



Franklin County Public Health
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Policy Name	Policy Number	Date	Amended or Original?
Code of Public Health Ethics			<input type="checkbox"/> Amended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original
This Public Health Ethics Policy was adopted by the Franklin County Board of Health, doing business as Franklin County Public Health, on Resolution xxxxx with effective date 01/11/2022.			<input type="checkbox"/> Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Original
			<input type="checkbox"/> Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Original
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Rationale

Meetings related this policy were held to gather information on shared values, professional practices, and organizational structures. This Code of Public Health Ethics reflects a consensus on the values, commitments, and standards of conduct within Franklin County Public Health.

It is the policy of Franklin County Public Health that each FCPH employee demonstrates the agency's Code of Ethics' Core Values and commitments with uncompromising integrity in all aspects of their work. The Code of Ethics is the foundation for accomplishing the FCPH mission, delivering public health services, and inspiring the public's trust in FCPH.

The purpose of this Code is threefold: This Code expresses our shared responsibilities. It shall be disseminated to all members of the Board of Health and staff and made available to the community.

- to provide guidance to officers, members, and staff of the Board of Health;
- to encourage and support an institutional culture of ethical awareness and high ethical standards in all aspects of the Board of Health's functions;
- to provide a process of open and transparent decision making.

Policy Details

Basic Values of Public Health

Three values are fundamental to public health professionals and the profession.

1. **Population-based Values:** The basic value of public health is to protect and promote the health and physical well-being of, as well as to prevent injury and disease in, whole populations. It is, therefore, concerned with the fundamental conditions that affect entire communities. It aims to avoid, prevent, and remove harms; produce maximal benefits for the community; and distribute burdens and benefits fairly. Public health works primarily through government agencies and has access to the state's police and coercive powers. The exercise of those powers, however, must be balanced with respect for the rights of individuals in the community.

2. **Advocacy Values:** The population health focus of public health makes the distribution of health and health inequalities across individuals and groups a central concern of the field. An important value of public health is therefore to advocate for disenfranchised, underserved, and vulnerable populations. Accordingly, programs and priorities should ensure an opportunity for all individuals in a community to have a voice, articulate the implications of policies for vulnerable populations, respect the diverse values, beliefs and cultures in a community, and provide a fair distribution of public health resources.

3. **Professional Values:** Another important value of public health is respect for the rights of individuals in the community, including the rights to privacy, confidentiality, and autonomy. The rights of individuals can sometimes conflict with the basic values of public health. Reaching a reasonable balance of values is often difficult and frequently case specific. In each case, we should strive to identify the intervention that is least restrictive while consistent with the public's health. Please see the Principals for Ethical Practice in Public Health, Appendix A.

Mission

Franklin County Public Health improves the health of our communities by preventing disease, promoting healthy living and protecting against public health threats through education, policies, programs and partnerships. We do this by educating and collaborating with the public to prevent disease, reduce health disparities, and enhance the quality of life in Franklin County.

Vision

We serve our communities, our organization, and each other with: Integrity, Accountability, Excellence, Respect and Humility.

Organizational Standards

Public health professionals are expected to adhere to standards of individual professional performance and to the rules and regulations imposed on them by their agencies, public policies, and laws.

In order to meet the mission of the Board of Health and to secure and promote an ethical workplace, members of the Board of Health and staff shall uphold the following organizational values that serve as standards of conduct:

- Accountability: To act responsibly and always adhere to the agency Public Health Code of Ethics.
- Communication: To communicate effectively, timely and accurately.
- Diversity: To appreciate and support diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas.
- Equity: To promote justice, fairness and a commitment to others.
- Excellence: To work at the highest level of performance, delivering services and products of high quality in a competent and timely manner, with a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Stewardship: To manage public resources responsibly and efficiently.

- Promote a positive work environment: Demonstrate courtesy and respect to all. Harassment or discrimination of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This includes discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship or veteran status.
- Work safely: Follow standard and workplace safety precautions, warnings, and regulations in carrying out all their duties and in caring for patients. Report all client, environmental or safety hazards or concerns promptly.
- Promote health equity: Commit to eliminating inequity in health status by promoting access to those resources and opportunities that support quality health care, healthy behaviors, and healthy families, communities and environments.
- HIPAA compliance: Maintain confidentiality of sensitive patient and client information, employee records and other private information, including agency policy and law regarding privacy, confidentiality and inappropriate release of sensitive patient, client, employee or emergency preparedness information. Limit access to sensitive information and obtain appropriate release of information as required by law and policy.
- Report Wrongful Conduct: Promptly report suspected fraud and alleged violations of the Code should be submitted for investigation by the Ethics Advisory Committee (EAC) Chair. Avoid conflicts of interest and/or the appearance of conflicts of interest by understanding the conflict-of-interest policies, disclosing all pertinent facts about potential conflicts, ensuring that their official position is never used for personal gain, and ensuring that no one benefits at the expense of the agency.
- Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest occurs whenever a professional has a private or personal interest sufficient to influence, or that can potentially influence or appear to influence, her or his professional objectivity in the exercise of official duties. Members of the Board of Health and staff will avoid such conflicts and disclose them to their immediate supervisors. Whenever there is doubt that such a conflict exists, members of the Board of Health and staff should request the opinion of the Ethics Advisory Committee.

Public Health Ethics Advisory Committee (EAC)

Purposes of EAC: The EAC is an advisory committee, not intended for enforcement purposes. Its main purpose is to assist the Board of Health and staff in making ethical decisions by applying the organization's public health values.

Other important purposes served by the EAC are:

- Leadership has a particular obligation to create a working environment conducive to ethical conduct and to ensure that individuals may freely express their ethical and professional concerns.
- Members of the Board of Health and staff who have good reason to believe that a violation of this Code has occurred should bring the matter to the attention of the Committee.

EAC Method

- Subsequent to a written request by any member of the Board of Health or staff, the EAC will meet to consider the ethical issues as reflected in this Code. To submit a request, a FCPH Ethics reporting form will need completed and shared with the Health Commissioner.
- The EAC will conduct an initial fact-finding of the issue(s), identify the relevant rights and interests of the stakeholders, apply the relevant values and standards, and, whenever consensus exists, recommend a course of action.

Important principles of procedure are:

1. Composition of the EAC: The EAC seeks to have wide representation. The constituencies to be represented include members of the Board of Health and staff, other public health practitioners, community members, and representatives of relevant professions. Membership is by appointment of the Board of Health or election by staff, with equal representation. Ideally, it will have between ten and twelve members. A chair will be elected by the members of the EAC.
2. Meetings of the EAC: Meetings shall be convened for case consultation subsequent to a written request, for the purpose of educating its members, and on a scheduled basis determined by the chair and members of the EAC. Minutes will be kept from these meetings to historically demonstrate items brought before the EAC as well as the recommendations from the meetings.
3. Recommendations of the EAC: Recommendations from the EAC will be written and provided back to the person(s) bringing the item up for review, along with anyone else appropriate. The Chair, or designee, will make sure that any necessary next steps or actions are taken.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed for revisions every three (3) years.

Approval Signature(s)

Printed Name	Title	Signature	Date

Date Reviewed Click here to enter a date.	Changes Made? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Reviewed By	Approved By
Employee Acknowledgement Required? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Date Notified Click here to enter a date.	Notified By?
How notified? <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Signature Sheet Required			

Date Reviewed Click here to enter a date.	Changes Made? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Reviewed By	Approved By
Employee Acknowledgement Required? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Date Notified Click here to enter a date.	Notified By?
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Appendix A.

Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health

In 2002, the American Public Health Association, under the guidance of the Public Health Leadership Society, adopted twelve ethical principles. Those principles are based on values that are inherent to the professional practice of public health and are intended to guide decisions and deliberations of public health professionals

- to develop the ability to identify an ethical issue in the practice of public health and in the Board of Health
- to provide members of the Board of Health and staff a decision-making process aimed at resolving disagreements on actions by the Board of Health and issuing recommendations on potential actions
- to serve as a consultative body for discussion and recommendations; and to educate the Board of Health and staff on the ethical practice of public health.
- Principle of Democratic Deliberation: The Board of Health exists for the benefit of the community. The rights of the relevant groups, particularly those affected by Board of Health decisions, should be ensured, and further, they may participate, in some sense and whenever possible, in decisions that substantially affect their interests and welfare.
- Principle of Fiduciary Relationship: The Board of Health and staff bear a fiduciary relationship to stakeholder groups and the organization. It must, therefore, act in the interest of the stakeholders, namely, the community and the Board of Health.
- Principle of Organizational Ethics: The deliberations and recommendations of the EAC are to be guided, first and foremost, by the Values and Standards of this Code.
- Public health should address principally the fundamental causes of disease and requirements for health, aiming to prevent adverse health outcomes.
- Public health should achieve community health in a way that respects the rights of individuals in the community.
- Public health policies, programs, and priorities should be developed and evaluated through processes that ensure an opportunity for input from community members.
- Public health should advocate and work for the empowerment of disenfranchised community members, aiming to ensure that the basic resources and conditions necessary for health are accessible to all.
- Public health should seek the information needed to implement effective policies and programs that protect and promote health.
- Public health institutions should provide communities with the information they have that is needed for decisions on policies or programs and should obtain the community's consent for their implementation.
- Public health institutions should act in a timely manner on the information they have within the resources and the mandate given to them by the public.
- Public health programs and policies should incorporate a variety of approaches that anticipate and respect diverse values, beliefs, and cultures in the community.
- Public health programs and policies should be implemented in a manner that most enhances the physical and social environment.
- Public health institutions should protect the confidentiality of information that can bring harm to an individual or community if made public. Exceptions must be justified on the basis of the high likelihood of significant harm to the individual or others.
- Public health institutions should ensure the professional competence of their employees.
- Public health institutions and their employees should engage in collaborations and affiliations in ways that build the public's trust and the institution's effectiveness.