

## **SERENITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS**

**SUBJECT:** Employment, Reference or Other Information Requested  
**POLICY NUMBER:** HR-51  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 2002  
**SUPERSEDES:** N/A  
**LAST REVISION DATE:** November 2011

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### **POLICY:**

It is the policy of Serenity Behavioral Health Systems (SBHS) that all employment-related records are subject to disclosure to the public, unless specifically exempted in accordance with the Georgia Open Records Act (see SBHS Policy HR-33.00). Basic employment information is subject to disclosure, and will be provided by SBHS staff as indicated in this policy. Employee consent is not required to disclose basic employment information.

### **ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

- I. Certain personal information about employees is not subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act, and will only be released to authorized officials (see paragraphs II and III below). This information includes: an employee's social security number, mother's birth name, debit and credit card information, other banking/financial information, insurance and medical information and birth day/month.
- II. Personal information about current or former SBHS employees is accessible without the employee's consent under the following circumstances:
  - A. The Human Resource staff has access to the information for maintenance purposes.
  - B. The Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Clinical Director and employee's supervisor may have access to the information, when necessary, for employment-related purposes or on a "need-to-know" basis.
  - C. For purposes of investigating employment-related misconduct or for other legal, administrative, or regulatory reasons, information is available to authorized officials with organizations including, but not limited to, the following:
    1. DHR Office of Investigative Services
    2. DHR Office of Audits
    3. DHR Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM)
    4. DHR Office of Child Support Enforcement
    5. DOAS Workers' Compensation

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6. Georgia Department of Labor
  7. Federal Department of Labor
  8. Social Security Administration
  9. Georgia Bureau of Investigation
  10. Federal Bureau of Investigation
  11. Other federal, state and local law enforcement or investigative agencies with a “need-to-know.”
- D. Information may also be released in response to a subpoena or other appropriate inquiry issued in the course of litigation.
- III. Employees may have access to their own personal information and may grant access in writing to other individuals or organizations.
- IV. The Human Resources Department should be contacted when requests for access to personal information is received.

**EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATIONS:**

SBHS Human Resource employees will verify basic employment information regarding employees’ job titles, salaries, and dates of employment. Requests may be received from current or former employees or organizations such as financial institutions, rental or leasing companies and credit card companies.

- I. Requests for verification of employment and salary information should be obtained in writing, whenever possible. The Salary and Employment Verification Form may be submitted by requesters or used by SBHS staff to record verbal requests. This form is available in the Human Resource Department (SBHS Form 706).
- II. Requests are to be sent to the Human Resources Department.
- III. Verification of salary and employment information will be provided in writing. The Salary and Employment Verification Form (SBHS Form 706) may be used for this purpose.

**REFERENCE CHECKS:**

- I. Reference information on current or former SBHS employees should be provided by the Human Resources Department.
  - A. Human Resources employees are required to provide reference information on current/former employees when requests are received from other SBHS managers.
  - B. Providing reference information to non-SBHS employers is discretionary, unless required by law.

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- II. Reference information must be job-related and factually accurate. Information provided should be supported by performance evaluations, examples of work performance, attendance records or other objective indicators.
- III. Prospective employers may be advised that SBHS employees have access to their performance evaluations and attendance records.
- IV. When references are requested on employees who have been separated from SBHS for serious infractions (e.g., client abuse, drug-related offenses, theft, etc.), the Human Resource Manager will discuss the request with the Chief Executive Officer and/or the SBHS attorney prior to releasing any information. The specific information to be released will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- V. SBHS hiring supervisors or managers should always conduct reference checks prior to making offers of employment.
  - A. Reference checks should be conducted in a structured manner. A core set of job-related questions should be developed in advance.
  - B. Answers are to be documented and maintained with other selection materials.
  - C. Non-job-related inquiries are prohibited.

#### **INTERN/WORK PROGRAM INFORMATION:**

SBHS managers are authorized to provide feedback to schools or organizations that place interns or similar work program participants within SBHS. Information should be provided in the format required by the schools or organizations, and may include evaluations of performance and recommendations for improvement. Questions regarding information that can be provided should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

#### **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:**

SBHS managers may, at their discretion, write letters of recommendation for employees under their supervision.

- I. If an employee requests a letter of recommendation, the manager should review the employee's work performance and adherence to the terms and conditions of employment to ensure that a letter of recommendation is appropriate.
- II. Letters of recommendation may be written in a generic manner (i.e., To Whom It May Concern) rather than being addressed to a specific organization or individual.

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**REFERENCE:**

- I. State Law (O. C. G. A. 50-18-70, *et seq.* – Open Records Act)
- II. SBHS Personnel Policy HR-33 – Access to Personnel-Related Public Records Based on the Georgia Open Records Act
- III. SBHS Personnel Policy HR-12.01 – Official Personnel Files

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- I. Salary and Employment Verification Form SBHS 706

**APPROVAL SECTION:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive Officer

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Date

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Committee Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**RESCISSION SECTION:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive Officer

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Date

**REVIEW SECTION:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chairperson

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Date

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Committee Chairperson

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Date

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Committee Chairperson

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