APPENDIX A3

STAFF RELATIONSHIP GUIDELINES

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- A. Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA) staff and administration hold their positions as a public trust. Employees fulfill that trust by adhering to general principles of ethical conduct. They fulfill that trust by striving to:
 - 1. Put the interests of the citizens of Nevada first in the completion of assigned duties.
 - 2. Avoid any activity that would create the appearance of a legal or ethical breach.
 - 3. Act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any organization or individual.
 - 4. Not use public employment for private gain.
- B. The following guidelines are supplemental to Nevada Administrative Code (NAC): Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), the State Administrative Manual, and the Department of Health and Human Services Prohibitions and Penalties. A copy of the Prohibitions and Penalties is attached as well as selected sections of NAC and NRS.
- C. The purpose of this document is to highlight facets of staff relationships with alcohol and drug abuse service providers, clients, volunteers, boards of directors, the public, co-workers within SAPTA, and co-workers within the Department of Health and Human Services. These guidelines will be incorporated into staff work performance standards.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR: RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FIELD AND OTHER DIVISION PERSONNEL

- A. SAPTA staff are expected to consistently maintain a professional attitude and behavior that should reflect that of business standards. Behaviors should include the following:
 - 1. Support SAPTA's mission, goals and objectives.
 - 2. Not disclose discussion of policies or practices that effect programs before those policies and practices are adopted and disseminated by SAPTA.
 - 3. Exhibit professional judgment and identify issues requiring immediate attention and/or action refer issues to SAPTA administration as appropriate.
 - 4. In order to minimize the frequency of special requests for information submitted to the field, staff should use internal resources before contacting the field for information.
 - 5. SAPTA employees assigned, as the program specialist/project officer for a program should develop written communication policies with the program, i.e. clearly define program staff member(s) to be contacted for specific items. The policies are to be developed in consultation with the program's chief executive officer.
 - 6. SAPTA staff should coordinate all communication with a program through the staff member assigned as program specialist/project officer for the program.

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- 7. Work with other Department of Health and Human Services and the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services programs to forge partnerships of value to the field and the public.
- 8. Assist and support fellow employees when possible.
- 9. Verify the accuracy of information prior to providing it to others.

IMPARTIALITY/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- A. SAPTA staff are required to consider how their impartiality may be maintained whenever their involvement in any matter involving specific parties might affect personal or business relationships. A pending case, contract, grant, permit, or license are some examples of particular matters that might be of concern. When there could be an appearance of a conflict of interest, the employee must give notice of their involvement to their supervisor. Examples of possible circumstances where this could apply include:
 - 1. A person with whom the employee has or seeks a business, contractual or other financial relationship.
 - 2. A person who is a member of the employee's household or with whom the employee has a close personal relationship.
 - 3. An organization for whom the employee's spouse, parent, child, or significant other serves as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, agent, attorney, consultant, volunteer, contractor or employee.
 - 4. Any organization for whom the employee has within the last year served as officer, director, trustee, general partner, agent, attorney, consultant, contractor, volunteer or employee.
 - 5. Any organization in which the employee is an active participant (such as volunteer, board member, consumer of services, etc.).

RELATIONSHIP WITH TREATMENT AND PREVENTION PROGRAM PERSONNEL

- A. SAPTA staff must treat the staff, boards of directors and volunteers of programs with respect and dignity at all times. Employees will observe the following:
 - 1. Respond to requests for information within five working days of the request. If a request can not be responded to within the five-day period, immediately inform the program of the anticipated date of response.
 - 2. Focus all conversations both in person and via the telephone to business matters.
 - 3. Regardless of the circumstances, never argue, lay blame or use an accusatory tone of voice
 - 4. At all times, interaction with program staff and representatives should be related to problem solving, technical assistance, and other constructive activities.
 - 5. To avoid potential confusion, communicate in writing when possible and/or confirm verbal communication in writing.
 - 6. Not allow a personal opinion or belief to impact a professional interaction or decision
 - 7. Avoid all forms of gossip.
 - 8. Avoid discussing a program with staff from another program, and avoid comparing programs.

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RELATIONSHIP WITH PROGRAM CLIENTS OR PARTICIPANTS

- A. SAPTA staff must not use their positions for their own or another's personal gain. Staff are not to use their position, title or any authority associated with their office to coerce or induce a benefit for themselves or others. Employees are not to use or allow the improper use of nonpublic (private or proprietary) information to further a personal interest, either their own or another's.
- B. SAPTA staff must observe the following when dealing with alcohol and drug abuse programs or clients.
 - 1. Information regarding participation in substance abuse programs is governed by 42 CFR, Part 2 and is strictly adhered to by SAPTA staff.
 - a. The relationship between SAPTA staff and participants in prevention and treatment programs is limited to a professional one during the course of participation. A two-year period must expire after the last professional contact before establishing any other type of relationship.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC

- A. SAPTA staff will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times with members of the public. Examples of proper contact with the public include the following:
 - 1. Promptly respond to all telephone calls and written requests.
 - 2. Respond in a courteous and respectful manner with all callers, regardless of the nature of the inquiry.
 - 3. When appropriate, provide all requested information on a timely basis. If information is not available, explain reason for not being available.
 - 4. Be aware of information which is classified as being in the public domain and those items which are not in the public domain.
 - 5. Do not provide or attempt to provide counseling services to individuals requesting referral information; do not become personally involved in the situations presented by the individual.
 - 6. Follow SAPTA policies and procedures when accepting a complaint.
 - 7. If SAPTA is not the correct source of information desired by an individual, refer the individual to the appropriate agency. Provide a telephone number and/or transfer the call if possible.

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