Living the Mission

Our mission statement is more than just the few significant words you see posted throughout the workspaces. The following helps bring those words into focus and apply them to our daily work.

BBAHC’s mission statement appears on all policies and on other corporate materials as a reminder to its directors and employees of the corporation’s ultimate goal:

**TO PROVIDE QUALITY HEALTHCARE WITH COMPETENCE, COMPASSION AND SENSITIVITY**

However, the mere fact that a director or employee has memorized the mission statement doesn’t necessarily mean that each person knows what it means or how to “live” it. People “live” the mission statement when they incorporate it into their daily decision-making process and actions.

To live the mission statement, we have to understand it. To understand it, we have to define it. Once we agree on a definition, our Board of Directors can adopt various policies to explain how employees, directors and third parties implement (or live) the mission statement. This guide explains the Executive Committee’s definition of BBAHC’s mission statement. Policies that implement the mission statement with BBAHC’s employees, directors and consultants will follow.

We will define the mission statement by breaking it into sections and developing a definition for each. BBAHC’s mission statement can be easily broken into the following: (A) to provide health care, (B) with competence, (C) and sensitivity. Each of the sections is discussed below.

*To Provide Quality Healthcare*

One dictionary has three meanings of the word “provide:”

a. To furnish or supply  
b. To make available  
c. To make ready ahead of time, to prepare.

Each of these meanings of “provide” relates to our use. When BBAHC cares for our patients in Dillingham or in the villages, we are providing that needed health care. We prepare in advance learning our skills, improving best practices, and learning new standards of care. BBAHC engages in preventive medicine through routine checkups, well-person and well-baby clinics, diabetes education, and similar programs. When BBAHC expands services in an area or requests more funding, it is providing for the growth of health care. When BBAHC provides education on well-baby or well-woman issues, it is making good health practices and knowledge available to the residents of the region. When it sends out information about a stop smoking clinic that will be available at Kanakanak or a sub-regional clinic, it is using publicity to provide good health habits.
Health as we are using it is best defined by Webster as: “optimal mental and physical soundness and well-being.” Optimal means best, but it takes into account existing circumstances and facts. Optimal physical soundness for a 16 year old boy is very different from optimal physical soundness for an 85 year old woman.

Taking all that together, “to provide health” is defined as:

a. Providing the best possible and continually improving health care to each person in our region.

**With Competence**

When people are competent, they are capable or qualified to do whatever they are supposed to do. Competency may require them to have a specific level of education or training or skills. It may require them to pass certain tests as a way of demonstrating they are competent. It does not require the person to be the very best in their field, but it implies that they can handle whatever arises in their area and have proven that they have the ability to do so. A competent receptionist can simultaneously answer a phone, put someone on hold, transfer a call, and continue to sound pleasant throughout the process. A competent basketball player will make a high percentage of free throws, but it is unlikely that she or he will make 100% of them.

Including “competence” in BBAHC’s mission statement means that BBAHC will hire people who have proven they are qualified to do their job as a doctor, receptionist, community health aide, nurse, manager, etc. Patient care demands a much higher standard of care and competency than a basketball player who occasionally misses a free throw or a secretary who forwards a phone call to the wrong office. If a patient is misdiagnosed, improperly treated, or medication is incorrectly administered, the result can be life ending.

“With competence” is defined as health care provided:

b. By employees and others who have demonstrated they are capable and qualified to provide those services and who make every human effort to provide the best and improving care to the patient.

**Compassion**

Compassion literally means “passion or suffering with” someone. Compassion in health care is vitally important so that patients truly know and understand that they are not suffering alone. There have been numerous studies within healthcare research focusing on the important aspects of excellent patient care and one characteristic which impacts greatly the patient and their family members overall satisfaction is if they had the direct feeling that their provider was compassionate. A primary model of healthcare compassion has defined compassion as “a virtuous response that seeks to address the suffering and needs of a person through relational understanding and action.” As an employee of BBAHC, it is vital (and expected) that you
display compassion, by whatever means necessary, to the patient and their family members. From employees that are direct patient care providers all the way down to those employees that rarely see patients and/or family members, it is imperative that all BBAHC employees not only display compassion to patients and their families at reasonably expected times, but to also look for opportunities to show compassion to them.

This “compassion” is defined as:

c. A virtuous response that seeks to address the suffering and needs of a person through relational understanding and action.

And Sensitivity

Someone is sensitive when they acknowledge the existence of another thing and respond readily or quickly. You are sensitive to the warmth of, and potential harm from, a flame when you pull your hand back from a fire.

Having sensitivity means that BBAHC and its employees, directors and outside consultants are aware of issues and values of the patients we serve and respond readily to address them. Sensitivity includes cultural, personal, and background values that make each patient a unique individual deserving of our respect and care. It means treating everyone with respect, having patience and tolerance for their views, listening without interruption, and seeking consensus rather than mandating an approach when possible.

This “sensitivity” is defined as:

d. Acting with respect, tolerance, and care for each individual’s culture, traditions, experiences, needs, and values.

Definition

Combining all these ideas gives the following definition of our mission statement:

Providing the best possible and continually improving health care to each person in our region by employees and others who have demonstrated they are capable and qualified to provide those services, who will seek to address the suffering and needs of patients through relational understanding and action and who make every human effort to provide the best and improving care to the patient, and who act with respect, tolerance, and care for each individual’s culture, traditions, experiences, needs, and values.