



5.0 – Human Resources

5.11 Volunteer Resources

5.11.3 Volunteer/ Staff Relations

1.0 Preamble

Voluntarism has always been an integral part of Canadian society and continues to be critical to the quality of life for every Canadian. Since before the turn of the century, Volunteers/Auxiliaries in Health Care Facilities have helped to improve the quality of health care. Their fundamental intent has been to provide services that would otherwise not be provided within healthcare facilities and programs, and dollars that are not available through other sources. Voluntarism has also pioneered the way over time for many paid positions.

The Volunteer Resources Programs of the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) are designed to provide an opportunity for members of the community to enhance, enrich, complement and strengthen the quality of care given by staff to patients/residents and clients of the VIHA.

Volunteer services are often conducted in close proximity to paid staff. Therefore, good relations between volunteers and staff are necessary. The goal for which we strive is an atmosphere in which staff welcome volunteers, understand their role and do not feel their livelihood threatened by them, and in which volunteers understand the boundaries of their role and feel accepted by staff as a part of the health care team.

2.0 Policy

A. VOLUNTEER STAFF RELATIONS

1. The use of volunteer resources shall be supernumerary to established staff positions, and the involvement of volunteers shall not result in the layoff of any employee; nor shall volunteers be used to fill positions that are filled by paid staff on either a regular, part-time or casual basis.

2. There will be consultation and open communication between the Volunteer Resources Department, Administration, staff representatives and volunteers regarding the use of volunteer resources, to ensure that the role of volunteers and staff complement each other.
3. All services provided by volunteers are with the approval of Administration and the Volunteer Resources Department. Staff should refer to the Manager/Coordinator, Volunteer Resources before asking volunteers to perform any task or service which is not defined in the volunteer's Assignment Description.
4. A volunteer provides his/her service only with the approval of Administration and the Volunteer Resources Department. Staff shall ensure that all individuals who express an interest in volunteering in their service or program have been referred to the Volunteer Resources Department for appropriate screening, registration and orientation prior to beginning any service in a VIHA facility or program.
5. Clear Assignment Descriptions for volunteers will be developed in consultation with staff and volunteers. The Volunteer Resources Department will ensure that volunteers are aware of the parameters of their service and, of all policies applicable to volunteers.
6. The Assignment Description will identify the staff or volunteer position responsible for the direction, guidance and support of volunteers in that service. Primary responsibility to ensure that a volunteer receives the necessary information to perform their volunteer service in a satisfactory manner rests with the volunteer's staff contact person. The designated staff contact person will be responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the volunteer's tasks and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. The staff contact person shall be asked to provide input to evaluation of volunteers and services as required and may request that the volunteer be re-assigned if the placement proves to be inappropriate after an reasonable training period. The Volunteer Resources Department will ensure that the volunteer is introduced to his/her staff contact person prior to beginning his/her volunteer service.
7. In the event of conflicts between staff and volunteers, the Manager/Coordinator, Volunteer Resources (or Administration in the absence of that staff person) should be contacted for resolution of the situation in the best interest of both parties. If the dispute cannot be settled through these discussions, normal grievance policies and procedures would apply.

8. Decisions to place, discipline, re-assign or terminate a volunteer lie with the Manager/Coordinator of Volunteer Resources (and/or Administration).
9. Any staff concerns about a volunteer that could result in disciplinary action must be discussed with the Manager/Coordinator of Volunteer Resources prior to action being taken. If the actions of a volunteer require a staff contact person to remove the volunteer from service immediately, the staff contact person shall contact the Manager/Coordinator of Volunteer Resources/(Administration) as soon as possible.
10. All investigations and disciplinary measures must be well documented.
11. Whenever possible, prior to dismissal, a volunteer will be given the opportunity to discuss the reasons for impending dismissal with the staff contact person and the Manager/Coordinator, Volunteer Resources.
12. Staff will consult with and value input from volunteers on all decisions which substantially affect the volunteer's services.
13. Volunteers shall recognize the right of staff to determine policies and procedures in the best interest of patients, residents and clients, and be willing to provide their service according to established guidelines.
14. Volunteers and staff will be informed during orientation of the policy regarding volunteers and paid staff interaction and will be encouraged to develop positive working relationships. Agreements on the nature and extent of voluntary activity in the healthcare facilities will be made widely known to interested parties at all levels.

B. Volunteer-Staff Relations – Job Action Situations

In the event of legal job action by unionized VIHA staff, the following guidelines apply:

1. To ensure harmony of relationships following the job action and to avoid exploitation of volunteers, volunteers will not be asked to fill any established staff position.
2. To ensure there is adequate direction for volunteers, to avoid exploitation of volunteers and to promote harmony of relationships following the job action, the Manager/Coordinator of Volunteer Resources has the authority to discontinue any regular volunteer assignment during the period of legal job action.

3. With the exception of assignments that the Manager/Coordinator of Volunteer Resources has requested be discontinued for the period of legal job action, volunteers may continue to provide services that are currently being provided by volunteers of the VIHA at that site.
4. It is the personal decision of the volunteer whether or not to continue giving their regular volunteer service during legal job action. There shall be no negative consequences for volunteers who choose not to come to the site of their volunteer assignment during such job action.
5. Volunteers coming in to a VIHA facility during job action must have their VIHA volunteer identification.
6. Recruitment of new volunteers will be discontinued during legal job action and no additional services will be assigned to volunteers.
7. Volunteers are encouraged to maintain harmony at all times with unionized staff taking legal job action and should contact the Manager/Coordinator, Volunteer Resources if difficulties arise rather than taking any personal action to deal with the situation.
8. Staff members taking legal job action are encouraged to allow access to VIHA facilities and programs by regular volunteers and to make every attempt to maintain good relationships with volunteers who make a personal decision to continue with their volunteer commitment during job action.
9. The Volunteer Resources Departments of the VIHA will comply with the current Global Orders of the Labour Relations Board regarding the involvement of volunteers during legal job action.

3.0 References

1. Standards of Practice: AVRBC
2. HEU Master Agreement
3. "Working Together in Harmony", Community Services Council, St. John's, NF
In development:
4. VIHA Policy #5.11.2 Screening and Registration of Volunteers