UCHealth Unveils “Standards of Excellence”

By Erin Emery, UCH Health Insider South

Everyone has a code that they live by. Your code is what you believe, how you behave, how you treat others. It is what makes you who you are.

Last week, University of Colorado Health unveiled its own code — Standards of Excellence — that articulates how UCH Health employees should conduct themselves, no matter where they work along the Front Range.

To call attention to the standards, UCH Health leaders last week distributed fortune cookies and thank you cards to staff. Employees will be required to complete computer-based training (e-learning) acknowledging their understanding of the standards (see sidebar).

“In a time of change, the Standards of Excellence can provide a roadmap for all of us to follow,” said Bonnie Shelor, Chief Human Resource Officer for University of Colorado Health. “The Standards of Excellence give us a set of guidelines that we can all share and trust in.”

Expectations. The standards spell out what the expectations are for UCH Health employees. When hard-wired into everyday employee performance, the standards will help UCH Health live its mission, and contribute to the professional development of the system’s 15,000 employees, Shelor maintained.

“The Standards of Excellence help guide what we do every day so that improving lives becomes who we are,” added Shawn Evans, UCH Health vice president of Organizational Development.

In writing the standards, a group of employees reviewed those that were already in place at University of Colorado Hospital, Poudre Valley and Memorial Hospital. Many of those elements were incorporated into the new Standards of Excellence for the system.

“Every region had its own standards. We took those and cross walked them, and found that they were very similar,” said Karen Burke, UCH Health’s regional director for staff development and orientation. “We worked with a group of representatives from all of the regions to come up with common language. The big change for the regions may be language changes, but the core standards remain much the same,” she asserted.

The Standards of Excellence include “personal” items not many other companies have, said Mallory Thompson, organizational development communications specialist.

“For me, the personal standard really stands out,” Thompson said. “When we look at personal standards, and our initiatives around health and wellness and learning and growing, that is unique to University of Colorado Health. I think it is very bold, and in line with our vision – from health care to health.”

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For Burke, the service standards especially resonate.

“I hope that in everything that I do, I have a service mentality,” she said. “I am here to serve my community and my customers. And, while I don’t do direct patient care, I support those that do, so I need to be serving them.”

Continued
“I also do have a chance to touch patient lives when I am in the hospital. It can be as simple as walking someone where they need to go, or asking somebody if they need help,” Burke added.

When an employee doesn’t follow the standards, Burke said, it is up to the staff, managers, directors and senior leaders to hold employees accountable.

“It's having brave conversations with peers when they are not living up to the standards; and performance management when the problem isn’t getting corrected,” Burke said.

Leaders believe the standards will help UCHealth further align as a system. At Memorial Hospital, leaders have seen a marked improvement in personal accountability since the “Culture Service Standards” were issued more than a year ago, said Robin Rogers, service excellence director at Memorial.

If you have a story about a UCHealth employee who has demonstrated one of the Standards of Excellence, please visit https://s.zoomerang.com/s/Standards_of_Excellence.

The Standards

Service:
» I am here to serve my customers. This means prompt, friendly and quality service.
» I promptly respond to patient requests, phone calls and customer needs.
» I communicate in a respectful and professional manner.
» Nonverbal communication is as important as what I say.
» I anticipate patients’ and others’ needs, working to prevent problems and remove barriers.
» I communicate frequently about how long a patient, visitor or colleague may expect to wait. I provide regular updates.
» I walk guests to their location and seek out those who look lost.

Quality:
» I seek to understand and improve core measures, quality metrics, best practices, patient satisfaction measures and employee engagement measures.
» I respect the confidentiality of patients and colleagues.
» I report concerns and take appropriate actions to eliminate patient, visitor and/or employee safety hazards.
» I identify opportunities and solutions for service and safety improvements in my work area and assume accountability for our success.
» I keep the facility and my work area neat, clean, presentable, uncluttered and safe.
» I will take appropriate action when public areas do not meet these standards.

Team:
» I listen to, understand and respond in a compassionate manner.
» I encourage my colleagues and offer words of praise for excellent work.
» I partner with my colleagues to manage the workflow of my team and willingly pitch in to help others.
» I help new or less experienced colleagues feel welcome.
» I thank others for their time and efforts.
Personal:
- I take responsibility for my attitude and actions. I treat others with dignity and respect; rudeness is not acceptable.
- I am supportive and flexible when change occurs.
- I consistently carry out my work duties to the best of my ability, skills and training, understanding that my work makes a difference in the care of our patients.
- I deal with conflict in a constructive manner and welcome personal feedback to improve performance and relationships.
- I look for opportunities to further my learning.
- I do the right thing because it is the right thing to do, whether anyone is watching or not.
- I take responsibility to use UCHealth resources appropriately.
- I take steps to maintain personal health and wellness.

Communication:
- I maintain a positive image and follow the UCHealth dress code. I wear my badge so it is easily read by patients, visitors and colleagues. Any time I am in uniform or have my badge on, I represent UCHealth in a positive light.
- I show respect to all members of the UCHealth team: volunteers, employees, managers, medical staff, students and others.
- Before I speak, I consider who might be listening and what is appropriate in that situation.
- I keep current on organizational information.