



# Patient Care Aide Program

## Trainee Handbook

September 2020

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## **I. What is a Patient Care Aide?**

Patient care aides (PCA) assist patients with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating. In the hospital setting, they are responsible for taking the patient's vital signs, temperature, pulse, respirations, and blood pressure and notifying the nurse of important changes. The PCA may perform other duties as needed to assist with patient care. The PCA must exhibit the ability to work with people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds; to organize, set and manage multiple priorities, and to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. The PCA is an important team member that reports to a Registered Nurse (RN) and/or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) on the unit they are assigned.

### **Organizational Goals:**

Vision – to be one of the best health systems in America and consistently strive to provide clinical and service excellence

Mission – to provide high quality care and services that improves the health of those we serve

### **Values**

- Safety – eliminating or minimizing potential harm to our patients, visitors, physician and employees
- Compassion – awareness of the needs of others
- Integrity – being consistent, honest, and fair in everything we do
- Excellence – exceeding the standards in service, clinical and financial performance
- Innovation – promoting creativity to enhance patient care & organization performance through a team environment
- Accountability – taking responsibility and ownership for our actions and their outcomes

## **II. Employment Eligibility Verification**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for verifying new employees' eligibility to work in the United States, in accordance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act. New employees must complete a Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification provided by the Human Resources Department, and provide acceptable supporting documents within three business days after they begin employment with HH Health System. The information reported on Form I-9 will be used to determine the eligibility of the employee to work in the United States via E-Verify.

New employees are required to present the documentation to satisfy the Form I-9 requirements within three days from the date they begin employment. In most cases this date is the employee's orientation date. If these requirements are not met in this timeframe the employee will be removed from payroll. Human Resources will accept a receipt of proof that the employee has applied for the required documents, however the original document must be produced within ninety days from the date the employee begins employment or the employee will be removed from payroll. In accordance with federal law, new employees will not be permitted to work if they fail to provide the proper documentation within a reasonable timeframe or citizenship cannot be proven via E-Verify.

No employee is authorized to state or imply that HH Health System will obtain visas or United States citizenship for alien employees or alien prospective employees.

## **III. Tuition Fees and Other Costs**

- There is no tuition. When accepted into the program the trainee becomes a full-time Huntsville Hospital employee based on a 36-hour work week with full benefits.
- Trainees accepted into the program must sign a contract committing to work for Huntsville Hospital for 1 year after the completion of training. This is required to participate in the education program.
- Textbook costs will vary, and required texts will be communicated to accepted trainees during the acceptance process.
- Uniform costs will vary. The required uniform (scrub suit) is Pewter Gray in color and fully enclosed shoes.

## **IV. Patient Care Aide Responsibilities & Skills**

**A. Responsibilities for Patient Care Aide**

1. Provides basic nursing care to patients within the Patient Care Aide scope of practice that includes actions that meet psychosocial, cultural, spiritual, and physical needs.
2. Performs basic patient care responsibilities considering needs specific to the standard of care for patient's age.
3. Assists in admission, transfer and discharge of patient.
4. Provides explanation to patient and family prior to administering care to patient; answers questions within scope of practice.
5. Demonstrates and ability to be flexible, organized and function under stressful situations.
6. Responds to patient in emergency or physically distressful situations.
7. Documentation meets current standards and policies.
8. Assumes accountability for appropriate utilization of resources.
9. Performs duties as assigned, within the Patient Care Aide's scope of practice.

**B. Upon successful completion of this course, the learner will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate professional behavior while performing the duties and responsibilities of a PCA.
2. Discuss legal implications involved in patient care.
3. Demonstrate providing patient care specific to the patient's needs.
4. Identify the duties and responsibilities of each member of the healthcare team.
5. Demonstrate basic knowledge of the disease processes and the impact on patient care.
6. Perform basic nursing care under the supervision of a RN/LPN and within the scope of a PCA practice
7. Practice in the role as a co-operative team member
8. Identify safety precautions required in the healthcare environment.
9. Demonstrate basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology
10. Demonstrate knowledge of medical terminology.
11. Demonstrate knowledge of policies and procedures.
12. Demonstrate the ability to provide patient care in a timely and efficient manner
13. Demonstrate correct body mechanics when moving or transferring a patient.
14. Discuss communication skills utilized in the healthcare environment

**V. Expectations**

**As a student and hospital employee, trainees are expected to follow all policies of Huntsville Hospital and the Patient Care Aide Program.**

**A. Mobile Devices**

**Cellular Phones, Camera Phones and Electronic Devices**

While at school students are expected to exercise discretion in using personal cellular phones. Cell phones, headphones, or any other electronic device such as IPods, MP3 players, watches etc. may **not** be used in the clinical setting, presence of patients or any public areas to include hallways and public elevators.

Acceptable areas of use are the cafeteria, break rooms, parking garages/lots.

Excessive personal calls/texting during the workday can interfere with student productivity, be distracting to others, and may interfere with the clinical monitoring equipment used for patients.

**Cell phones and other electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom setting.**

A reasonable standard is to limit personal calls/texting to authorized rest or meal periods. Students are therefore asked to make personal calls/texting on non-class time and to ensure that friends and family members are aware of the hospital/school policy.

Flexibility will be provided in circumstances demanding immediate attention with instructor approval.

Huntsville Hospital strictly prohibits use of cell phone cameras when such use might potentially breach employee, patient or customer confidentiality or privacy. Therefore, use of cameras in the clinical setting (anywhere within Huntsville Main, Women's and Children's, GMT, Madison Hospital) is strictly prohibited.

Use of cameras in the classroom setting is permissible at selected times, as long as it is not disruptive.

Students found in violation of this policy will receive disciplinary action and /or immediate dismissal using the code of

conduct policy. (The complete Cellular Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy can be located on HH Health System's Intranet)

## **B. Appearance and Attire Policy**

Those individuals representing Huntsville Hospital System have a responsibility to not only provide quality health care to our customers, but to look the part as well. You are expected to demonstrate professionalism and good judgment at all times concerning make up, clothing, personal hygiene, and appearance. Clothing must fit, be clean and pressed, be appropriate for your size, and not drag the floor. Clothing and jewelry which may pose a safety hazard or which could interfere with or detract from the delivery of high quality patient care or other business functions of the hospital will not be permitted. We require that you observe the following specific standards regarding personal appearance and neatness while performing your duties:

**Identification badges** must be worn by employees at all times when at work or in a class or meeting on campus. The badge picture and name on the badge must be visible, readable, clean, and show no damage. Employees cannot wear the badge at or below the waist or attach anything to the badge, including stickers, decals, pins, or similar items, unless the items are HH Health System hospital-issued, issued by an academic institution, or approved by Human Resources. Employees should not wear their badge off campus when not on duty.

**Personal hygiene** is very important. Showering and the use of antiperspirant or deodorants are required. Strong perfume, aftershave, and scented lotions are not permitted. All fragrances are discouraged.

**Smoking/Tobacco Products:** Employees who use tobacco products must eliminate smoke odor from clothing, skin, and breath while at work. If you have a smoke/cigarette smell on your person or clothes while at work, you may be sent home to change your uniform or clothes and eliminate the smell before returning to work.

**Hair** must be neat, clean, well groomed, and a natural color (i.e. no pink, purple, blue, glitter, etc.). Distracting extremes in hair styling, dyeing, bleaching, coloring, or shaving designs into the hair are not permitted (i.e. no Mohawks). No excessive or distracting hair accessories. Hair below shoulder length should be secured so as not to interfere with patient care.

Mustaches, beards, and goatees are permitted but must be neatly trimmed, clean, and not present a bushy or uncombed appearance. Mustaches must not extend over the lip.

**Contact lenses** or tinted lenses must not be distracting.

**Fingernails** are to be kept clean and cannot exceed ¼ inch from the tip of the finger. Nail polish, nail art, and nail bubbling are not permitted. Artificial nails (i.e. acrylic/gel overlays, acrylic/gel nails, wraps, tips, shellac polish, powder gel, jam berry, stones, silk, fiberglass, extensions, UV gel sculpted or cured, crackles and any nail or polish strengthener or hardener are not allowed.

**Earrings** must not be larger than 1 inch in diameter and stud type only.

Visible body piercing (other than earrings) is not permitted. This includes tongue piercing and forking, eyebrow piercing, noticeable spacers/large holes in the ear lobe, (no gauges), noticeable nose piercing and any other piercing deemed as distracting.

**Pins** are permitted if they are HH Health System issued and/or issued by academic institutions and/or approved by Human Resources. Employees may wear up to two pins on their lapel or through the slot at the top of their badge.

**Tattoos** - Employees who have a visible tattoo that could reasonably be considered degrading, offensive, or demeaning to patients, family members, co-workers, or management must have the tattoo covered at all times while on health system property. Tattoos on the neck and face are not permitted. Employees will be required to cover a tattoo if a patient complains about it while they are being cared for. Department Directors have the authority to ask employees to cover tattoos if they feel the tattoo is extreme or distracting. In addition, extreme body altering and branding must not be visible.

**Uniforms:** Pewter (Dark Gray) scrub attire is required and provided by the student. Scrubs may have colored trim. Scrubs with prints are not allowed. Scrubs may be embroidered with Department name or HH. As long as you wear the correct color, you may purchase your scrubs wherever you like. You do not have to use Uniform Center, Parkway Scrubs, or the Foundation uniform sale.

Long-sleeve undershirts are permitted underneath the scrub tops in solid coordinating colors. Burnouts are acceptable.

Undergarment shirts must be tucked into pants or skirts and not extend below scrub top if scrub is worn outside of pants or skirt.

Leggings, hosiery, or tights are to be worn under a dress or skirt (length is no shorter than 3 inches above the top of the knee).

**Pants** must fit appropriately and look professional.

### **Sweatshirts**

Crew neck sweatshirts are permitted in place of scrub top, but they must match designated scrub color and must have the department or practice name/Logo and/or employee name and position title embroidered on them. Zippers or hoods are not permitted. Employee name and position title is not required.

**Shoes** must be closed-toe and be clean and in good condition. They should match or complement the uniform.

### **Universal Masking**

Masks must maintain a professional appearance. Please use good judgement at all times regarding choices with mask designs.

Acceptable masks, and face covering include:

- Solid colors and patterns
- HH logo or HH theme
- Hospital issued
- Team sports or school logos
- Cartoon or child themed are acceptable only in pediatric areas
  
- Update: Respirators brought from home used for Universal Masking must approved by their director
- \*\* Slogans, words, or pictures are not allowed to be worn by hospital employees.

**Only HH Issued PPE can be worn when entering an isolation room**

## **VI. Attendance and Tardy Policy**

**Guidelines for missed clinical days are established and failure to comply may result in dismissal from the program.**

The Patient Care Aide Program operates Monday-Friday 7:00am – 2:30pm during the didactic (classroom) period.

The clinical hours (Clinical Rotations) will begin at 6:30a.m and finish at 7:00p.m (12hr shift) Main.

Each student will be assigned to a preceptor during this time.

While enrolled in the Patient Care Aide Program each student is allowed three absences and four tardies. A tardy is defined as any arrival to class or clinical seven (7) minutes but less than one hour past the scheduled start time without prior approval from the school instructor. Each student that accrues four (4) tardies will receive an absence. Failure to clock-in is not considered a tardy as long as the instructor knows that the student arrived prior to seven (7) minutes but less than one hour past their scheduled start time. A student is also considered tardy if late returning from rest and lunch periods. Upon the fifth tardy, the student will be dismissed from the program.

An absence is defined as any absence from class or clinical for a complete shift, a partial shift, or more than one hour past their scheduled start time. A maximum of two (2) absences will be allowed. Upon the third absence, the student

will be dismissed from the program. Unexpected emergencies will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Each student is expected to attend all scheduled learning experiences. Continued enrollment in the Program depends, in part, on consistent attendance. In academic courses, grades are earned on the basis of the student's attainment of the course objectives; but regular and punctual attendance is expected and will be evaluated weekly.

Because of the importance of attendance in the curriculum, students will be expected to adhere to the following attendance policies:

1. Absences exceeding the course established criteria printed in the course syllabus and handbook will be brought to the attention of the Program Director. The student will be expected to participate in a conference with the Program Director.
2. Instructor-initiated withdrawal may result if the absence limits are exceeded.
3. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of his/her absences and to discuss concerns with the Program Director.
4. Huntsville Hospital recognizes the following major holidays: Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
5. Make-up time will be scheduled at the discretion of the program director or clinical instructor.
6. Tests missed during an absence will be made up immediately upon return with a 10-point penalty. Test not made up will be recorded as a "0". It is the responsibility of the student to schedule all make up tests. The test will differ from the original test.
7. Leaving early during clinical rotations is **not** permitted without the prior approval of the Instructor.

#### **Sick Time**

- Students are required to notify the Program Director and assigned clinical area of any unscheduled absence.
- Sick time may be used for illness of a minor child or spouse.
- Routine dental and doctor appointments should be made on non-class days or after rotation scheduled shift hours.
- Students who are absent will be required to present a physician excuse.
- Each day a student is absent, he/she must notify the Program Director unless duration of the absence is known.

#### **Inclement Weather:**

Huntsville Hospital is a 7-day a week, 24 hour a day facility and circumstances of inclement weather only make manpower more critical. In the event of inclement weather or adverse driving conditions, the student will be notified by the Program Director and/or Instructor. Should a student not be able to get to school during times of inclement weather he/she can take an absent weather day. There will be no penalty for this, but the weather day will be made up if possible during the same pay cycle. The student must contact the Program Director/Instructor to let them know. These policies are in place as a pattern of absences and/or tardies reflects a lack of dependability and commitment and may result in corrective action and discussion about opportunities available for improvement.

#### **Attendance Exceptions**

- Three days bereavement will be granted due to death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as spouse, parent or legal guardian, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, children, grandparent, grandchildren, and step parents.
- Jury Duty
- Military Duty

## **VII. Classroom Requirements & Grading**

To progress to the clinical portion of the program, the student must earn a minimum of a "B" or "80" in the course and successfully complete all required skill check-offs. The course average will be determined by exams, class and homework assignments and computer modules. The grading scale will be:

A= 90 – 100

B= 80 - 89

C= 70-79  
D= 60-69  
F= <59

### **Final Grading System**

Before a student can enter into the clinical setting, all required CBLs must be completed.

During the clinical rotation, the student must be able to meet the clinical objectives satisfactorily and maintain a “B” average. The student will be evaluated daily and receive a written evaluation each week from the preceptor. If the student receives an overall unsatisfactory for 2 evaluations they will be subject to dismissal. It is the student’s responsibility to have all clinical evaluations given to the instructor each week.

## **VIII. Clinical Guidelines**

Students who must miss a clinical experience are expected to notify the preceptor and the Instructor in advance according to the guidelines established for the course. Documentation of illness is required by the Instructor and Program Director.

1. The student must notify the Program Director or Instructor and the preceptor of a clinical absence no less than **sixty (60) minutes** in advance of the scheduled start time.
2. The student must notify the Program Director or Instructor **EACH DAY** he/she is absent.
3. Time missed for arriving late, **7 minutes** or more, will count as a tardy.
4. Medical or other documentation may be required for verification.
5. Time missed for leaving early must be approved by the Program Director or Instructor prior to leaving. Upon approval to leave early, the student must communicate with their preceptor before leaving.
6. Leaving the clinical area is not permitted without the approval of the instructor.
7. Notify the preceptor and/or RN prior to leaving the area for any reason.

### **Employee Identification Badge**

- Employees must wear a HH Health System issued employee identification badge at all times when at work and in such a manner that their picture and name is easily visible and readable. Wearing the badge at or below the waist is not permitted.
- Employees are not permitted to attach anything to the badge, including stickers, decals, pins, or similar items, unless the items are HH Health System hospital-issued, issued by an academic institution, or approved by Human Resources.
- Employees who lose their badge will be required to purchase a replacement. There will be no charge for replacing identification badges due to name or department changes or for badges that have become unserviceable through normal usage, damaged from hospital equipment or have become old and worn.

## **IX. Classroom and Clinical Conduct**

Students will receive disciplinary action and/or immediate dismissal upon any of the following, but not limited to, examples:

- Conduct that is dangerous or hazardous to another person’s health, safety, or personal well-being, including physical abuse or immediate threat of abuse.
- Disorderly conduct, including behavior that is abusive, obscene, lewd, indecent, violent, excessively noisy, disorderly, argumentative, or inappropriate for the classroom or operating room.
- Misuse or damage to property of Huntsville Hospital or personal property of instructors/teachers, patients and their families.
- Failure to cooperate with or violation of Huntsville Hospital policies and procedures.
- Failure to cooperate with Huntsville Hospital supervisors and/or instructors.
- Plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty.
- Inefficiency, inability and/or gross or repeated negligence in performance of assigned clinical duties

- Abandoning or neglecting a patient requiring care.
- Altering, falsifying or making a willful misstatement of facts on any patient's record or chart.
- Tardiness or absences beyond the approved number as stipulated under the above policy.
- Discussing confidential information regarding a patient on or off premises.
- Students are required to badge in upon arrival and badge out upon departure – excessive failure to do so will result in one warning and if the behavior continues, the student will be dismissed from the program.

### **Unsafe and Unprofessional Clinical Practice Defined**

Unsafe clinical practice shall be deemed to be behaviors demonstrated by the student which threaten or violate the physical, biological, or emotional safety of the patient assigned to his/her care. This also applies to all staff members.

The following are examples which may serve as guidelines for the student's understanding of unsafe clinical practices. Examples are not inclusive:

**Physical Safety:** unsafe behaviors: inappropriate use of side rails, wheelchairs, positioning straps and equipment, lack of proper protection of the patient which potentiates falls, lacerations, burns, etc.

**Biological Safety:** unsafe behaviors: fails to recognize errors in aseptic technique, attends clinical site while ill, performs technical actions without appropriate supervision, fails to seek help when needed, etc.

**Emotional Safety:** unsafe behaviors: threatens patient/staff, make patient/staff fearful, provides patient/staff with inappropriate or incorrect information, fails to seek help when needed, and demonstrates unstable emotional behaviors. Unprofessional practice shall be deemed to be behaviors demonstrated by the student which are inappropriate to the student-instructor, student-personnel, or student-patient interactions which may be taken to be unsafe practice or to reflect negatively upon the PCA program or Huntsville Hospital.

Examples of unprofessional practice (not inclusive): verbal or non-verbal language, bullying actions, or voice inflection which compromise rapport or working relations with patients, family members of patients, staff, physicians, or instructors which may compromise contractual agreements and/or working relations with clinical affiliates, or constitute violations of legal or ethical standards.

Students are to be on their best behavior and act Professional at all times with no exceptions.

Students are to follow all Huntsville Hospital policies, rules and guidelines and all Program policies and rules.

### **Disciplinary Process**

1<sup>st</sup> Offence: Verbal Warning with a Teaching Performance Improvement.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offence: Written Warning with a Teaching Performance Improvement.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offence: Dismissal from the Program.

**Probation:** When a student is not maintaining satisfactory performance in any of the following areas: theory grades, clinical performance, attendance, or conduct, the student will be placed on probation. A Student Progress Analysis form will be completed by the faculty member. The faculty members will conference the student regarding the unsatisfactory performance, any follow-up action, and time until re-evaluation.

The student will be re-evaluated at the next evaluation period or sooner, at the discretion of the instructor or director.

**Termination:** If the unsatisfactory performance continues while the student is on probation, the student will be referred to the program director. At this time, the director will make the determination to terminate the student from the program.

### **Academic Honesty**

All students must maintain academic honesty in all aspects of their training. Academic honesty is actions and conditions that encourage scholarship, subject mastery, intellectual growth and development.

#### **Academic dishonesty is defined as:**

1. Cheating on an exercise, test, problem, or examination submitted by a student to meet course requirements.

Cheating includes the use of unauthorized aids; copying from another student's work; soliciting, giving, and/or receiving unauthorized aid orally or in writing; or any similar action contrary to the principles of academic honesty.

2. Plagiarism on an assigned paper, theme or other material submitted to meet course requirements. Plagiarism is the act of using in one's own work the work of another without indicating that source.
3. Use of texts or papers prepared by commercial or noncommercial agents and submitted as a student's own work.
4. Any student who displays academic dishonesty will be dismissed from the program.

**Academic probation results when a student:**

1. Fails to maintain at least an 80% average in any class
2. Is behind in clinical check-offs for the required period.
3. Has received below an 80% in a clinical evaluation.
4. Has received any School action that required a written warning.
5. Has been suspended for any reason.

**Grounds for Dismissal**

The Program reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time for any action listed below. The list below is not entirely inclusive of all actions that might warrant dismissal. Actions less than dismissal are an option in certain extenuating cases; however, it is the sole discretion of the Program Director, Human Resources, and Director of Surgery to even consider options less than dismissal.

1. Failure (below an 80%) of any required class
2. Failure to meet required number of clinical competencies for assigned time-frame
3. Excessive Absences
4. Patient abuse
5. Invasion of privacy
6. Theft
7. Unprofessional conduct
8. Reporting to school under the influence of drugs or alcohol
9. Possession of a weapon
10. Fighting or provoking a fight
11. Unexcused absence
12. Insubordination
13. Conviction of a felony or equivalent charge
14. Immoral conduct
15. Indecency
16. Falsification of personnel or other records
17. Clocking in or out prior to approved time
18. Clocking in or out of another student
19. Improper use of any System or School computer system
20. Failure to maintain a hygienic and clean appearance at all times
21. Failure to report to school without notification
22. Violation of HIPAA regulations
23. Smoking in an undesignated area
24. Selling or possession of illegal drugs
25. Failure to maintain at least an 80% overall GPA due to excessive tardies or absences.

**Smoking**

Huntsville Hospital and all of its facilities are tobacco free. This policy applies to all persons, including staff, physicians, patients and visitors; and it covers all buildings and parking decks which are owned or leased by the hospital. All employees are prohibited from smoking or using any tobacco products (including tobacco-less electronic cigarettes) anywhere within and on the grounds of any hospital owned campus and facility. Violations of the Smoking and Tobacco Products Policy will be addressed promptly and may result in disciplinary action, up to and to include discharge.