereavement pay has been exhausted, per occurrence, a full-time employee may take up to three (3) days of Sick Time if available and then may use vacation time if needed. SouthCoast will work in good faith with the employee to allow additional time off for funeral and final arrangements.

Part Time Employees: In the event of death of a Family Member, part time employees (who consistently work less than 32 hours per week) may be excused from work for up to three (3) days without pay. In the event of death of Other Relative, Part Time employees will be granted one (1) day of absence from scheduled duty without pay.

Definition of Family Member: For this purpose, immediate family includes spouse, parent or stepparent, in loco parentis, brother or stepbrother, sister or stepsister, child or stepchild.

Death of Other Relative: For this purpose, "other relatives" includes grandparent or step grandparent, grandchild or step grandchild, parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law.

Death of Non-Family Member: Death of non-family member will be handled in accordance with SouthCoast Health Time Off Policy.

Reporting Bereavement to Payroll: The Supervisor will report bereavement to payroll and attach supporting documentation (i.e. memorial service bulletin, obituary) to the employee's Request for Time Off Form (Form HR#109). Bereavement pay will not be paid in less than fifteen (15) minute or twenty-five hundredths (0.25) of an hour increments. Refer to the Reporting of Absence section below.

Emergency Disaster Pay

It is the policy of SouthCoast Health, to allow full time staff to earn up to a maximum of 40 hours (5 days) to use during a natural disaster (i.e. tornado, hurricane, fire, flood, earthquake) that is declared by the President of SouthCoast for one or more locations affected or by the President of the United States if the Savannah area is affected.

Eligibility: All employees who have been full time for a minimum of ninety (90) days are eligible for Emergency Disaster Pay on their anniversary date.

Rate of Pay: Emergency Disaster Pay is paid at one (1) time the employee's regular hourly rate.

Procedure:

Non-Exempt (Hourly) Employees- Full time employees will earn up to 8 hours of emergency pay each year on their anniversary date beginning January 1, 2018, up to a maximum of 40 hours to use during a declared natural disaster. In the course of a natural disaster in which the company must be closed, full time employees may use time from their emergency pay bank to cover the hours or days the company is closed. Example: If the company is closed for two (2) days, full time employees may use up to 16 hours of their emergency pay. If an employee uses hours for emergency pay from a previous natural disaster, they will continue to earn 8 hours toward the maximum of 40 hours of their emergency pay bank each anniversary date. If a full-time employee does not have enough hours to cover the full business closing, they may use their vacation or sick time to make up for any hours lost.

Exempt (Salary) Employees- Exempt employees will earn up to 8 hours of emergency pay each year on their anniversary date beginning January 1, 2018, up to a maximum of 40 hours to use during a declared natural disaster.

The Leadership Team and Team A (practice managers, IT staff, maintenance, and designated staff) may be asked to work during the natural disaster for planning and re-entry purposes and continuity of patient care. These hours will be considered normal work hours and not be used toward the emergency pay bank. Hours outside of work hours may be used from the emergency bank. If a team member does not have enough emergency bank hours, they may use vacation or sick time.

Emergency Pay may not be used for vacation, sick, bereavement, jury duty, nor donated to another employee to use. This is strictly to be used during a declared disaster of a location due to Mother Nature or the Savannah area has been declared a natural disaster.

It will be the manager's and employee's responsibility to communicate with each other on how many hours the employee wishes to be paid during the company closure. The manager will then enter the hours into the time and attendance software system.

Termination of Employment:

Upon notification of termination of employment, hours that are in the emergency pay bank will be forfeited.

Reporting of Absences Procedure

All of the above are considered absences or time away from work. All absences will be requested/reported electronically or on a Request for Time Off Form (Form #HR109) and given to the supervisor to be turned in with payroll.

Scheduled Absence with Notice - Vacation, Jury Duty, Bereavement, and Non-Emergent Sick Time Appointments: As a general rule, all requests for scheduled absences should be made electronically with as much notice as possible, and with the exception of bereavement should be requested no less than two (2) weeks prior to the date requested. Vacation requests will be considered based upon the needs of the department, and the employee's current job performance, absenteeism pattern, and length of service with the department. Jury duty will be granted based on a copy of the jury summons. Bereavement must have supporting documents to be approved time off. Employee must complete a Request for Time Off Form (Form HR#109) and obtain supervisor's approval prior to absence.

Unscheduled Absence - Sick: All employees will notify their supervisor by phone of their impending absence, at least two hours in advance of their scheduled start time. Upon making an initial effort in reaching the supervisor by phone, an employee may leave a voicemail. However, an employee must, in good faith, attempt to reach the supervisor by phone. Sending a text message, telling a coworker, having a spouse, parent or friend call in, does not qualify as notification to the supervisor. An employee must notify the supervisor each day, he/she will be absent from work. If an employee fails to notify their supervisor, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Progressive Discipline Policy. When notification is not possible due to an emergency, the supervisor will request validation of emergency.

Excessive absenteeism is defined as absence from work on more than two (2) separate occurrences within a thirty (30) day period, provided the employee is not on approved leave of absence or FMLA. A pattern of absences will be disciplined according to the Progressive Discipline Policy.

UNPAID LEAVE

FMLA

The Family Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) requires covered employers to provide up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees in a 12-month period upon the occurrence of a qualifying event. Employees returning from leave are guaranteed reinstatement to their prior position or an equivalent position.

Twelve-Month Period: A rolling twelve (12) month period measured backward from the date employee uses any FMLA leave.

Eligibility: SouthCoast employees are eligible for FMLA leave if they:

- Have worked for SouthCoast for at least twelve (12) months (the months need not be consecutive);
- And have worked at least one thousand two hundred and fifty (1,250) hours in the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the date of qualified leave; or would have worked at least 1,250 hours within the preceding twelve months but for leave due to USERRA-covered military service;
- And work at a location that has at least 50 employees within seventy-five (75) miles;
- And are taking the leave for a qualifying reason.

Upon completion of the twelve (12) week FMLA leave, you will be restored to your same or an equivalent position. After twelve (12) weeks, the FMLA provision regarding job restoration does not apply. SouthCoast Health does not guarantee job restoration beyond that which is required by the FMLA.

Key Employees: SouthCoast may deny equivalent restoration to key employees who are salaried and are among the highest paid 10% of the employees.

Qualifying Reasons for Leave: You may take FMLA leave for any of the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth
- Prior to court ordered placement of dependent to attend counseling sessions, appear in court, consult with his or her attorney or the birth parent’s representative, submit to a physical examination, or travel to another country to complete an adoption before the actual date of placement
- To care for your child after birth or upon placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care;
- To care for your spouse, son, daughter, or parent (see “Covered Relation” section) with a serious health condition (see “Definition of Serious Health Condition” section);
- Due to your own serious health condition which renders you unable to perform the functions of your position; or

- Because of a need for qualifying exigency leave due to:
 - short notice deployment;
 - military events and related activities;
 - childcare and school activities;
 - financial and legal arrangements;
 - counseling;
 - rest and recuperation (up to 15 calendar days);
 - post-deployment activities;
 - parental care;

arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on covered active duty (or has been notified of an impending call to order to active duty) in the National Guard, Reserves or the Regular Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation or deployment to a foreign country.

- To care for a parent, child, spouse, or next of kin who is a Covered Service Member or a Covered Veteran undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, or is on outpatient status or the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness.

Covered Relation:

Spouse: Partner through legal marriage.

Son or Daughter: Biological, adopted, foster or stepchild (or legal ward) who is under eighteen (18) years old. Children over eighteen (18) years old who are incapable of self-care because of physical or mental disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), are also included.

Parent: Biological parent or person who stood in the position of parent when you were a child, but does not include your parents-in-law.

Covered Service Member: A member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty, or had an illness or injury that existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty, that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness.

Covered Veteran: A veteran of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated by the member in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces, and is:

- A continuation of a serious injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated when the covered veteran was a member of the Armed Forces and rendered the servicemember unable to perform the duties of the servicemember's office, grade, rank or rating; OR
- A physical or mental condition for which the covered veteran has received a VA Service Related Disability Rating (VASRD) of 50 percent or greater and such VASRD rating is based, in whole or in part, on the condition precipitating the need for caregiver leave; OR

- A physical or mental condition that substantially impairs the veteran's ability to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation by reason of a disability or disabilities related to military service or would do so absent treatment; OR
- An injury, including a psychological injury, on the basis of which the covered veteran has been enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Military Caregiver Leave: An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (nearest blood relative) of a covered service member or covered veteran shall be entitled to a total of 26 workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for the service member for up to five years after a veteran leaves service if he or she develops a service-related injury or illness incurred or aggravated while on active duty.

Definition of Serious Health Condition: An eligible employee may take leave due to the following, in relation to themselves or a covered relation as follows:

- An illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or
- Continuing treatment* by a healthcare provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities
- *Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Time Restraints: Leave to care for a newborn child or due to a court ordered placement of a dependent in your home must conclude within twelve (12) months of the birth or placement. Spouses who both work for SouthCoast may both request leave because of the birth or adoption of a child, initial placement of a foster child or to care for a child with a serious health condition. Their combined leave may not exceed twelve (12) weeks during any twelve (12) month period. Spouses taking Service Member Leave may not take a combined leave which exceeds 26 weeks within a single 12-month period.

FMLA regulations state, in part:

An eligible employee may use intermittent or reduced schedule leave after the birth or court ordered placement of a dependent to bond with that child only if the employer agrees. If the employer agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the child, the employer may require the employee to transfer temporarily, during the period the intermittent or reduced leave schedule is required, to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position. The employer's agreement is not required for intermittent leave required by the serious health condition of the mother or child.

Effective March 1, 2012, SouthCoast Health, after first considering the needs of the business, will allow employees to take intermittent or reduced schedule leave to bond with a newborn or newly placed dependent as long as the employee and their manager have planned the schedule in advance of the commencement of this leave. If the employee currently works in a position that allows them to work from home, the intermittent leave may also be conducted, in part, remotely. However, if the employee works in a position that does not allow for telecommuting, then the intermittent leave must be worked on-site. If a manager and employee have agreed upon an intermittent or reduced work schedule leave and the manager has temporarily filled the employee's position; the employee may be asked to work in an equivalent position if they decide to return to work prior to the originally scheduled return date.

When leave is taken to care for a covered service member, covered veteran, spouse, son, daughter, parent, or your own serious health condition, the leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule, when medically necessary. If the employee requests intermittent or reduced-leave status, the employer may temporarily transfer the employee to another position of equivalent pay and benefits to better accommodate the leave. The transferred employee will receive the same pay and benefits and work under the same conditions as if they had not been transferred. This transfer may not take place unless authorized by the Human Resources Department.

Leave is Unpaid: FMLA leave is an unpaid leave. However, in the event that you have any accrued paid time off, SouthCoast will require you to use any accrued paid time off during this leave. Unused Sick Time must be used first prior to the use of available vacation time. The use of paid leave time for unpaid leave time will not extend the twelve (12) week leave period. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the normal paid leave policies, as referenced in the Paid Time Off policy. Leave will be used in not less than fifteen (15) minute or twenty-five hundredths (0.25) of an hour increments.

Notice of Leave: If your need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, you must give SouthCoast at least thirty (30) days prior written notice. If your need for FMLA leave is unforeseeable, you must give SouthCoast notice as soon as possible, generally within two (2) business days after the need for leave becomes known to you and generally must comply with normal call-in procedures. Failure to give the required notice may result in the delay of your leave or may disqualify the leave under the FMLA.

The Human Resources Department will provide you with written notice of the determination of your eligibility for FMLA. Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. The Human Resources department will notify you if the requested leave is not FMLA-protected. If you are not an eligible employee, the Human Resources department will provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Certification: If you request leave because of your own or a covered relation's serious health condition, you and the relevant health care provider must supply appropriate medical certification to SouthCoast. You may obtain Medical Certification forms from the Human Resources Department.

Generally, any required medical certification must be provided to SouthCoast before your leave begins, unless it is impractical to do so, in which case medical certification must be provided within fifteen (15) days of the request.

Failure to provide medical certification in a timely manner may result in the denial or delay of leave. SouthCoast will notify you if your medical certification is deficient or incomplete. You will be provided with seven calendar days in which to cure any deficiencies. Failure to cure deficiencies within the timeframe may result in delay or denial of the leave.

Employees may be required to provide recertification of the need for leave, depending upon the length of the leave requested and any changing circumstances surrounding the leave. When scheduling medical treatments covered by FMLA, you should consult with SouthCoast and make reasonable efforts to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt business operations.

SouthCoast, at its own expense, may require an examination by a second health care provider designated by SouthCoast. If the second health provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, SouthCoast, at its own expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, health care provider to conduct an examination and issue a final and binding opinion.

If leave is for the birth or care of a covered relation, SouthCoast may require you to provide reasonable documentation or a statement of the family relationship. Failure to provide the requested documentation in a timely manner may result in the delay of your leave.

Employees Responsibility While on Leave: If you take FMLA leave for any reason, you must report to the Human Resources Department or your supervisor, at least monthly, on your status and intent to return to work. If the circumstances precipitating the need for FMLA leave change while you are on leave, and such changes are foreseeable, you must promptly (within two (2) business days) notify SouthCoast of those changes.

When the leave is due to your own serious health condition, unless otherwise required by law, SouthCoast will require you to provide, at your own expense, a certificate of fitness to return to work. We may supply a list of essential functions that must be reviewed and considered by the health care provider prior to releasing the employee to return to work.

Medical Benefits: During an approved FMLA leave, SouthCoast will maintain your company sponsored health benefits, as if you continued to be actively employed. If paid leave is substituted for unpaid FMLA leave, SouthCoast will deduct your portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If your leave is unpaid, you must pay your portion of the premium to the Human Resources Department on or before the 26th day of the month prior to the month the premium will cover. Failure to pay your portion of the premium in a timely manner may result in termination of coverage.

If you do not return to work at the end of the leave period, and SouthCoast paid premiums to maintain your group health benefits during your unpaid leave, you will be responsible for reimbursing the total cost of the paid premium(s) to SouthCoast.

Other Benefits: You will be asked to make a written election concerning contributory benefits during your unpaid leave. If you choose to continue benefits, which require an employee contribution, you may be asked to prepay any required premiums within thirty (30) days of the date the payment would normally be due.

Employees who qualify for FMLA do not suffer a loss of service time as a result of the leave. During the unpaid portion of FMLA, vacation time will not accrue, nor will there be pay for holidays, jury duty, or bereavement leave.

Other Rights and Obligations: Employees' rights and obligations under the FMLA are posted in the workplace. If you have any questions, please contact the Human Resources Department.

SouthCoast will not interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of any right provided under the Family Medical Leave Act. Also, SouthCoast will not discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice or because of involvement in any proceeding related to FMLA.

Personal Leave of Absence

SouthCoast Health may grant a Personal Leave of Absence to accommodate personal needs that can only be satisfied through a temporary absence from work. Full Time and Part Time Employees are eligible once the employee has successfully completed the ninety (90) day Initial Employment Period.

A Personal Leave of Absence may be granted for reasons such as family illness, employee illness or surgery, involvement in legal matters, settling family estates, household disasters, family crises, extended jury duty, extended bereavement, etc. to employees who have successfully completed the ninety (90) day Initial Evaluation Period but are not eligible for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or may have exhausted their FMLA.

Personal Leave of Absence may not be used for purposes of seeking or engaging in other employment.

Requests for Personal Leave of Absence will be considered on an individual basis; taking into consideration the reason for the request, the urgency of the request, the ability of the department to provide coverage for the absence, and the employee's length of service and work record. Military leave of absence will be granted in accordance with federal/state regulations. SouthCoast reserves the right to deny any or all requests for Personal Leave of Absence based upon the needs of the business.

*Personal Leave of Absence may be granted once in a rolling twelve (12) month period measured backward from the date employee uses any unpaid leave with a maximum of thirty (30) days.

Leave may be extended beyond thirty (30) days during extenuating circumstances which will be considered on a case-by-case basis, to include but not limited to, business needs and the employee's communication regarding leave. Further documentation may be required before the leave is approved beyond the thirty (30) days. A Personal Leave of Absence may not exceed beyond a total of sixty (60) days.

Leave is unpaid: Personal Leave of Absence is an unpaid leave. However, in the event that you have any accrued paid time off, SouthCoast will require the employee to use any accrued paid time off during this leave. The use of accrued paid time off for unpaid leave time will not extend the thirty (30) day leave period.

Other Benefits: The employee will be asked to make a written election concerning contributory benefits during an unpaid leave. If employee chooses to continue benefits, which require an employee contribution, he/she may be asked to prepay any required premiums within thirty (30) days of the date the payment would normally be due.

Employees granted a Personal Leave of Absence do not suffer a loss of service time as a result of the leave. During the unpaid portion of a Personal Leave of Absence, vacation time will not accrue, and there will be no pay for holidays, jury duty, or bereavement leave.

Employee's Written Request for Leave: The request for a Personal Leave of Absence must be submitted in writing (Form HR110) and must be approved by the employee's supervisor and is subject to final approval by the Human Resources Department. The request must state the reason for the leave, the commencement date and expected date of return. A minimum of thirty (30) days of advance written notice of intent to take Personal Leave of Absence shall be presented to the supervisor when possible.

Return From Personal Leave: Management will make an effort to provide an opportunity for the employee to return to the same position or one of like status and pay, assuming that the employee returns to work on or before the specified date of expiration of the leave, that such a position is available, and that the employee is qualified. There is no guarantee of job restoration unless on Military Leave or FMLA leave. Failure to return from personal leave of absence on the specified date will be considered a voluntary resignation.

Procedure to Report Leave of Absence: Employees may request a Personal Leave of Absence in writing using the Leave of Absence Form (Form #HR110) and obtaining their supervisor/manager's signature and their approval or denial of request. This form is sent to the Human Resources Department and is subject to final approval by the Human Resources Department.

Employee's Responsibility While on Leave: If you take a Personal Leave of Absence for any reason, you must report to the Human Resources Department or your supervisor, at least bi-weekly, on your status and intent to return to work. If the circumstances precipitating the need for LOA change while you are on leave, and such changes are foreseeable, you must promptly (within two (2) business days) notify SouthCoast of those changes.

Medical Benefits: During an approved Personal Leave of Absence, SouthCoast will maintain the employee's company sponsored health/dental benefits, as if the employee continued to be actively employed. If paid leave is substituted for an unpaid personal leave of absence, SouthCoast will deduct the employee's portion of the health/dental plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If the employee's leave is unpaid, the employee must pay his/her portion of the premium to the Human Resource Department on or before the 26th day of the month prior to the month the premium will cover. The employee's failure to pay his/her portion of the premium in a timely manner may result in termination of coverage.

If an employee does not return to work at the end of the leave period, and SouthCoast paid premiums to maintain his/her group health/dental benefits during the unpaid leave, the employee will be responsible for reimbursing the total cost of the paid premium(s) to SouthCoast.

Military Leave

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable.

Leave is Unpaid: The leave will be unpaid. However, employees may use any available paid time off for the absence.

Medical Benefits: Continuation of health insurance benefits is available as required by USERRA based on the length of the leave and subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible.

Other Benefits: Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon the employee's return to active employment.

Returning From Military Leave: Employees on military leave for up to 30 days are required to return to work for the first regularly scheduled shift after the end of service, allowing reasonable travel time. Employees on longer military leave must apply for reinstatement in accordance with USERRA and all applicable state laws.

Employees returning from military leave will be placed in the position they would have attained had they remained continuously employed or a comparable one depending on the length of military service in accordance with USERRA. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service.

Furlough:

A furlough is a temporary unpaid leave of absence in full week increments or reduced hours that could last up to six (6) months during financial emergency caused by a natural disaster, pandemic, or sudden, dramatic and unexpected conditions outside the control of SouthCoast.

Procedure: This is a companywide policy and will apply to full and part time and PRN staff. Employees who hold positions that is determined not essential during the time of a financial emergency to fulfill and support the mission and goals of the company will be considered for furlough. The Leadership team will consult with managers to identify employees who are eligible for consideration for a furlough.

Non-Discrimination: Selection of employees to be furloughed shall be non-discriminatory. Age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other legally protected class, status or characteristic shall not be considered in identifying an employee for a furlough or in implementing a furlough.

General Terms: No employee on a furlough is permitted to work on matters for the Company while on furlough (i.e. logging onto network, checking emails, etc.).

Pay: SouthCoast will reserve the right to require an employee to use accrued vacation time when put on a furlough. Otherwise, the furlough is considered unpaid leave of absence.

Reinstatement: Once the furloughed has ended, affected employees will be usually reinstated to the position held at the time of the furlough. However, a furlough does not prevent SouthCoast from restructuring or reassigning it resources or from taking additional action to support its mission and goals. Reinstatement cannot be guaranteed and reinstatement is not a guarantee that conditions of employment will remain unchanged. The relationship between the employee and the company will remain at-will by Georgia law.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND HEALTH

Substance Abuse Policy Statement

SouthCoast Health is committed to providing a safe, productive, and drug-free work environment and to foster the well-being and health of its employees. That commitment is jeopardized when any SouthCoast Health employee illegally uses drugs on or off the job, comes to work under the influence, possesses, distributes or sells drugs in the workplace, or abuses alcohol on the job. Therefore, SouthCoast Health has established the following policy:

1. It is a violation of company policy for any employee to use, possess, sell, trade, offer for sale, or offer to buy illegal drugs or otherwise engage in the illegal use of drugs on or off the job.
2. It is a violation of company policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or while possessing in his or her body, blood, or urine illegal drugs in any detectable amount.
3. It is a violation of company policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or impaired by alcohol.
4. It is a violation of company policy to consume or possess alcoholic beverages on company premises.
5. It is a violation of SouthCoast policy for any employee to use prescription drugs illegally, i.e., to use prescription drugs that have not been legally obtained or in a manner or for a purpose other than as prescribed. (However, nothing in this policy precludes the appropriate use of legally prescribed medications.)

It is SouthCoast Health's policy to conduct pre-employment drug screens as well as reasonable suspicion, and post-accident drug and/or alcohol tests. Current drug testing does not distinguish between a positive test result based on illegal use of marijuana and THC use with legal CBD use. Any employee who tests positive for THC, for any reason, is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The Company reserves the right to search any company property such as offices, desks, lockers, and file cabinets when there is reason to believe a person is under the influence, in possession of drugs/alcohol, or has reported measurable amounts of drugs/ alcohol in one's system.

Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. If an employee test positive for drugs and/or alcohol the employee will be required to obtain a drug and/or alcohol evaluation at their own expense. Once the evaluator determines the type of treatment program the employee must enter and he/she must complete the program and present a certificate of completion of the drug and/or alcohol program. The confidentiality of any information received by the employer through a substance abuse testing program shall be maintained, except as otherwise provided by law. The employee will be subject to random or on going testing for a minimum of one year or longer as required by Georgia law or the treatment program's recommendation.

Smoke Free Workplace

It shall be the policy of SouthCoast Health to be a “Smoke Free” Workplace. As leaders in the healthcare community, it is our responsibility to set the example for our patients and the community that we serve. The use of all tobacco products including all electronic cigarette devices of any kind is strictly prohibited.

Smoking will not be permitted on SouthCoast Health grounds, including buildings, parking lots, or employee break areas. This policy applies to providers, administration, management, hourly staff, vendors, visitors, and patients.

Violation of this policy will result in progressive discipline up to and including termination.

Workers’ Compensation

Employees are required to immediately report all on-the-job injuries/illnesses requiring medical attention to his or her supervisor. Employees suffering work-related injuries will receive compensation and medical benefits in accordance with the Georgia Workers’ Compensation Act. An employee who loses more than seven calendar days as a result of a work related injury or occupational disease is placed on compensatory leave. The employee may choose to use sick time during the first seven calendar days. If sick time has already been exhausted in the calendar year, the employee may then choose to use vacation time.

This includes the day of the injury; therefore, employees leaving work to see a workers’ compensation physician should clock out for the initial doctor’s visit and for any subsequent visits. Employees are required to cooperate with SouthCoast, and any other treating healthcare professional in connection with a claim for workers’ compensation and treatment of any work-related injury. SouthCoast will not tolerate any form of retaliation against an employee based solely on the fact that he/she has submitted a claim for or is receiving benefits under Georgia’s Workers’ Compensation Act.

Employee Assistance Program

SouthCoast Health provides confidential and voluntary assistance to all employees who may be faced with dynamic challenges of financial concerns, legal issues, alcohol or drug problems, marital problems, illness of a family member, emotional worries, childcare problems, etc. There is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) brochure provided to employees or you can request one from Human Resources. The counselors of an EAP, after evaluation and discussion by phone or in person, may suggest a referral to an outside resource that would be appropriate to assist in resolving the problem or situation. Employees who need to visit the EAP during regular work hours must use sick or vacation time.

When an employee’s job performance or attendance is unsatisfactory or there appears to be signs of other problems during the workday, the supervisor may counsel the employee in consultation with the Director of Human Resources or designee with an end toward resolving the situation. If the employee appears to be unable or unwilling to correct the situation, he/she may be referred to the EAP to assist in the resolution of the problem. Depending on the situation, if offered, an employee may accept or refuse participation in the EAP. However, there may be situations where continued employment at SouthCoast may be contingent upon the employee utilizing the EAP for assistance, such as when an employee tests positive for drug use.

Safety Issues for Cell Phone Use

Employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving and who are issued a cell phone for business use are expected to refrain from using their phone, to include texting and emailing, while driving. Safety must come before all other concerns. Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, employees are strongly encouraged to pull off to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call, texting and emailing. If acceptance of a call is unavoidable and pulling over is not an option, employees are expected to keep the call short, use hands-free options if available, refrain from discussion of complicated or emotional discussions and keep their eyes on the road. Special care should be taken in situations where there is traffic, inclement weather or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area. Texting and emailing while driving, is strictly prohibited at all times.

In situations where job responsibilities include regular driving and accepting of business calls, hands-free equipment will be provided to facilitate the provisions of this policy.

Employees whose job responsibilities do not specifically include driving as an essential function, but who are issued a cell phone for business use, are also expected to abide by the provisions above. Under no circumstances are employees allowed to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs.

Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their phone while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

Violations of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Special Responsibilities for Managerial Staff: As with any policy, management staff is expected to serve as role models for proper compliance with the provisions above and are encouraged to regularly remind employees of their responsibilities in complying with this policy.

Security and Safety Protocols

Policy: It is the policy of SouthCoast Health to establish security and safety guidelines for our staff and patients.

Procedure: The following guidelines will be protocols that will be used to implement this policy:

The following protocols shall be in place to guard against unsafe acts and to ensure the security of our staff, patients, and buildings. Each office will have a book with current protocols in case there is an event. Ask the manager where the book is located. A detailed course of action for each protocol is listed in Exhibits A through H to this policy. If an incident occurs, a Critical Debriefing Incident form (HR FORM 131) will be filled out by the SouthCoast Safety Officer and will debrief management and staff. Staff may refer to the company Safety Handbook.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| A. Disruptive Person | E. Suspicious Mail/Package |
| B. Phone Threat | F. Severe Weather/Tornado |
| C. Bomb Threat | G. Fire |
| D. Active Shooter | H. Fumes of Unknown/Known Origin Containment |

WORKPLACE PROFESSIONALISM

Dress Code

Each employee is a representative of SouthCoast Health. As a professional in the health care field with high visibility to the public, one's personal appearance is a significant reflection of professional competence in the judgment of many patients, physicians, and the community. Each employee is expected to appear clean, neat, and well groomed, with regard to attire and hairstyles for work. Your personal appearance reflects SouthCoast's standards.

Because most of our employees deal with patients and have "high visibility" to the public, such personal matters as attending to make-up, nails, chewing gum, eating candy or other foods, cell phones, personal electronics (ear pods, etc.) should **never** be done where patients may be present or patient interactions may occur.

Uniformed Clinical & Clerical Personnel: All clinical and most clerical personnel that work in clinical practices will be required to be in the Company uniform at all times while on duty. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep it clean, wrinkle free, correctly sized, and in good condition.

- SouthCoast will purchase three (3) sets of uniforms plus one (1) scrub jacket one time for all current and new full-time employees.
- SouthCoast will purchase one (1) set of uniforms plus one (1) scrub jacket one time for all current and new part-time employees.
- Employees who work PRN will be required to purchase their own uniforms. They must be the correct brand and color that correlates to their department and can purchase it from our uniform vendor at company prices. Purchasing the logo is optional.
- Full and part time employees may purchase additional company approved uniforms with logo at company prices.
- If a uniform is not at company standard, the manager will have discretion to ask employee to replace their uniform at their own expense.
- A white long or short sleeve undershirt may be worn with the uniform.
- If an employee terminates (voluntary or involuntary) less than one year from receiving employer purchased uniforms and scrub jacket, they must return such uniforms to their Practice Manager in order to receive their final paycheck. If such uniforms are not returned, the purchase cost of such uniforms will be deducted from their final paycheck.

To comply with OSHA standards, personnel providing direct patient care shall wear shoes that enclose the entire foot or socks or stockings with impermeable enclosed toes.

Non-Uniformed Employees:

Males: Shoes with socks, professional in nature and job appropriate
Slacks (material suitable to hold a crease)
Short/long sleeves
Collared shirts
Suits/Sports jacket permissible

Females: Shoes must be professional in nature and job appropriate
Shoes worn without stockings, presentation must be polished and professional
Skirts-Length not more than two (2) inches above the knee
Split Skirts – Length not more than two (2) inches above the knee
Slacks –mid-calf or longer (material suitable to hold a crease, Capri length not permitted)
Short/long sleeve blouses; (no midriff tops, plunging necklines, or bare shoulders, such as, tank tops, camisoles, one shoulder top)
Suits/Jackets permissible

All attire must be professional and appropriate in nature.

Jewelry: All employees are asked to take a conservative approach to wearing jewelry which is appropriate to the job function, such as avoiding too much jewelry and/or dangling bracelets or large earrings, limiting potential associated health and safety risks to employees and patients.

Visible body piercings must be limited to ear piercings and minimal nose piercings that will not affect patient care or violate infection control standards. Gauges are not allowed and must be plugged with a flesh-colored plug. Clear retainers are appropriate to maintain piercings beyond the acceptable standard. Dental jewelry cannot be worn while working.

Cologne/Lotion/Perfume: Employees shall not wear cologne/lotion/perfume with heavy scents, which could be offensive to other persons. These items may trigger allergic reactions or asthma symptoms for coworkers, patients or the general public.

Photo ID Badge: Employee photo ID badge must be worn at all times, during scheduled work hours, or while on company property. The proper placement of the photo ID is on a lanyard around the neck, on a clip attached to the collar or clipped on employee's shirt/jacket pocket. ID badges are not to be worn on belts, pant pockets, or otherwise hidden from view. No stickers, tape, or decorations, other than Company approved, should be placed on the ID badge. If the badge is lost, misplaced, damaged or otherwise defaced, the employee will be responsible for the replacement cost of the new ID badge. Upon termination of employment ID badge is to be returned to the supervisor/manager or Human Resources.

Hygiene: Every employee is expected to practice daily hygiene and good grooming habits.

Nails: Nails must be neat and trim and of length which is appropriate for the job function. Clerical staff should not have nails that interfere with job performance and they must be professional in nature. Per the CDC, clinical staff with access to patients and/or bodily fluids should not wear artificial nails or tips as it poses a risk of infection, and all nails should be no more than ¼ inch so as not to puncture gloves.

Hair: Hair should be clean, combed, and neatly trimmed and styled. Unkempt hair is not permitted. No extreme hair style such as, Mohawks, art designs, etc. are permitted. Facial hair should be neatly trimmed. Scarves worn as headbands are permitted, while items that cover the head fully such as: hats, caps, bonnets, and scarves are not allowed.

Body Art: Tattoos on the face and front of the neck area above the collar line are not permitted. Tattoos are permitted elsewhere so long as the images or words do not convey violence, discrimination, profanity, or sexually explicit content.

Employees whose attire fails to meet these standards shall be counseled by their supervisor. If counseling fails to correct the noncompliance, the employee will be disciplined according to the Progressive Discipline Policy.

Dress Down Friday: SouthCoast has designated each Friday to be dress down/casual Friday. During this time staff may wear appropriate slacks, jeans, khakis, and a work appropriate top. Inappropriate casual attire is jeans that are too tight, patched and/or torn, athletic wear, tights worn as slacks, shorts, revealing blouses, t-shirts, hats, bonnets, caps, or full head scarves. Employees shall be mindful to dress professionally while dressing casually.

Employees may seek an exemption from any of these requirements from the Human Resources Department by providing in writing, justification that the employee requires a reasonable accommodation relating to the employee's religious beliefs, physical disability or other justifiable circumstances.

Personal Cell Phones and Smartphones

While at work employees are expected to exercise the same discretion in using personal cell phones as is expected for the use of company phones. Excessive personal calls, texting, use of social media/apps during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. Employees are therefore expected to make any personal calls, text, or log onto social media or apps on non-work time and to ensure that friends and family members are aware of the company's policy. Personal cell phones are to be kept on the employees' person and should be placed out of view of the public. In circumstances demanding immediate attention or potential family emergencies, you should notify your supervisor in order to receive permission to use your personal cell phones beyond the guidelines listed above.

In addition to the cell phone capability, these devices have emailing, texting, social media, video, and picture taking capabilities. Pictures or videos of company documents, coworkers, patients, work areas, etc. are prohibited. No photo images will be permitted without the specific permission from your supervisor or administration. It is our intent to protect the privacy of our personnel and to maintain a pleasant and productive work environment. The Company will not be held liable for the loss of personal picture cell phones, or smartphones brought into the workplace.

Personal cell phones may be used for company business purposes only, such as, Duo, Athena Capture, Google Authenticator, and communicating with a provider by text. An employee's phone must be compatible with the SouthCoast's multi factor authentication system.

Employees will not be reimbursed for business calls placed or accepted on personal phones unless authorized in writing by management prior to calls being made or accepted.

Personal Electronic Devices

Personal ear pods/headphones and all other personal electronic devices such as, iPads, tablets, and laptops may only be used during work hours for work related activities. The Company will not be held liable for the loss of personal electronic devices brought into the workplace.

Use of Company Provided Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Where job or business need demands immediate access to an employee the company may issue a business cell phone to an employee for work-related communications. To protect the employee from incurring a tax liability for the personal use of this equipment, such phones are to be used for business reasons only, unless approved by the CEO, CFO or HRD. Phone logs may be audited to ensure no unauthorized use has occurred.

Employees in possession of company equipment such as cellular phones, iPads, Wi-Fi devices, and laptops are expected to protect the equipment from loss, damage or theft. Employees must password protect company cell phones, laptops and iPads to ensure patient information cannot be violated and the HIPAA guidelines are followed. Upon resignation or termination of employment, or at any time upon request, the employee may be asked to produce the phone, iPad, Wi-Fi device, or laptop for return or inspection. Employees unable to present the device in good working condition within twenty-four (24) hours may be expected to bear the cost of a replacement.

Employees who separate from employment with outstanding debts for equipment damage, loss or unauthorized charges will be considered to have left employment on unsatisfactory terms and may be subject to legal action for recovery of the loss.

Personal Calls from the Office

If an excessive amount of personal calls is placed by a provider or employee, SouthCoast reserves the right to deduct all costs from available pay.

Long Distance, Cell Phone and Electronic Device Use

Employees, Board Members, and Medical Staff may place long distance calls from the office for all business operations associated with SouthCoast. In general, long distance calls placed in the course of patient care, account collections, insurance authorization or any legitimate SouthCoast business is authorized as long as such calls are:

- Actual and reasonable; and
- Consistent with the needs of SouthCoast to conduct normal business operations and to accomplish business objectives in a professional and cost effective manner.

Good business judgment on the part of the individual remains the most important factor in the control of telephone expenditures. Individuals are expected to:

- Exercise good judgment when placing long distance calls;
- Make only necessary and reasonable calls; and
- Individuals may be asked to pay for calls if considered excessive; excessive will be measured by costs over \$10.00 per month.

Management must utilize the guidelines set forth in this policy to review and approve long distance expenses and is responsible for ensuring communication of the provisions of this policy to employees who incur expenses in connection with long distance telephone usage.

Electronic Systems and Services [Internet/E-mail Policy]

The use of SouthCoast Health electronic systems, including computers, fax machines, and all forms of Internet/Intranet access, is for company business and for authorized purposes only. The services allow employees to connect to information resources around the world. Every staff

member who has access to these systems and services has a responsibility to extend the company's code of ethical conduct in using these systems in a productive manner. All confidentiality agreements and guidelines extend to use of these systems and services.

Employees accessing the systems are representing SouthCoast Health. All communications should be for professional reasons. Employees are responsible for seeing that these systems and services are used in an effective, ethical and lawful manner. Use of SouthCoast Health computers, network, and Internet access is a privilege granted by management and may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct carried out on such systems.

The employee recognizes that all information, correspondence, data and materials which will be furnished or disclosed to him/her by the company, or come into his/her knowledge or possession during his or her employment by the company will not be communicated through these systems or services for the purpose of personal gain. The employee understands this information is for the sole purpose of his/her employment by the company.

Unacceptable Use:

- Sending chain letters or participating in any way in the creation or transmission of unsolicited commercial email ("spam") that is unrelated to legitimate SouthCoast Health purposes;
- Engaging in private or personal business activities, including excessive use of instant messaging, chat rooms, streaming services – such as music, etc.;
- Accessing network, servers, drives, folders, or files to which the employee has not been granted access or authorization from someone with the right to make such a grant;
- Making unauthorized copies of Company files or other company data;
- Destroying, deleting, erasing, or concealing Company files or other Company data, or otherwise making such files or data unavailable or inaccessible to the Company or to other authorized users of Company systems;
- Violating the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation or any state, city, province, or other location jurisdiction in any way;
- Engaging in unlawful or malicious activities;
- Deliberately propagating any virus, worm, Trojan horse, trap-door program code, or other code or file designed to disrupt, disable, impair, or otherwise harm either the Company's network or systems or those of any other individual or entity;
- Using abusive, profane, threatening, racist, sexist, or otherwise objectionable language in either public or private messages;
- Sending, receiving, or accessing pornographic materials;
- Printing, forwarding or distributing correspondence with malicious intent;
- Becoming involved in partisan politics through the systems or services;
- Causing congestion, disruption, disablement, alterations, or impairment of Company networks or systems;
- Use to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials (accept as defined within this document), trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials without prior authorization from the CEO or SouthCoast President;
- Failing to log off any secure, controlled-access computer or other form of electronic data system to which you are assigned, if you leave such computer or system unattended;
- Defeating or attempting to defeat security restrictions on company systems and applications. Using Company electronic systems and services to access, create, view, transmit, or receive racist, sexist, threatening, or otherwise objectionable or illegal material, defined as any visual, textual, or auditory entity, file, or data, is strictly prohibited. Such material violates the Company anti-harassment policies, HR Policy 111, and subjects the responsible employee to disciplinary action. The Company's

electronic mail system, Internet access, and computer systems must not be used to harm others or to violate the laws and regulations. Use of company resources for illegal activity can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal and criminal prosecution.

Copyright Issues: Copyrighted materials belonging to entities other than SouthCoast may not be transmitted by staff members on the system. One copy of copyrighted material may be downloaded for your own personal use in research provided approval has been obtained from the System Administrator. Users are not permitted to copy, transfer, rename, add or delete information or programs belonging to other users unless given express permission to do so by the owner in writing. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements will result in disciplinary action from SouthCoast or legal action by the copyright owner.

No Privacy Expectation: All messages created, sent or retrieved over the system are property of SouthCoast and should be considered company property. SouthCoast reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as deemed necessary and appropriate. Internet messages are not private, but company property. All communications including text and images can be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

Social Media Policy

Social media (including personal and professional websites, blogs, chat rooms, and bulletin boards; social networks, such as *Facebook*, *LinkedIn*, *X(Twitter)*, and *Instagram*; video sharing sites such as *YouTube*, *Tik Tok*, and email) are common means of communication and self-expression. However, online posting can conflict with the legitimate interests of SouthCoast Health and its customers. In light of this, SouthCoast Health has adopted the following policy.

If you have any questions regarding whether a communication on social media may violate this policy, please consult with Human Resources.

Online identity and Confidentiality: Do not disclose SouthCoast Health's confidential or proprietary information, or sensitive personal information of anyone at SouthCoast Health or any customers of SouthCoast Health or their families, in online postings or publications. Sharing these types of information, even unintentionally, could result in harm to SouthCoast Health or your co-workers.

SouthCoast Health may be liable for online activity that uses company assets, e-mail address or any e-mail address that can be traced back to SouthCoast Health's domain, which generally is any internet address affiliated with SouthCoast Health. Social media and networking sites are public; therefore, the use of company assets should be used to perform job-related activities only.

Do not offer or provide medical advice or discuss medical treatments on social media.

Outside the workplace, you have a right to participate in social media and networks using your personal e-mail address. However, information and communication that you publish on personal sites should never appear to be endorsed by or have originated from the Company rather than you personally.

If you choose to disclose your affiliation with SouthCoast Health in an online communication, you must treat all communications associated with the disclosure as professional communications governed by this and other SouthCoast Health policies.

Using Social Media at Work: Refrain from using social media while on work time unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager. Do not use SouthCoast email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Libel and Harassment: SouthCoast Health prohibits the use of social media to post or display comments that are deliberately and knowingly false, egregiously offensive, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or harassing are unacceptable and prohibited. This includes comments that violate SouthCoast Health's workplace policies which forbid discrimination, harassment, or hostility on the account of age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other legally protected class, status or characteristic.

Copyright Issues: The CEO must approve any website, blog, chat room, video sharing site, bulletin board, or other social media that promotes SouthCoast Health. No employee may incorporate SouthCoast Health's logo or other intellectual property in a website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board or other social media without SouthCoast Health's written permission. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements will result in disciplinary action from SouthCoast.

Violations: The above are examples of infractions and violations of this policy will be determined based on all of the relevant facts of the particular situation. Obey the law and ethical rules. Do not post any information or engage in any online activity that violates applicable local, state or federal laws, or professional rules of conduct. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment based on the infraction, frequency, and degree of infraction.

Confidentiality

It is the policy of SouthCoast Health that all persons acting on behalf of SouthCoast conduct themselves ethically and in conformance with all applicable laws, regulations, professional standards, corporate policies and procedures. SouthCoast expects that all employees work with honesty and in accordance with legal practices and in a professional and ethical manner.

SouthCoast recognizes that employees will, over the course of their employment and in fulfillment of job responsibilities, be provided access to confidential, proprietary information and data. This information is considered confidential whether given verbally, stored on paper, computer disk or any other media.

This information and data includes, but is not limited to, faxes, computer systems, computer generated reports, email, internet, corporate financial statements/records, correspondence, patient medical records and pertinent information, and employee payroll and personnel files/records. Access codes and passwords to multi-user systems at SouthCoast will not be disclosed to any other individual. See also Policy # 107 Electronic Services [email and internet].

Employees with access to patient, physician, payroll, financial or employee information shall use their individual access only to the extent needed to (i) perform the duties of their job; (ii) create only those documents absolutely required by law and necessary to do business; and (iii) distribute documents to the smallest possible audience with adequate security. An employee's breach of any aspect of this confidentiality policy is grounds for immediate dismissal.

No employee, whether during the term of their employment or thereafter, shall remove, duplicate, disclose or distribute any confidential or proprietary information or data. No employee will use, for personal gain, information about SouthCoast acquired during the course of employment. In addition, no employee shall assist anyone to use such information for personal gain.

Patient medical information is considered confidential under Federal and Georgia law. There are strict protections of medical information except as authorized by the patient or corporate policies.

YOU MAY NOT:

- Obtain a patient's medical information except to provide care, perform medical quality review, submit claims for reimbursement, or for other authorized and appropriate purposes;
- Discuss or reveal information relating to a patient's identity or medical condition with any other person who does not need to know the patient's medical condition for purposes of providing care, performing medical quality review, submitting claims for reimbursement, or other authorized and appropriate purposes; or
- Discuss a patient's identity or medical condition with an authorized person under such circumstances that the conversation can be heard by an unauthorized person.

You should refer all requests for patient medical information, from anyone other than the patient, authorized physician, third (3rd) party payors, or authorized SouthCoast personnel to the manager of the department that receives such requests. Any request for medical information by subpoena will be forwarded to the appropriate department and risk management for assistance.

A non-clinical employee will not give patients their opinion or advice on personal or medical problems. Clinical employees are authorized only within the scope of their position and licensure. It is best to defer these questions to the authorized provider. Employees giving such information to the patient will be subject to immediate dismissal.

All confidential and proprietary information must be returned to SouthCoast upon termination of employment. Authorization for access to all systems, files, electronic mail or computer networks, programs or records, and/or all other data or information storage or retrieval systems is immediately revoked on the employee's last day of employment.

While this policy contains many specific guidelines, it is not exhaustive as not all eventualities can be anticipated; however, SouthCoast subscribes to strict adherence and employees in violation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

In the event any employee witnesses acts that are inconsistent with this code of conduct, it is his/her obligation to report such conduct to management. A report may be made anonymously in writing by submitting a statement to any SouthCoast Manager, Corporate Compliance Officer, or the Human Resources Department. The compliance hotline is 912-303-3511.

Standards of Conduct

It is the policy of SouthCoast Health that all individuals within its facilities be treated courteously, respectfully, and with dignity and those employees maintain a working environment that encourages mutual respect, promotes civil and congenial relationships among employees and is free from all forms of harassment and violence. All individuals, employees, physicians, administrators, and other independent practitioners must conduct themselves in a professional and cooperative manner while conducting work on behalf of SouthCoast.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner as judged by a reasonable person.

Employees have the right to conduct their work without disorderly or undue interference from other employees. SouthCoast prohibits employees from violating this right of their co-workers.

SouthCoast encourages a congenial work environment of respect and professionalism. Therefore, SouthCoast prohibits employees from intentionally harming or threatening to harm other employees, patients, providers, managers, vendors, visitors, or property belonging to any of these parties.

The objective of this policy is to ensure optimum patient care by promoting a safe, cooperative, and professional environment and to prevent or eliminate, to the extent possible, conduct which disrupts the operations of SouthCoast, affects the ability of others to do their jobs, or creates a "hostile work environment".

Unacceptable disruptive conduct may include, but is not limited to, behavior such as:

1. Verbal attacks leveled at individuals, which are personal or go beyond the bounds of fair professional conduct;
2. Physical attacks;
3. Any criticism addressed to a recipient in such a way as to intimidate, undermine confidence, belittle or imply stupidity or incompetence;
4. Disrespectful and inappropriate comments to include but not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile comments; denigrating jokes; offensive language, and rude remarks; and
5. Knowingly disseminating information that is false, misleading, or deceptive.

If an employee fails to conduct himself or herself in a manner similar to those listed above, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Progressive Discipline

Disciplinary action is designed to establish an equitable system of corrective action applicable to employees found to be involved in violating group rules, regulations, or standards of performance. Disciplinary action, properly administered, is intended to improve employee performance and behavior so that an acceptable standard is attained.

Counseling will be used to clarify expectations of the job and will not be considered a discipline. However, it will serve as supporting documentation for discipline if the behavior or action is not corrected through counseling. Counseling will be documented on Counseling Form (Form #HR129) and sent to Human Resources.

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) may be issued to an employee at any time during the discipline phase when they have demonstrated an inability to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently. All PIPs are documented on the Performance Improvement Plan Form (Form # HR132).

Written Warning: Documented warning stating what rule, regulation or performance expectation has been violated, the facts/circumstances surrounding the violation and the reason(s) that a warning is being issued.

Probation: A term used to:

- Extend the ninety (90) day initial evaluation period
- Extend a promotion period
- Extend a transfer period
- Monitor an employee's behavior/performance, when measures of counseling have not corrected the issue, the probation period will not exceed sixty (60) days.

Suspension-Pending Investigation: Time off from the workplace, without pay, for an infraction requiring investigation. Suspension may be administered during any phase of the disciplinary process. Human Resources must be advised before an employee is suspended from work.

Administration of disciplinary action is the responsibility of the Supervisor/Manager. When appropriate, disciplinary action will be applied in the progressive sequence outlined below. After each step, the employee's subsequent performance will be observed for a specific time. If insufficient improvement occurs, the next step of disciplinary action appropriate to the infraction will be taken.

The discipline procedure includes the following four (4) steps; however, in certain situations and depending upon the severity of the infraction, a manager may accelerate the discipline process by skipping a step(s). Management may have compelling evidence that the employee's actions warrant immediate termination and the disciplinary process will not be used. Human Resources must be advised prior to any employee discipline or termination.

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) may be issued to an employee at any time during the discipline phase. A PIP may be given whenever an employee has demonstrated an inability to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently. A PIP status will last for a predetermined amount of time, not to exceed sixty (60) days. Within this time period, the employee must demonstrate a willingness and ability to meet and maintain work requirements specified by the manager or Human Resources. At the end of the performance improvement period, the performance improvement plan may be closed, or if established goals are not met, discipline up to including termination may occur. All PIPs are documented on the Performance Improvement Plan Form (Form # HR132).

The supervisor/manager should choose a time and private place that is conducive to counseling the employee. The manager/supervisor must confer with Human Resources in any discipline action to insure fairness and consistency. Another manager/supervisor should be present as a witness during all corrective action counseling's including terminations. The witness will sign the form acknowledging the counseling and/or the refusal to sign. All disciplinary actions should be recorded on the Disciplinary Action Form (Form #HR115).

Step 1. Initial Written Warning: The supervisor/manager will complete and sign the Disciplinary Action Form and then present it to the employee. An explanation of the infraction of rules or specific failure to meet job performance standards will be given to the employee. At this time, expectations of performance and corrective action on the employee's part will be clearly stated by the supervisor.

The supervisor will advise the employee of further disciplinary steps to be taken, up to and including termination, if the employee fails to correct the behavior or performance issue. A review period for the employee's behavior/performance will be established.

The employee will be asked to sign the Disciplinary Action Form and make comments. If the employee refuses to sign the warning, this will be noted on the Disciplinary Action Report. The original will be placed in the employee's personnel file in the Human Resources Department, and a copy of the signed disciplinary action form should be given to the employee.

Step 2. Second Written Warning: When the initial written warning has not corrected the employee's behavior or a new behavior or infraction of policy, rule, or procedures has occurred, a second written warning will be issued, following the same procedures for issuing the initial written warning. This notice will document that this is a second event requiring a warning and that any additional infraction of policy, procedure or practices will result in probationary action. The original signed Disciplinary Action Report will be placed in the employee's personnel file in the Human Resources Department, and a copy of the signed disciplinary action form should be given to the employee.

Step 3. Probation and Final Written Warning: When the second written warning has not corrected the employee's behavior or a new infraction has occurred, a final written warning will be issued, following the same procedure for issuing an initial and secondary written warning. After consultation with supervisor/manager, the employee will be placed on a sixty (60) day probationary period. This will be noted on the Disciplinary Action Report. The employee will be advised that any further infraction of any policy or failure to meet performance standards during this probationary period will result in immediate dismissal. The original signed Disciplinary Action Report will be placed in the employee's personnel file in the Human Resources Department, and a copy of the signed disciplinary action form should be given to the employee.

STEP 4. Termination: An employee will be terminated when the above steps have not corrected the behavior or when immediate termination is deemed necessary. Prior to this action, consultation with Human Resources is required. Human Resources must approve all involuntary terminations. The supervisor/manager should meet with the employee in private, explaining the final infraction and termination of employment. The employee will be given a separation notice provided by the manager and signed by the Director of Human Resources.

Suspension Pending Investigation: When an infraction is one that requires further investigation, the manager, in consultation with Human Resources, may elect to suspend the employee pending investigation. The manager will advise the employee of the reason for the suspension and the likely length of time of the investigation. Suspension may be issued to a maximum of three (3) scheduled workdays to allow the investigation to be completed. If no infraction is found after investigation, the employee will be reinstated to his/her position and will be paid for the time missed from work. Sick and accrued vacation may not be used during the suspension.

If an infraction is found, the manager, in consultation with Human Resources, will determine the appropriate disciplinary step given the employee's work history and the type of infraction. *It should be understood that suspension pending investigation can be used during any step within the disciplinary process.* If no infraction is found, the employee will receive back pay for the days on unpaid suspension.

Some behavior is so serious that immediate termination may be warranted and Steps 1-3 of this policy will not apply. In that instance, the supervisor/manager may terminate the employee, provided they have consulted with Human Resources.

Violations Subject to Progressive Discipline

Listed below are some examples of company violations that are subject to progressive discipline depending on the degree and frequency of the infraction(s); however, immediate termination may result. (This list is not all inclusive):

- Employees who exceed the number of allowed sick hours per year and are not on an approved Family Medical Leave or Personal Leave of Absence
- Creating conflict, any act of rudeness, or being discourteous to or in the presence of a patient, provider, management, coworker, visitor, or vendor
- Failure to follow procedures as needed for the specific job assignment or meet performance standards
- Being disruptive or causing disruption in the workplace
- Leaving the assigned work area or facility prior to end of shift without supervisor's permission
- Abusing lunch or break periods
- Violation of HIPAA
- Excessive absences, tardiness, or missing time clock punches
- Conducting personal business or enterprise on Company property, including soliciting contributions or selling any service or article
- Violation of Company Cell Phone and Electronics policy
- Violation of Electronic Systems and Services [Internet/Email] policy
- Violation, abuse, withholding or giving false information in applying or while on FMLA or Leave of Absence Policy
- Smoking or vaping on Company property
- Violation of Dress Code policy
- Failure to notify supervisor/manager of absence from work at least two (2) hours prior to scheduled work time
- Violation of Nepotism policy
- Any failure to provide appropriately prescribed care for a patient.
- Failure to report in a timely manner, any injury to a patient caused by any medical service or medical equipment
- Sleeping during work hours
- Failure to renew nursing license and/or certifications in a timely manner
- Violating rules or policies not specifically listed.

Violations Subject to Immediate Dismissal: Listed below are some examples of company violations which may result in immediate dismissal after consultation with Human Resources. (This list is not all inclusive):

- Violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct/Confidentiality Policy
- Violation of the Harassment/Bullying/Violence Policy
- Violation of the Substance Abuse Policy
- Major violation of HIPAA
- Non-clinical employees giving patients opinions or advice on their personal or medical problems or clinical employees providing medical opinions or advice outside the scope of their position and licensure
- Any deliberate act or omission that unnecessarily endangers a patient or coworker
- Any sexual conduct with a patient
- The wrongful taking of any property which belongs to a patient, coworker, provider, manager, visitor or vendor
- The falsification or altering of any information in a medical record or company documents
- Falsification of time, entering fraudulent time on behalf of another employee, or instructing an employee to enter time on your behalf is grounds for immediate dismissal
- The failure to document or comply with a patient's advance directives
- Stealing, defacing or abusing property and/or unauthorized personal use of or selling of property which belongs to SouthCoast
- Insubordination or breaking a rule, including, but not limited to open defiance of instruction from a supervisor or provider; refusal to do assigned job, refusal to render assistance, insolent response to a work order, intentional delay in carrying out an assignment, the use of abusive, profane or threatening language toward a supervisor/manager, provider, coworker, patient, visitor, or vendor; deliberately deviating from standard operating practices
- The failure to report to management suspicious, unethical or illegal conduct by coworkers, managers, providers, patients, visitors, or vendors
- Loss of licensure
- Sanctioned by Medicare, Medicaid, or any federal or private health care program

The above are examples of infractions and are not inclusive of all violations of SouthCoast policy, procedures and practices. Disciplinary action will result based on the infraction, frequency and degree of infraction.

Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying and Violence Prevention

It is the policy of SouthCoast Health to commit to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices including harassment, discrimination, violence, and bullying. Therefore, SouthCoast expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendos; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through e-mail); and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Sex-based harassment, that is, harassment not involving sexual activity or language (e.g., male manager yells only at female employees and not males) may also constitute discrimination if it is severe or pervasive and directed at employees because of their sex.

Harassment: Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group (including through e-mail or text).

Bullying and Violence: Bullying constitutes intimidation, bullying, cyber bullying, threats of violence (bodily harm or property damage) and acts of violence (regardless of whether they cause harm or damage) against an employee, provider, manager, patient, vendor, or visitor. Bullying can be verbal, nonverbal, and/or physical, direct or indirect (aggressive or passive) that is performed by one or more persons against another person or group of people that could be reasonably regarded as undermining the person's right to dignity at work.

A violent act/threat of violence is defined as any direct or indirect action or behavior that could be interpreted, in light of known facts, circumstances and information, by a reasonable person, as indicating the potential to harm, endanger or inflict pain or injury on any person or property. This list of behaviors, while not inclusive, provides examples of prohibited conduct:

- a) Physical assault, threat to assault or stalking an employee or patient;
- b) Threatening with a weapon;
- c) Intentionally damaging property of SouthCoast Health or personal property of another;
- d) Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person;
- e) Public humiliation or reprimands in any form;
- f) Abuse of authority;

- g) Spreading rumors and gossip regarding individuals;
- h) Deliberately excluding an individual or isolating them from work related activities (meetings, etc.)
- i) Harassing or intimidating statements, phone calls, voice mails, social media posts, text messages, or e-mail messages, or those which are unwanted or deemed offensive by the receiver; and
- j) Racial or cultural epithets or other derogatory remarks associated with hate crime threats.

Coverage

These policies apply to all applicants and employees, and prohibit harassment, discrimination, bullying, violence, and retaliation whether engaged in by fellow employees, by a supervisor or manager or by someone not directly connected to SouthCoast Health (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant or client).

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

Complaint Procedures

Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying, Violence, or Retaliation. SouthCoast Health strongly urges the reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced conduct that they believe is contrary to SouthCoast's policy or who have concerns about such matters should file their complaints with their immediate supervisor, the Director of Operations, the Director of Human Resources or any member of Management before the conduct becomes severe or pervasive. Individuals should not feel obligated to file their complaints with their immediate supervisor first before bringing the matter to the attention of one of the other designated representatives identified above.

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment, discrimination, violence, or bullying. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, SouthCoast Health strongly urges the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken. SouthCoast will make every effort to stop alleged harassment, discrimination, violence, or bullying before it becomes severe or pervasive but can only do so with the cooperation of its staff/employees.

The availability of this complaint procedure does not preclude individuals who believe they are being subjected to harassing conduct from promptly advising the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and requesting that it be discontinued.

The Investigation: Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination, bullying, violence or retaliation will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Responsive Action: Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination, bullying, violence, or retaliation will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling, monitoring of the offender and/or disciplinary action such as warning, reprimand, withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reduction of wages, demotion, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay or termination, as SouthCoast believes appropriate under the circumstances.

If an employee making a complaint does not agree with its resolution, the employee may appeal to the CEO.

Individuals who have questions or concerns about these policies should talk with the Director of Human Resources or a member of Management.

Finally, these policies should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, or any other protected characteristic, from participating in business or work-related social activities or discussions in order to avoid allegations of harassment. The law and the policies of SouthCoast Health prohibit disparate treatment on the basis of sex or any other protected characteristic, with regard to terms, conditions, privileges and perquisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination, bullying, violence, and retaliation are intended to complement and further these policies, not to form the basis of an exception to them.

False Claims: The Company recognizes that false accusations of harassment can have serious effects on innocent individuals. False accusations may result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Retaliation Is Prohibited

SouthCoast Health prohibits retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, or participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment, discrimination, bullying, violence, or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment, discrimination, bullying, or violence is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment, discrimination, bullying or violence itself, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION

Resignations

Exempt (salaried) staff shall provide at least four (4) weeks written resignation notice. Non-exempt (hourly) employees are expected to provide at least two (2) weeks written notice of resignation. If adequate notice is not given or the employee voluntarily does not work out the notice period, he/she will be reviewed as to eligibility for rehire.

When an employee requests to rescind their resignation, Human Resources reserves the right to accept or decline on a case-by-case basis. In making such decision, Human Resources will take into consideration the employee's discipline, attendance record, performance, his/her behavior/conduct, and the business needs of the Company.

Involuntary Separation

Employees of SouthCoast Health are employed on an at-will basis, and SouthCoast retains the right to terminate an employee at any time. Involuntary terminations may occur for a variety of reasons, including with cause (i.e., employee malfeasance) or without cause (i.e., as a part of a layoff). All involuntary terminations are to be coordinated with the Director of Human Resources. No employee shall be summarily discharged for cause without an investigation. Should a supervisor be present when serious misconduct occurs, he/she may immediately suspend the employee, pending an investigation and notification to Human Resources.

When practical, employees will be warned and counseled. However, failure to correct behavior or further violation of company policy may result in additional disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Depending on the nature of the offense, SouthCoast reserves the right to terminate any employee without warning.

Warnings and counseling are to be documented on the Disciplinary Action Form and retained in the employee's personnel file. SouthCoast will generally terminate an employee after the third offense. The employee's record will indicate if the termination was either with or without cause.

Reduction in Workforce

Although SouthCoast Health strives to maintain a productive and stable workforce essential to providing continuity and quality in the delivery of patient care, business development or economic conditions may require adjustments to the workforce. In these situations, SouthCoast's primary goals are to maintain operations and quality patient care.

Release

Release is the end of temporary or seasonal employment.

Automatic Termination

If an employee has not returned to full-duty status from authorized leave of absence(s), employment will be automatically terminated. An employee will be considered unable to return to work if he or she cannot perform the essential functions of the job in full capacity, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Final Paycheck

Final wages will not be paid by direct deposit. The supervisor and/or human resources will advise the employee that his/her final check will be mailed to his/her home address unless otherwise specified.

Abandonment

If an employee does not report for work and fails to notify their supervisor for two (2) consecutive scheduled workdays, SouthCoast will consider the employee to have abandoned their job, unless a valid and reasonable explanation is provided. The employee's departure will be recorded as a resignation without notice. Upon notification from supervisor/manager, Human Resources will notify the employee by mail of termination of employment.

Return of Company Property

Employees must return, on or before the last day worked, all company property including (but not limited to) keys, nametag, uniforms, computer equipment, phones, and manuals. Employee must password unlock the devices upon termination of employment.

Termination of Benefits

Health, Dental and Vision Insurance: Health, dental, and vision insurance terminates on the day in which the employee terminates. Information for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) continued health coverage will be provided.

Ancillary Insurance: Short and long term disability insurance, life insurance, accident, and identity theft will terminate on the day in which the employee terminates. The supplemental policy issuer of such policies will contact the terminated employee to offer same coverage that will be direct billed to terminated employee.

Human Resources is responsible for terminating all insurance and notifying the employee of his/her conversion rights.

Exit Interviews

An employee who resigns will usually be asked to participate in an exit interview with the supervisor or human resources. The purpose is to:

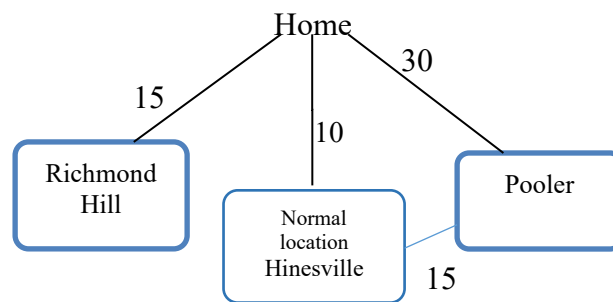
1. Ensure that the reason for resignation is not based on a misunderstanding or a condition that could be remedied; and
2. Gather information that could be helpful in improving working conditions of SouthCoast.

GENERAL

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Approved use of personal vehicles for SouthCoast Health business will be reimbursed on a per mile basis. Mileage will be reimbursed based upon corporate rate established by the accounting department. Per IRS regulations, the normal commute from home to work is not reimbursable. Any travel that is greater than your normal commute will be reimbursed for any extra miles above and beyond the normal commute.

In the example below: if an employee's normal commute from home to work (Hinesville) is 10 miles and they are asked to work at another location that is 15 miles (Richmond Hill) from their home, they will be reimbursed for an extra 5 miles to the different location and another 5 miles from the location: a total of 10 miles round trip. However, if the employee is at a work location (Hinesville) and then asked to drive to another location (Pooler), they are paid the full mileage (15) from Hinesville to Pooler.



Employee Referral Program

A program to award current non-management employees for assisting in recruiting new talent for the organization. A candidate that is hired and successfully completes ninety (90) days of employment, the referring employee will receive \$100.00 on his/her paycheck. If the employee successfully completes one (1) year of employment, the referring employee will receive \$200.00 on his/her paycheck. Amount of referral bonus is subject to change.

Solicitation/Distribution Policy

In order to maintain a proper business environment and prevent interference with an employee's own work and the work of others, solicitation of any kind is prohibited while either employee is on his or her working time. This includes selling any kind of service or merchandise, soliciting financial contributions, or soliciting for any other cause. Solicitation by non-employees on SouthCoast premises or at SouthCoast sponsored events is prohibited at all times, unless expressly authorized by Management.

Distribution of advertising material, handbills, printed or written literature of any kind in the working areas of SouthCoast is prohibited at any time. Distribution of literature by non-employees on SouthCoast premises is prohibited at all times.

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Employee Handbook

I acknowledge that a copy of the SouthCoast Health (or “SouthCoast”) Employee Handbook is located on the SouthCoast website under the employee login and becomes effective **November 1, 2024**. If I am unable to access the Employee Handbook online, I may request a hard copy through the human resources office.

I understand that this employee handbook supersedes all other employee handbooks previously issued by SouthCoast. I acknowledge that the online Employee Handbook includes the most up-to-date information and it is my responsibility to obtain the latest version of the Employee Handbook.

I acknowledge that the SouthCoast Employee Handbook does not create a contract of employment with SouthCoast and does not guarantee me any specific terms, conditions, or length of employment. I understand that the employment relationship may be terminated at any time and for any reason by me or SouthCoast. Further, I recognize that no employee or representative, with the exception of the Board of Managers, has the authority to bind SouthCoast to any employment contract with any employee. Additionally, any such commitment must be in writing, addressed to a specific individual, and signed by an individual authorized to act on behalf of the Board of Managers.

Date: _____

Employee’s Name (please print)

Employee’s Signature

Signature of Human Resource
Representative
or Supervisor