



North Central Health Care

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to NCHC!

We're excited to welcome you to North Central Health Care and support your growth as you build your skills, confidence, and professional identity. This handbook outlines the expectations, requirements, and key information you'll be expected to follow as a student at NCHC.

1. About North Central Health Care

1.1 Our Mission, Vision, and Values

At NCHC, person-centered service is at the heart of everything we do – we meet people where they are, listen to understand, and support them with compassion and respect. Our core values help guide that work: Dignity, Integrity, Accountability, Partnership, and Continuous Improvement. As a student, you'll see these values in action every day and contribute to a positive, supportive experience for the people we serve.

1.2 Overview of Services and Departments

- Skilled Nursing Care
- Behavioral Health Inpatient Hospitals (Adult & Youth)
- Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization (Adult & Youth)
- Lakeside Recovery Program
- Crisis Center
- Community Treatment
- Outpatient Services
- Additional Services: Adult Protective Services, Pharmacy, Aquatic Therapy, and more. Access a complete list of our services at norcen.org/services.

1.3 Types of Students at NCHC

- Students in Instructor-Led Cohorts: Supervised by a school-employed instructor.
- Students Working 1:1 With a Preceptor: Paired with an NCHC staff member who provides guidance, direction, and feedback. These can include internships, practicums, clinical rotations, etc.
- Access to our systems and Electronic Health Records (EHR) varies by student type and program. Your preceptor or instructor will let you know how, when, or if you will use the EHR. Even if access is available, you may only view information needed for your assigned learning activities.



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2. Student Expectations and Requirements

As a student at NCHC, you are expected to follow the below expectations and requirements. Breaking the below requirements could result in disciplinary action from NCHC and your school, including possible dismissal from your student placement.

2.1 Professional Conduct

- Communicate professionally with staff, patients, and peers.
- Attend scheduled student shifts and notify your instructor or preceptor of any absences.
- Always wear an NCHC student badge on the top third of the body.
- Follow department-specific dress expectations and maintain high standards of personal hygiene.
- Maintain a professional, therapeutic relationship at all times.
- Avoid sharing personal contact information, engaging in social media interaction, or developing personal relationships with patients, residents, or clients. Conversations should remain focused on care, support, and treatment—not personal details.
- Decline gifts, favors, or personal offers, and notify staff if a patient attempts to provide or request such exchanges.
- Follow NCHC policies and procedures.

2.2 Scope of Practice

- Students may not perform any duties beyond their student scope or skills related to their program/education.
- Students must follow the direction of their instructor, preceptor, and NCHC staff members.
- Students have the right to refuse to complete activities they feel are unethical or fall outside of their student scope.

2.3 Employee Expectations

- Any employee completing a placement must complete all student hours outside of scheduled working hours. Student hours are unpaid (unless otherwise approved by HR)
- When onsite in a student capacity, employees should not wear an employee badge nor complete any job-related tasks outside of your student responsibilities.

2.4 Reporting Injuries or Incidents

- Students must immediately inform their preceptor/instructor or another member of NCHC staff in the event of an injury or incident. Students should seek first aid or medical attention if needed.
- A SafetyZone report must be submitted by the student, instructor, or NCHC staff member to prompt proper follow-up from Employee Health, HR, or Compliance.

2.5 Infection Control

- Follow hand hygiene guidelines every time:
 1. When entering or leaving a patient room
 2. Before and after patient contact
 3. After removing PPE
 4. After coughing, sneezing, or touching surfaces

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- If a patient is on isolation precautions, check with staff before entering their room. Students must follow all PPE requirements, including respiratory protection to prevent the spread of illnesses such as Tuberculosis.
- If you may come into contact with blood, you must take proper care to prevent exposure to bloodborne pathogens and report any exposure incidents or blood spills.
- If you're sick, stay home and notify your instructor or preceptor prior to the scheduled start time for your scheduled student shift.

2.6 Locker Room Use

Use of the North Central Health Care (NCHC) employee locker room and lockers is a privilege. NCHC cannot be held responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal property. Users must act in accordance with NCHC policies and procedures, including the following locker room guidelines:

- Entry to the locker room requires security badge access and is only to be used by the badge owner.
- Use of a locker by a person other than to whom it is assigned is forbidden.
- The lock combination code cannot be shared with anyone and must remain confidential. Students must not place their own lock on a locker.
- The student assigned to the locker is the person responsible for all items within the locker.
- NCHC retains ownership of all employee lockers and therefore reserves the right to inspect/open a locker at any time with or without the consent of the user. If the locker must be opened by anyone other than the person using the locker, a member of management, Human Resources, or Safety and Security, and one additional witness normally shall be present. NCHC has the right to remove any facility property or any other item(s) that are stored in violation of our policies from the lockers.
- Flammable materials, dangerous chemicals, explosives or weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited inside the lockers. Perishable items, illegal or controlled substances such as drugs or alcohol, inappropriate material, or items in violation of the Anti-Harassment policy, are also strictly prohibited inside the lockers.
- Lockers must be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner. Users are not permitted to affix anything to the interior or exterior of their lockers. Absolutely no graffiti, writing, painting, or any other form of vandalism will be allowed.
- Upon assignment and during use, users are responsible for reporting any damage or needed repairs to Safety and Security. Users will assume the cost of any unreported damages.
- All personal items must be stored completely within the locker. All items left outside of a locker, whether secured or not, may be removed and disposed of accordingly.
- All personal items must be removed prior to the end of all student placements. If personal items are left, lockers will be cleaned out and all contents held by Safety and Security.

2.7 Onboarding Requirements

- During onboarding, students/schools must complete:
 1. Student Handbook Attestation, including a Student Participation & Confidentiality Agreement
 2. Health Requirements Attestation
- If a patient is on isolation precautions, check with staff
- When onsite in a student capacity, employees should not wear an employee badge nor complete any job-related tasks outside of your student responsibilities.

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3. Regulatory and Compliance Requirements

Your safety – and the safety, privacy, and dignity of the people we serve – is incredibly important at NCHC. As a student, you're expected to follow all policies, regulations, and basic safety practices while you're here.

3.1 Patient Rights

Every person receiving care at NCHC has the right to be treated with respect, be involved in decisions about their care, and receive clear information about the services being provided.

- Patients must be informed when receiving services from students and may decline student involvement.

3.2 HIPAA & Confidentiality

Protecting patient privacy is a legal requirement and a core part of how we provide person centered care.

- Only access patient information if your instructor or preceptor directs you to do so as part of your learning.
- Do not discuss patient information in public areas or outside your learning environment.
- Never take pictures onsite or post about your experience – this includes anything related to patients, residents, or clients – on social media.
- Any papers with patient information must be placed in the secure shredding bins. When in doubt, ask your instructor or preceptor.

3.3 Corporate Compliance & Reporting Concerns

NCHC follows all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. As part of our compliance standards, students must immediately report any situation involving:

- **Fraud, Waste, or Abuse:** This includes falsifying information, misusing resources, or engaging in practices that result in unnecessary cost or improper care.
- **Abuse, Neglect, or Misappropriation:** Abuse includes any action that causes physical or emotional harm. Neglect occurs when necessary care or supervision is not provided. Misappropriation refers to theft, misuse, or unauthorized use of a patient's personal property.
- **Workplace Violence or Harassment:** This includes threats, intimidation, harassment, bullying, or any behavior that makes you or others feel unsafe.
- **Any situation that feels unsafe, unethical, or non-compliant.**

If you witness or suspect any of the above – even if you are unsure – notify your preceptor, instructor, or any staff member right away.

- You can report concerns to your preceptor/instructor, directly to leadership/HR/Compliance, or following instructions available at nrcen.org/about-us/quality-compliance/report-a-concern/.
- NCHC follows a non-retaliation policy for all good-faith reporting. Early reporting helps protect patient safety, maintains ethical care, and supports a culture of integrity at NCHC.

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3.4 Emergency Preparedness

If an emergency happens, stay calm and follow staff direction. Your role as a student is to listen, stay safe, and support staff as directed. If needed, our emergency number on the Wausau Campus is 4599, in addition to the standard option of 911. Here are some of the emergency codes you may hear onsite:

- Facility alerts include fires and evacuations. Evacuation maps are posted throughout the building.
- Weather alerts include severe weather warnings. Interior storm areas are marked on maps around the building.
- Security alerts include Behavioral Health Emergencies (Dr. Green), lockdowns, or other safety threats.
- Medical alerts include sudden medical changes requiring urgent clinical response such as Rapid Response and Code Blue.

3.5 Suicide Awareness & Prevention

Because NCHC serves individuals who may be experiencing significant emotional distress, suicide awareness is important. As a student, your role is to remain alert to any statements or behaviors that may suggest a person is feeling unsafe. If you ever have concerns – no matter how small – immediately notify your preceptor/instructor or any staff member. Prompt communication helps ensure the safety and well being of the people we serve.



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4. Onsite Logistics

4.1 Scheduling

- All scheduling must be coordinated with your preceptor or instructor.
- Prompt communication of any schedule changes (due to sickness, unexpected circumstances, late arrival, or other absences) is expected.

4.2 Parking

- Students may park in designated employee parking areas. Map available in Appendix A.
- Any exceptions must be authorized by NCHC leadership or HR. If approved to park in visitor lots, students will be expected to park toward the back of the lot to allow clients and visitors to access the closer parking spots.

4.3 Food & Beverages

While onsite, students are welcome to utilize the amenities we have available for staff. Note, all purchases are paid for by the student and students must follow all department policies regarding food on the units.

- IT-Related Issues: Contact the CCIT Help Desk at 715-261-6710.
- For onsite logistics and scheduling, contact your instructor or preceptor.
- For other questions related to your rotation, contact Learning & Development at nchclearning@norcen.org.

4.4 Questions

- Students may park in designated employee parking areas. Map available in Appendix A.
- Any exceptions must be authorized by NCHC leadership or HR. If approved to park in visitor lots, students will be expected to park toward the back of the lot to allow clients and visitors to access the closer parking spots.

5. Attestation

5.1 Student Participation & Confidentiality Agreement

Please be advised of your legal obligation to keep confidential all information about clients, patients, or residents of North Central Health Care both during and after your affiliation with the facility.

This includes, but is not limited to, their identities, medical or psychological condition, progress, treatment plans, and family relationships.

Federal law regulating confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records, 42 CFR Part 2, provides criminal penalties of \$500 to \$5000 for violations by "any person" of the requirement that all records, **including the identity of a person as a patient**, be kept confidential and disclosed as authorized by law.

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Section 51.30 of the Wisconsin Statutes provides for civil damages, attorney fees, and exemplary damages of \$100 to \$1000 to be awarded against "any person" that violates the requirement that all treatment records of mental health, developmental disabilities, geriatric, alcoholism, or drug dependence be kept confidential. Nothing in the law limits this obligation.

YOU CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF NCHC CLIENTS, PATIENTS, OR RESIDENTS AFTER YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH NCHC HAS ENDED.

I will abide by all North Central Health Care policies and procedures regarding Confidential Information.

If I am given any access security codes or passwords, I agree to use them solely to perform my duties and will not breach the security of the information systems or premises. I will not use or disclose or misuse security codes or passwords. I will not misuse or attempt to alter North Central Health Care information systems in any way. I understand that North Central Health Care reserves the right to audit, investigate, monitor, access, review and disclose information obtained through the information systems at any time, with or without advance notice to me and with or without my knowledge. I understand I will be held accountable for my work and any changes made under my password and security codes. I understand that I am responsible for the accuracy of information submitted under my passwords and security codes.

I am expected to be covered by my own health insurance at all times, including hospitalization insurance. Should I seek routine or emergency medical care, I understand that I will be responsible for the cost of such care.

I am not and will not be an employee of North Central Health Care by virtue of my participation in this Clinical Program at North Central Health Care and shall not be entitled to compensation or employee benefits of any kind, including but not limited to health insurance, workers' compensation insurance or unemployment benefits.

I understand that violations of North Central Health Care policy may subject me to immediate termination of my assignment at North Central Health Care, as well as civil sanctions and/or criminal penalties.

I attest that I have read and agree to abide by the NCHC Student Handbook.

Student Name

Educational Institution

Student Signature

Date

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Appendix A

