



North Central Health Care

Person centered. Outcome focused.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Volunteer Services of North Central Health Care • 715.848.4450

Updated 04/2025

Dear Volunteer:

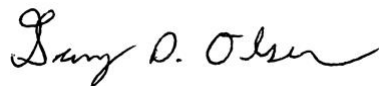
Your commitment to North Central Health Care (NCHC) is truly valued and appreciated. As you embark on your journey as a volunteer, it's essential to acquaint yourself with the policies, procedures, and regulations that shape our collaborative efforts. This handbook serves as a roadmap, guiding you through your role and responsibilities within our organization.

This document is designed to guide all volunteers across NCHC. Should you have any questions or require further clarification on any aspect of this material, our dedicated Volunteer Service team is here to assist you.

At NCHC, we believe in fostering a culture of open communication and collaboration. Your ideas, suggestions, and feedback are invaluable to us as we strive to continuously improve and enhance our services. Your active participation is crucial in shaping the future of our organization.

We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to work alongside you as we collectively strive to fulfill our mission of providing quality healthcare services to our community.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary D. Olsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Gary Olsen
Executive Director

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1. Our Values

Volunteer Services Mission

Our Volunteers are committed to providing quality services for our clients, patients and residents. Our programs are aimed at creating a warm, friendly, home-like environment, with a genuine concern for the dignity and special needs of everyone. Volunteers enable clients, patients and residents to participate in the programs and events within our facility and to take part in community outings.

Volunteer Services Vision - To be recognized as a leader in providing innovative and rewarding volunteer opportunities.

Core Values - As a volunteer, you are an ambassador for North Central Health Care. It is important that you positively support our values and mission. North Central Health Care practices the following Core Values.

Dignity: We are dedicated to providing excellent service with acceptance and respect to every individual, every day.

Integrity: We keep our promises and act in a way where doing the right things for the right reasons is standard.

Accountability: We commit to positive outcomes and each other.

Partnership: We are successful in building positive relationships by working across the organization as a trusted County partner.

Continuous Improvement: We embrace change, value feedback, creativity and the advancement of excellence.

Person Centered Service - Person centered service is serving others through effective communication, listening to understand and building meaningful relationships. It is a philosophy North Central Health Care implements to serve others.



2. Volunteer Practices and Procedures

When you become a volunteer you join in a special endeavor – to create the best experience possible for our clients, patients and residents. Your words and actions can leave a lasting impression on a client, patient, resident or family.

Volunteer Benefits

As a valued member of the North Central Health Care (NCHC) Volunteer program, you are offered special service and benefits. These include:

- Free Flu shots
- Free TB health screenings
- Invitations to Volunteer Recognition and other special events

Attendance

Consistent and dependable attendance is vital to the success of our volunteer program. If you have accepted a volunteer assignment, we are counting on you. Please make every effort to be here. Call the volunteer office at 715-848-4450 if you will be late or are unable to work your assignment.

Badges

All volunteers must wear their NCHC identification badge on the upper third of their body. Wearing your badge helps patients, families and staff to recognize you as a volunteer. If you misplace your badge, please contact the Volunteer Services office.

Signing In and Out

All volunteers must sign in and out each day they volunteer. Sign-in sheets can be found at the Guest Services desk in the Bistro Lobby.

Please make sure you take the time to record your hours. This enables us to keep an accurate account of the volunteer hours that are being given to our facility.

Dress Code

Volunteers are asked to dress in a clean and neat manner. Clothing should be fitting to the assignment. It is suggested to wear comfortable shoes. No ripped jeans or extremely short skirts or shorts. Your volunteer badge must always be worn. All volunteers are asked to use common sense regarding these guidelines. The Volunteer Services staff reserves the right to ask a volunteer to leave if their dress is inappropriate.

Personal Belongings

Do not leave personal belongings unattended. Please leave valuables locked in your car and place them out of view in the trunk or glove compartment. We cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. If you lose something, a lost and found is located at the Guest Services desk in the lobby. You may also leave personal items in the Volunteer Services office, knowing that the room is not secured.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phone use is not permitted during volunteer time, except in the case of an emergency. Wearing headphones and listening to music while volunteering is prohibited. You may NOT take photos or recordings of any type while volunteering due to HIPAA.

No Smoking Policy

In keeping with NCHC's intent to provide a safe healthful environment, smoking is prohibited throughout the building and on the NCHC grounds. Smoking is permitted in one's own personal vehicle.

Donations

Volunteers are not permitted to purchase personal items from patients or accept donations, money or gifts from patients.

If you wish to make a donation to a specific client, patient, resident or department at NCHC, please contact the Volunteer office for the correct procedure. Volunteers shall not accept or provide benefits that could be seen as creating conflict between their personal interests and NCHC legitimate business interests.

Annual Training

To ensure the safety and well-being of residents, nursing homes are required to provide annual training for all volunteers. Regular training helps maintain high standards of care and ensures that volunteers continue to contribute effectively to the care environment.

Change of Contact Information

It is important to keep our records accurate to contact you and to ensure you receive mail from NCHC. Notify a member of the Volunteer Services staff with any changes to your personal information, including changes to your address, email, phone number or name.

Ending of Volunteer Service

We expect your volunteer service to be satisfying and beneficial. If you wish to end your service with us, please let the Volunteer Services office know of your decision.

Volunteer Service Termination

Be aware that failure to follow NCHC's volunteer policies and procedures may result in the discontinuance of volunteering. The following practices, though not all-inclusive, would discontinue the volunteer assignment:

- Discourtesy to clients, patients, residents, staff, family members, or visitors.
- Dishonesty or theft
- Intoxication while volunteering
- Use of abrasive language
- Breach of confidentiality
- Being under the influence of drugs while volunteering
- Continued absence without notice
- Abuse of dress code guidelines.

3. Serving our Clients, Patients and Residents

Healthcare Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)

All our volunteers are responsible for protecting the privacy of the patients who receive our care. HIPPA is designed to protect private health information (PHI) which includes name, date of birth, address, unit, etc. For any HIPAA – related questions and issues, contact the Volunteer Services office.

Patient Confidentiality

As a volunteer, you may have knowledge of confidential patient information or confidential information about a patient's family. All information about a client, patient or resident is confidential and this information cannot be disclosed to anyone. Disclosing confidential patient information has possible civil and criminal penalties.

By signing the Confidentiality Acknowledgement for Non-Employees (Appendix 2), a volunteer agrees to:

- Uphold their legal obligation to keep all information about clients, patients or residents of North Central Health Care confidential both during and after your affiliation with the facility
- Not reveal (to anyone) the name or identity of a client, patient or resident, medical or psychological condition, progress, treatment plans and family relationships
- Not repeat (to anyone) any statements or communication made by or about any client, patient or resident
- Not reveal (to anyone) any information that you learn about the client, patient or resident as a result of discussions with others providing care to the patient
- Not to stay in a patient's room while a procedure is being performed or discussed by a clinician.
- Not photograph a client, patient or resident. Videotapes, audiotapes, photography (**including cell phones and smart phones**) and/or motion pictures or interviews of any client, patient or resident may not be taken on a volunteer's personal device.
- Not post any patient or family information or photographs on any social media sites.
- Not write or publish any articles, papers, stories or other written materials that will contain the name of any patient or information from which the name or identities of any patient can be discerned. If anything is written about your volunteer experience here, you agree that you will submit it to the Volunteer Office for approval prior to its use.

Client, Patient and Resident Rights

Residents have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and independence. This includes their right to make decisions about their own care, privacy, and participation in activities. Volunteers should support these rights by being mindful of each resident's personal preferences, maintaining confidentiality, and advocating for their needs when necessary. It's your responsibility to ensure that residents are not subjected to abuse, neglect, or discrimination, and that they have the opportunity to live in a safe and supportive environment. Always approach your volunteer role with kindness and a commitment to upholding these rights.

QAPI:

QAPI (Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement) is a process used in nursing homes to ensure residents receive the best care possible. As a volunteer, your role in QAPI is to help identify areas where care can improve by providing feedback and assisting with activities that support resident well-being. By being observant and actively engaged, you contribute to enhancing the quality of care and the overall experience for residents.

Risk Management

We strive to provide a warm, caring and safe environment for our patients, visitors and employees, but everyone is responsible for identifying and reporting potential risks. If during your volunteer shift you encounter a situation involving a client, patient, resident or visitor that appears unsafe, or any activity that is a potential risk to NCHC, contact your immediate supervisor or the Volunteer Services Office.

Person Centered Service

To make others comfortable, always address everyone in a warm, sincere manner. Make eye contact, smile and greet those you pass in the hallways.

Diversity

NCHC is a diverse organization. Please be respectful of people who may be of a different race, age, religion or background than you are.

Working with Special Populations

NCHC serves a wide variety of residents, patients and clients. Here are some tips for working with a diverse population:

1. **Different Needs and Experiences:** Residents may have unique backgrounds, including a history of trauma, mental health conditions, or substance use. These factors can affect their behavior and how they interact with others.
2. **Communication Skills:** Some residents may have difficulty expressing themselves. It's important to be patient, use clear and simple language, and be attentive to non-verbal cues like body language.
3. **Respect and Dignity:** Always treat residents with respect, regardless of their condition. Maintain their dignity and involve them in decisions about their care when possible.
4. **Triggers and Responses:** Certain situations, environments, or even sounds may trigger negative emotional responses. Understanding potential triggers can help prevent stress or agitation.
5. **Non-Pharmacological Approaches:** Many residents may benefit from calming techniques, music therapy, art, or relaxation exercises rather than medication to manage stress or anxiety.
6. **Promote Engagement:** Encourage participation in activities that align with the resident's interests. Meaningful activities can improve their mood and create positive social interactions.
7. **Patience and Flexibility:** Residents may have unpredictable moods or behavior changes. Being flexible and patient is key to supporting their well-being.
8. **Know When to Seek Help:** If a resident's behavior becomes concerning or if you're unsure how to handle a situation, it's important to know when to alert nursing staff or other professionals for support.

Keep a Professional Relationship

Always remember your boundaries with a client, patient or resident. Always knock before entering someone's room. Always identify yourself as a volunteer. If a procedure is being performed, please excuse yourself and come back later.

Do not assume you can touch a patient or their personal items. Always ask permission first. It is not ok to accept gifts of food, money or items from a patient.

You should only be at NCHC during your designated volunteer shift. As a volunteer, you will get to know clients, patients and residents but it is best to only visit them when you are volunteering. Never give patients personal contact info. Let them know that the Volunteer services staff can always get in touch with you.

Even if you can relate to their illness or injury, do not give a client, patient or resident your personal experience or opinion. If a client, patient or resident talks to you about their problems or illnesses, be a listener. Do not offer advice.

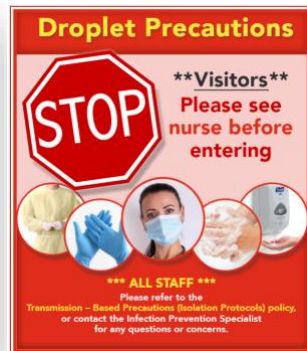
4. INFECTION CONTROL


Stopping the Spread of Infection

No one wants to get an infection or disease. Infection and diseases cannot start if germs are not spread around. NCHC has several control methods put in place to aid in stopping the spread of infection and disease. Working as a volunteer has no greater risk of getting an infection than going out in public. In healthcare, we take additional steps to prevent illness from occurring; however, sometimes you may get sick. If this does happen, report any illness to the Volunteer Services office.

The best way to avoid getting an infection is to follow these simple guidelines.

1. **Hand Hygiene is the Best Defense for You and Our Clients/Patients/Residents.**
Washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer, is required before and after patient contact. Don't forget to offer the client, patient or resident an opportunity to wash their hands.
2. **Cover Your Cough**
3. **Stay at Home When You Are Sick.**
Please take care of yourself first. If you are not feeling well, stay home and volunteer another day.
4. **Use the Disinfectant Wipes on Hard Surfaces and Equipment** like walkers, wheelchairs, etc. Apply the disinfectant liberally. Remember while the disinfectant is drying the bugs are dying.
5. **Stay Current on Your Immunizations.** Many diseases today can be prevented by getting vaccinated. Speak with your personal health provider if you have any questions or concerns. Flu and COVID vaccinations are offered to volunteers free of charge.
6. **Follow the Isolation Signs Posted.**
Isolation signs will give you instructions on what precautions you will need to take if you choose to go in a resident's room. You are allowed to visit as long as you follow the signs on the door. Ask the nurse if you have any questions.





North Central
Health Care

quickreference

Isolation Precautions – Active Infection

Signs placed on resident's door and head of bed	Standard Precautions	CONTACT	ENTERIC CONTACT	DROPLET	AIRBORNE	RESPIRATORY AFB
Clinical Situation ▶	All Patients	MDRO's Draining Wounds	Diarrhea	Upper Respiratory Infections	Shingles, Measles, Chickenpox	Tuberculosis
Wear Gloves	Contact w/blood, body fluids or potentially contaminated materials	Wear gloves upon entering room	Wear gloves upon entering room	Standard Precautions	Standard Precautions	Standard Precautions
Wear Gown	Contact w/blood, body fluids or potentially contaminated materials	Wear gown upon entering room	Wear gown upon entering room	Standard Precautions	Standard Precautions	Standard Precautions
Wear Mask	Contact w/blood, body fluids or potentially sprays of respiratory secretions	Standard Precautions	Standard Precautions	Surgical Mask	Standard Precautions (only accurate personnel should care for patient)	N95 Respirator or PAPR

Volunteer Health Requirements

All individuals that volunteer must pass a TB health screening examination prior to volunteering. A questionnaire will be done for TB annually.

Volunteer Illness

If you are not feeling well, please stay home and notify the Volunteer Services team of your absence. Do not come in if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Diarrhea
- Fever or chills
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Vomiting

Please help us to keep our clients, patients, residents, staff and families healthy.

Injury policy

All injuries, either to a volunteer or client, patient or resident, must be reported immediately to the staff supervisor.

5. SAFETY GUIDELINES

General Safety

Volunteers must always follow safety rules to protect clients, patients, residents and themselves. Make the patient's safety your first priority in every situation. Following procedures and making simple observations can help avoid accidents.

Volunteers are expected to observe prescribed safety rules and common safety practices and to support safety programs by NCHC.

The following general safety rules are to be followed:

- Know your volunteer duties
- Report unsafe acts, conditions and unsafe equipment – slippery floors, loose carpeting, etc.
- Do not run, even in emergencies - walk briskly and use caution around corners and in doorways
- Wear proper clothing
- Wash your hands often
- Watch for precaution signs on resident's doors – obey them
- Follow all infection control procedures and policies.

Guidelines for Transporting Residents

Use these guidelines when gathering and transporting residents to and from activities:

1. Watch the hallway mirrors closely. Mirrors are located on the ceilings. Hallways can be very busy at times, and we do not want to have a collision.
2. Observe all posted signs outside a resident's room. Follow all directions indicated on the sign. If you have a question, please ask a staff member.
3. Knock before entering a resident's room. Wait to be invited in.
4. Upon entering, introduce yourself face to face. Inform the residents of the event and offer to assist them to the activity.
5. Before transporting a resident, make sure the resident has wheelchair pedals on the wheelchair. Volunteers cannot put wheelchair pedals on, so ask for assistance from staff before transporting.
6. Utilize the sign out book at the unit clerk desk when taking residents off the unit.
7. Return residents to the common area where staff are available, and not to their room. This is a safety precaution for the residents.
8. While at the activity, never lock the brakes on a resident's wheelchair.
9. Do not assist with feeding in any way. Staff must feed all food and drinks to residents. You can assist by passing out napkins, utensils and visiting with residents.
10. If you have any questions during a group activity there will always be an Activities staff member that you can direct your questions to. Do not be shy.

Thank you for Joining our Volunteer Team!

We understand you have just been a lot of important information about volunteering at North Central Health Care. The most important piece of advice we can give you is: when in doubt, ask.

Thank you for your interest in helping those who are served by North Central Health Care. We are so very glad you have joined our team.

Acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of North Central Health Care Volunteer Handbook

I have received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. I know that I must understand the information contained in this handbook so that I may comprehend my rights and responsibilities as a volunteer of NCHC. I also know if I have any questions concerning any of this information, I am to talk with my supervisor or the Volunteer Services Department.

I understand that these Statements do not constitute an employment contract. I realize that NCHC may interpret, clarify, revise, and/or deviate from the Statements set forth in this document.

My signature on this form indicates that I agree to abide to all terms and provisions designated in this handbook and any other policies of NCHC. I will comply with those policies as they are written and as they may be modified from time to time.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Print Name

Turn this page into the Volunteer Services Office

Appendix 1: The Wisconsin Caregiver Law

Summary of Caregiver Misconduct as It Applies to Volunteers

Caregiver misconduct in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities can have serious consequences for the well-being of residents. While volunteers are not typically paid caregivers, they still have a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of behavior and professionalism when interacting with residents. The following outlines types of misconduct and how they apply to volunteers:

Types of Caregiver Misconduct:

1. **Abuse:** This includes physical, emotional, or verbal abuse towards residents. Volunteers must never engage in any form of abuse, which can involve hitting, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise mistreating a resident.
2. **Neglect:** Volunteers are expected to ensure that residents' needs are met. Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide necessary care, including assistance with personal hygiene, feeding, or medications. Volunteers must report any signs of neglect or inadequate care they observe.
3. **Exploitation:** Volunteers must avoid any action that could lead to the exploitation of a resident, including financial exploitation or coercion. Any attempt to take advantage of a resident for personal gain is considered misconduct.
4. **Failure to Report Misconduct:** Volunteers are obligated to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation they witness or are aware of. Failing to report misconduct is considered a serious violation.
5. **Violation of Resident Rights:** Volunteers must respect the dignity and privacy of residents. Misconduct includes invading a resident's privacy, making inappropriate comments, or failing to maintain confidentiality regarding their personal and medical information.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- **Compliance with Policies:** Volunteers must adhere to all facility policies and procedures, including those related to abuse prevention, reporting requirements, and ethical standards of care.
- **Training and Education:** Volunteers must complete any required training, including those on resident rights, abuse prevention, and standard precautions.
- **Duty to Report:** Volunteers must immediately report any incidents or suspicions of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the appropriate supervisor or authorities.

Acknowledgment and Sign-Off Sheet

By signing, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the information regarding caregiver misconduct as it applies to volunteers. I agree to uphold the standards outlined above and understand my responsibility to provide compassionate, ethical care to residents. I am aware that any form of misconduct, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, or failure to report such behavior, will result in immediate action and could lead to termination of my volunteer status.

I acknowledge the following:

- I will report any suspected or observed abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the appropriate authority.
- I will comply with all facility policies regarding resident care and confidentiality.
- I understand that violations of caregiver misconduct policies may result in disciplinary action, including removal from my volunteer position.

I have read the above definitions of caregiver misconduct. I understand I must immediately report any conduct I observe or gain knowledge of that which could potentially meet this definition to my immediate supervisor, or in the event that the situation involves my immediate supervisor, I understand I must report to another supervisory individual immediately.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

NORTH CENTRAL HEALTH CARE

CONFIDENTIALITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR NON-EMPLOYEES

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. 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 acknowledge that I have read the above and agree to follow this policy.

Signed _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Reason for Affiliation _____

Facility Representative _____

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Turn this page into the Volunteer Services Office

APPENDIX 3 - Self test

Volunteer Self-Test

Name: _____

Date: _____

Read the questions below circle the correct answer and return the test to Volunteer Department.

- 1.) Annual training is required by all volunteers. **True False**
- 2.) It is ok to assume that NCHC is aware of a problem and it is not your responsibility to report a problem to management. **True False**
- 3.) All information about a client, patient, or resident is confidential and this information cannot be disclosed to anyone. Disclosing confidential patient information has possible civil and criminal penalties. **True False**
- 4.) North Central Health Care is a smoke free campus. **True False**
- 5.) All volunteers are expected to be neatly dressed and wear their photo ID badge while volunteering at North Central Health Care. **True False**
- 6.) Volunteers do not need to follow the HIPPA guidelines on confidentiality. **True False**
- 7.) Volunteers are not permitted to use mobile phones, while volunteering, except in the case of an emergency. **True False**
- 8.) It is ok to photograph or video tape residents and clients while you are volunteering. **True False**
- 9.) If a volunteer witnesses any abuse or neglect, whether it be verbal or physical, it needs to be reported to their supervisor immediately. **True False**
- 10.) All volunteers are expected to maintain a professional relationship with all clients and residents that they interact with. **True False**
- 11.) As a volunteer your personal information (phone number, address, etc.) should not be given to a client or resident. **True False**
- 12.) Injuries or illnesses that occur while volunteering do not need to be reported. **True False**
- 13.) To report an emergency, volunteers should dial x4599. **True False**
- 14.) Volunteers must understand basic infection control practices in order to ensure the best possible care for our residents related to stopping the spread of infection. **True False**
- 15.) Misappropriation of property is any of the following: intentional taking, carrying away, using, concealing or retaining possession of a client's property without the clients consent. **True False**

Turn this page into the Volunteer Services Office