

Compliance Corner

Answering your Compliance, Coding, HIPAA Privacy and Security Questions



Fellow Employees,

Below are the results of the **2009 compliance questionnaire**. The questionnaire was distributed to approximately 2,700 employees and was available in both English and Spanish. Some 628 employees, or 23 percent, returned completed questionnaires. This year we were able to offer online questionnaires, which were completed by 17.5 percent of respondents.

The areas where the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the question 95 percent or more of the time included:

- Being aware of the compliance program.
- Knowing who the compliance officer is and how to contact her.
- Knowing how to direct a patient to file a complaint.
- Knowing who to report to and how to report compliance incidents or violations of policy.
- Being aware of the ability to report an issue anonymously and confidentially.
- Being aware of the compliance hotline and how to access it.
- Having compliance reporting posters clearly displayed in work areas.
- Being aware of the compliance policies on the South Nassau Intranet Web site.
- Knowing not to give your password to anyone.

The areas where the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the question between 88 and 94 percent of the time included:

- Believing that South Nassau is an ethical organization.
- Believing that management supports the goals of the compliance program.
- Being aware of the “no retaliation” policy.
- Believing the brief summary of the compliance manual is clear.

- Knowing policies regarding job functions and where to find them.
- Understanding patient information in compliance with HIPAA privacy practices.
- Understanding how the joint notice of privacy practices describes to patients how we use their protected health information.

The response with the lowest rating remains the question relating to the “no retaliation policy.” Please remember that if you report an issue in good faith, you are protected by law and our policy of no retaliation. If you believe that you are being retaliated against, please report it to the compliance department. We are always open to ideas on how to improve the perception of this policy and appreciate your input on ways to improve our compliance program.

There were also comments commending the compliance department and acknowledging the effectiveness of the program. Comments were also made relating to areas where you believe we can improve. Compliance is committed to working with employees to answer their questions and resolve their issues. We welcome your suggestions.

Please also remember that information about the compliance program is always available on our Intranet Web site, <http://snchweb>. Look in the department's section and click on the compliance link. There you will find a brief summary of the "Compliance Manual" (also called the “Compliance Handbook”) as well as the full manual.

Please call the compliance office at **632-3040** or e-mail me at aamato@snch.org if you have any questions or would like to report an issue.

Thank you,
Ann Amato

H1N1 Virus

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Spread of the H1N1 virus is thought to occur in the same way that seasonal flu spreads—from direct contact with an infected person or breathing aerosolized particles released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Also, you may become sick after touching something with viruses on it and then touching your mouth or nose.

To help prevent the spread of germs that cause influenza, follow these simple steps:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze into the bend of your arm, NOT your hands.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. If you are not near a sink, use an antibacterial alcohol-based hand sanitizer, which is also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.

For more information on the H1N1 virus, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm> or call the Nassau County flu hotline: (888) 684-4271.