



GIFT, TICKET AND HONORARIA POLICY #P-2018.04.05-3

I. PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this policy is to ensure Sonoma Valley Health Care District (SVHCD) Board Members, leaders and staff members (including Sonoma Valley Hospital (hospital)) comply with external regulations and internally established standards regarding the receipt and provision of gifts, tickets and honoraria. This policy covers gifts to and from internal and external parties including individuals, businesses and organizations. The policy also governs SVHCD's distribution of tickets and passes (e.g., to sporting, cultural and community events), and acceptance of payments or reimbursements related to speaking or appearing at professional or educational events.

B. Gifts, tickets and honoraria can be perceived tools to influence SVHCD decisions and patient care, and can erode public confidence and the impartiality of decisions made by public officers, officials and employees. This policy has been adopted to guard against even the appearance of impropriety in all aspects of SVHCD's programs, services and administration. Furthermore, this policy is intended to prevent the perceived obligations of reciprocity that can arise from the giving or accepting of gifts, tickets and honoraria.

II. POLICY

A. Federal Anti-Kickback Statute: It is the policy of SVHCD to ensure full compliance with the federal anti-kickback statute, which prohibits the acceptance of any item of value (remuneration) made directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind, that may induce or appear to induce the purchase or referral of any kind of health care goods, services, or items reimbursed by a federal or state health care program (Medicare and Medicaid). The unlawful acceptance of any gifts or business courtesies from vendors or others with whom SVMHS presently conducts business – or potentially could conduct business – is strictly prohibited.

B. State Gift Laws: Directors, Officers and designated employees of SVMHS identified in the District's Conflict of Interest Code or covered by Government Code section 87200 (including public officials who manage public investments) are subject to State laws regarding the receipt and disclosure of gifts as set forth in the Political Reform Act (at Government Code Section 89503) and the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Regulations. These minimum requirements are not altered by this Policy.

1. Individuals in positions designated in the Conflict of Interest Code's Disclosure Category 1 or 2, or who are covered by Government Code section 87200 are prohibited from receiving gifts totaling more than \$470 from any single source in a calendar year.
2. Individuals in positions designated in the Conflict of Interest Code's Disclosure Category 3 are prohibited from receiving gifts totaling more than \$470 in a calendar year from any single source that provides services, supplies, materials, machinery or equipment of the type utilized by the District.
3. Individuals in positions designated in the Conflict of Interest Code's Disclosure Category 4 are prohibited from receiving gifts totaling more than \$470 in a calendar year from any single source that is a type to receive grants or other monies from or through SVHCD.
4. These annual limits shall automatically increase or decrease consistent with modification to the gift limit established by the FPPC every two years.
5. This Subsection B shall not be interpreted to permit receipt of Gifts prohibited under any other provision of this Policy, such as Subsection A, above.

C. Perishable Items: It is the policy of SVHCD that any department, clinical unit, or clinical practice may accept modest perishable gifts such as floral arrangements, cookies, candy or similar food items to be shared by staff members and, where possible, made available to the public.

D. Gifts to Agency: It is the policy of SVHCD that gifts received by SVHCD or any part thereof, which are then distributed to or used by individual recipients shall be used for official agency business, and must be distributed and reported as required under the Political Reform Act and FPPC Regulations.

E. Solicitation of Gifts: It is the policy of SVHCD that an employee shall not solicit (i.e., ask for or request) gifts unless authorized to do so for approved hospital functions, fundraisers or special events. Requests for authorization to solicit gifts shall be made in writing to the Director of the Human Resources.

F. Gifts Between Employees: It is the policy of SVHCD that gifts of a personal nature between employees is permitted, provided hospital funds are not utilized. The value of such gifts should not exceed \$25. It is further the policy of SVHCD that gifts between employees that are related to a person's employment at SVHCD (e.g., for Secretary's Day, Nurses Week, etc.) are permitted, provided they are customary for the occasion, are of reasonable value given the circumstances and the persons' positions in the organization, and hospital funds are not utilized. The value of such gifts shall not exceed \$25.

G. Tickets and Passes: All Tickets and Passes received by SVCHD shall be distributed and reported in accordance with this policy and relevant FPPC Regulations.

1. Tickets and Passes that are provided to a SVCHD board member or an official designated in the conflict of interest code are not considered "Gifts" to the official under

State law when they are received and distributed by SVHCD in compliance with related FPPC Regulations and this Policy.

2. When Tickets and Passes are provided by a third-party so that the recipient can perform a ceremonial role or function on behalf of the hospital, as further described in related FPPC Regulations, such Tickets and Passes are not considered "Gifts" under State law, though such Tickets and Passes shall still be reported by SVHCD.

3. A ticket or pass shall not be considered a gift to the recipient when it is provided directly to the recipient from a third-party when the giver and receiver treat the ticket or pass as income consistent with applicable state and federal income tax laws.

H. All Other Gifts: It is the policy of SVHCD that gifts other than those described in paragraphs D through G, above, shall not be accepted in the performance of any officer or employee's duties or responsibilities. This includes gifts from patients, family members of patients, vendors or business associates.

I. Honoraria: It is the policy of SVHCD to comply with the Political Reform Act and FPPC Regulations regarding the receipt of honoraria. SVHCD Board members and those who manage public investments (individuals who are required to file statements of economic interests under Government Codes section 87200) are prohibited from receiving honoraria payments. Likewise, employees whose positions are designated under the SVHCD Conflict of Interest Code are prohibited from receiving honoraria payments from any source of gifts or income included in their disclosure categories set forth in the Conflict of Interest Code. Exceptions to the State's honoraria prohibitions for local officials, such as for income earned from a bona fide business or profession, shall apply to SVHCD officers and employees. (Government Code Section 89502.) Honoraria and reimbursements for event attendance when permitted shall be handled pursuant to the procedures set forth below.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. "FPPC Regulations" means the regulations adopted by the Fair Political Practices Commission in its role as the implementing and enforcement agency of the State's Political Reform Act. These implementations are set forth in title 2, Division 6, Sections 18109-18997 of the California Code of Regulations.

B. "Gifts": For purposes of this Policy, "Gifts" are defined and excepted as set forth in the Political Reform Act and FPPC Regulations, as they may be amended from time to time. Generally speaking, the Political Reform Act defines a "gift" as any payment or other benefit received (including food/drink, travel or travel expenses, services, and items of any type) that confers a personal benefit for which the recipient does not provide something (e.g., payment, goods or services) of equal value. This includes a rebate or discount in the price of anything of value unless the rebate or discount is made in the regular course of business to members of the public without regard to official status. Exceptions generally include, but are not limited to:

1. Informational materials such as books, reports, pamphlets, calendars, or periodicals.

2. Gifts which are not used and which, within 30 days after receipt, are either returned to the donor or delivered to a nonprofit entity exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, without being claimed as a charitable contribution for tax purposes.
3. Gifts from close family members (e.g., an individual's spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, parent-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle, or first cousin, or the spouse of any such person) unless the donor is acting as an agent or intermediary for any person not covered in this paragraph.
4. Campaign contributions.
5. Inheritance.
6. Personalized plaques or trophies with an individual value of less than two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250).
7. Gifts from long-term, close personal friends or friends or colleagues from business relationships unrelated to the recipient's role as a public officer or employee.
8. Acts of neighborliness (e.g., picking up someone's mail or feeding a pet while the recipient is on vacation) or compassion (e.g., delivering food or flowers to someone in mourning).

C. "Honoraria" (plural form of "honorarium") are payments received for making a speech, publishing an article, or attending any public or private conference, convention, meeting, social event, meal or similar gathering.

D. "Tickets" or "Passes": The FPPC, in interpreting the Political Reform Act, has established that "ticket" or "pass" means "admission to a facility, event, show, or performance for entertainment, amusement, recreational or similar purpose." This includes but is not limited to include tickets/passes/admission to fundraising events, luncheons, dinners, parties, etc. from third parties. (Tickets/passes purchased by the District/Hospital to enable Board members, the CEO or other employees to attend in their official capacity on official business shall not be governed by this policy, e.g., Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce meetings.)

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Giving and Receiving Gifts to or from Outside SVHCD in the Course of Business

1. Receiving Gifts from External Parties: Gifts from patients or patients' families shall be discouraged. An employee who is offered a gift of cash or a cash equivalent shall decline the gift or may suggest a donation to a charitable organization such as the Sonoma Valley Hospital Foundation. However, if the employee has a reasonable belief that refusing to accept such a gift would have a detrimental effect on a patient or the Hospital as an institution, the employee must report in writing and forward the gift immediately to the Department Director. The following applies to all gifts received by employees or SVHCD in the course of business:
 - a. An employee who receives a gift shall notify and forward the gift to the department director, who shall determine, in cooperation with the CEO, whether State disclosures (e.g., on FPPC Form 801) are required.
 - b. If a Gift is provided to SVHCD for distribution at the agency's discretion, the CEO shall distribute the Gift in accordance with FPPC Regulations. In such cases, the hospital

shall maintain records of such gifts and utilize FPPC Form 801, Gifts to Agency Report, to document this information. The hospital shall forward the completed Form 801 (Attachment A) within 30 days from the distribution of each included Gift to the Sonoma County Clerk, and shall post completed forms on the SVHCD web site. Gifts appearing on a Form 801 need not be included in the eventual recipient's Statement of Economic Interests.

- c. If the Gift was provided other than for distribution at the agency's discretion, the CEO shall decide how to handle the gift under relevant FPPC Regulations, including allowing the employee to retain it, or distributing it within the department (where feasible).
- d. Gifts of minimal value (under \$25) such as pencils, desk calendars, and other promotional items may be distributed and used within the receiving department.
- e. With prior written approval of the CEO, vendors may provide meals and other food to employees only when the vendor is providing significant education related to products or procedures, or when conducting informational business meetings. Written attendance records must be provided to the CEO for all meetings at which meals are provided.
 - i. The total value of any meal should not exceed \$20 per attendee.
 - ii. Annual value of all meals provided by a single vendor shall not exceed \$300 per year without prior written approval of the CEO.

2. Offering or Giving Gifts to External Parties: Under limited circumstances, gifts may be given to external parties provided they relate to the business of SVHCD, are in SVHCD's best interests and are legally and culturally acceptable. In addition they should meet the following criteria:

- a. Cash gifts or cash equivalents, such as gift certificates, are prohibited.
- b. The non-cash or non-cash equivalent gift may not exceed \$25.00 per recipient/year.
- c. The item is customary and does not create an appearance of impropriety.
- d. Giving the gift imposes no sense of obligation on the part of either the giver or recipient.
- e. Giving of the item is not concealed.
- f. Giving of the item has been approved in advance and in writing by the relevant department executive and copied to the CEO.

B. Giving and Receiving Gifts within SVHCD in the Course of Business

- 1. Gifts and cash equivalents, such as gift cards may be given to employees as incentives for program attendance, recognition of outstanding achievement or for other positive rationale. Gifts in excess of \$25.00 shall be documented as income and taxed accordingly. The CEO shall develop written policies and procedures for this to occur.
- 2. If an employee receives a gift card of any value (e.g., \$10.00 Starbucks Gift Card) from the organization, the value (\$10.00) of such gift must be documented as income and taxed accordingly. This provision does not apply to coupons for specific items, such as a free drink or free meal, or discount coupons such as 10% off any purchase in the Cafeteria, Gift Shop or Starbucks.
- 3. If gift cards are approved in writing by the CEO for distribution from the department executive, the director is responsible to obtaining the names of employees receiving such gifts and providing the information in writing to accounting with a copy to the CEO.

C. Ticket/Pass Distribution This procedure section shall provide procedures for the distribution of Tickets and Passes as required under State law, to ensure proper identification and use of 1) receipt of Tickets and Passes; 2) the “public purpose” to be achieved in distributing Tickets and Passes; 3) distribution of Tickets and Passes; 4) documentation and 5) public posting of the receipt and use of Tickets or Passes. Proper exercise of these procedures will exclude Tickets and Passes from required disclosure on individuals’ Statements of Economic Interests. For the purposes of this section of the policy, “official” means all positions identified in SVHCD’s Conflict of Interest Code.

1. Ticket/Pass Receipt Process: All Tickets/Passes received by SVHCD shall be forwarded to Administration. Determination of whether to give the tickets/passes to the Foundation for use, or to distribute internally will be at the discretion of the CEO.

2. Public Purpose: The distribution of Tickets or Passes by SVHCD/SVH must be in furtherance of a “public purpose.” Examples of such public purpose:

- a. To promote networking opportunities of officials with community stakeholders.
- b. To evaluate SVHCD/SVH’s ability to attract business at the locale or event, and thus to contribute to the healthcare of the community in the future.
- c. To reward an official, employee or hospital stakeholder for his or her exemplary service to the organization or to encourage staff development.
- d. To promote attendance at a hospital-sponsored event or event held at the hospital in order to maximize potential from concession sales.
- e. To reward a hospital healthcare partner for its contributions to the SVHCD/SVH or the community.
- f. To provide opportunities to those who are receiving services from County and State agencies consistent with the District’s goals for the particular population (e.g., for use by juvenile wards in the custody of the Chief Probation Officer or mental health clients and seniors receiving services from the Health and Human Services Agency/Public Health);
or
- g. To promote health, motivate and provide expanded opportunities to vulnerable populations in the SVHCD such as the disabled, underprivileged, seniors, and youth in foster care.

3. Distribution: Tickets/Passes are distributed at the discretion of the CEO. Once distributed, tickets cannot be transferred by the recipient other than to members of the official’s immediate family or no more than one guest, solely for such guest’s attendance at the event with the recipient.

4. Documentation: The CEO shall ensure that the hospital will maintain record of all Ticket/Pass distribution and the use of Tickets and Passes by SVHCD officials for ceremonial purposes, as required by FPPC Regulations and utilizing FPPC Form 802, Agency Report of Ceremonial Role Events and Ticket/Pass Distribution, to document this information. The hospital must forward the FPPC Form 802 (Attachment B) within 45 days from the distribution of each Ticket or Pass to the FPPC via email to Form802@fppc.ca.gov; by Fax to 916.322.0886; or by mail to 428 J Street, Suite 620, Sacramento, CA 95814.

D. Honoraria and Reimbursement for Professional/Educational Involvement

1. With the prior written approval of the CEO, employees who provide education at professional conferences and meetings may accept reimbursement for travel, meals and hotel expenses for the date(s) of the presentation(s). Presentations must be professional and educational in nature and may not be for the sole purpose of product endorsement.
2. In such circumstances, unless prohibited above, honoraria of \$100 or less in value may be accepted from the host organization.

V. DOCUMENTATION

A. Department directors shall maintain written records of all gifts given to employees of their departments when such gifts are to be reported under this Policy. Such documentation will include the type and value of each gift, the name and affiliation or position of recipient(s) and giver(s), the date of receipt and disposition, and method of disposition and provide a copy to the CEO.

B. Human Resources shall maintain documentation of education done in orientation or at annual compliance training. Department directors shall maintain documentation of staff training meetings.

C. Statements of Economic Interest (including gift disclosures under State law) shall be handled in accordance with the SVHCD Conflict of Interest Policy.

D. The CEO shall develop and implement policies and procedures that will maintain a record of all ticket/pass distribution as required by FPPC Regulations, including copies of all completed FPPC Forms (e.g., Form 801: Gift to Agency Report; Form 802: Agency Report of Ceremonial Role Events and Ticket/Pass Distribution Form 802).

E. The CEO shall be responsible for posting completed FPPC Forms (e.g., Form 801: Gift to Agency Report) on the SVHCD website when required by State law.

VI. REFERENCES

A. The Medicare and Medicaid Patient Protection Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C. 1320a- 7b) (Anti-Kickback Statute).

B. Political Reform Act, California Government Code §81000 et. seq.

C. FPPC Regulations, Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, Division 6, §18109 et seq.