

# HARFORD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT POLICY

Title of Policy: Social Security Number Protection Policy	
Program Area: All Areas	
Approved By: <i>Susan Kelly</i>	Original Effective Date: <i>5/30/14</i>
Susan Kelly, Health Officer	Revised Dates:

## 1.0 POLICY

The Harford County Health Department (HCHD) recognizes Social Security Numbers (SSN) as confidential information that must be protected. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) requires that documents use Social Security Numbers as identifiers to process payments to staff and for client insurance claims. These documents include: payroll reports, overtime vouchers, expense reports, consultant time sheets, and medical claims.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purposes of this policy are to ensure that the HCHD:

- Protects the confidentiality and security of SSNs;
- Limits access to SSNs to those employees who need such access to perform their job-related duties;
- Prohibits the unlawful disclosure of SSNs;
- Properly transports documents that contain SSNs;
- Provides for the proper disposal of SSNs; and
- Conducts periodic compliance checks to assure confidentiality and security of SSNs are maintained.

## 3.0 PROCEDURES

3.1 HCHD will require Social Security Numbers only for the documents specified by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and will diligently maintain security of SSNs.

3.2 Only those employees who need access to documents containing SSNs for completion of their job duties may review or otherwise process such documents. Employees handling these documents must protect the confidentiality and security of SSNs.

3.3 Unlawful disclosure of SSNs is prohibited. SSNs may not be shared with other employees unless it is part of the job duty as required by processing payments or submitting insurance claims.

3.4 Documents containing SSNs should only be transported to the HCHD Administration fiscal and billing units. When sending a document that contains a SSN to Administration for processing, the confidentiality and security of the document must be protected by placing it in an inter-office envelope. Once the document is received and processed by Administration, it must be secured in a locked cabinet. Documents containing SSNs must never be left exposed on an employee's desk.

3.5 Disposal of documents containing SSNs will occur every three years or after an audit

whichever comes first. All documents containing SSNs must be properly shredded, according to HCHD regulations.

- 3.6 The Compliance Officer will conduct periodic checks to determine that the procedure is being followed properly and notify the Director of Administration of any concerns via email.