

What Integrity Means to Me

By Larry Chewning

Larry is the supervisor of the Ryan White client managers at HopeHealth Specialty Services - Infectious Diseases located at 600 East Palmetto Street, Florence, SC. Larry's experience working with some of the most marginalized people in the Pee Dee Region has inspired him to share his perspective on what it means to live the HopeHealth values.

Imagine for a moment that your next doctor's appointment required this. You are sitting on a stage in front of a group of people – all of whom are watching your every move. As you fidget in a failed attempt to look calm, someone begins to ask detailed questions about your health, finances, sexual orientation and what medical problems or issues you are facing today. The answers you give are then projected on a large screen for everyone to see.

Within a few short minutes the entire audience will know your cholesterol numbers, whether or not you have an STI, if you drink and how often, if you have depression or anxiety, what you earned on your last paycheck and how much you REALLY weigh.

Feeling nervous yet? Now imagine that instead of you on that stage, it is your grandfather, favorite aunt or your child being asked the same intimate questions. All you can do is watch the reactions of those in the audience and pray that they will have integrity and not turn you away because your grandfather does not meet certain financial criteria or your aunt has been given a specific diagnosis.

You walked on to that stage with the hope of receiving medical care. Now there is a possibility of that hope being deferred.

Not long ago this was a reality for thousands of South Carolinians. Being treated as less than equal by those unwilling to put ethics and morality first with regards to health care was, and in some cases continues to be a struggle for many families. But that is not the case at HopeHealth.

What began as a small office where medical care could be provided in a safe environment has grown into one of the largest community health centers in the state. Why? Because of every single one of you.

Everyday people come to us seeking medical care for themselves and their families. People drive from as far away as Columbia, Augusta, Myrtle Beach and Charleston to receive care at HopeHealth because we treat each patient with respect – with integrity. We do what is right regardless of the circumstances.

Having integrity means when the time comes to ask intimate questions, we do so without passing judgment. Having integrity means when patients need financial assistance with their care, we provide that help with respect. Having integrity means when patients have been worn down by the decisions of their pasts, we kneel down by their sides and help them to stand again. And having integrity means when a mother's eyes are filled with tears because her child is finally given hope, sometimes we cry with them.

Integrity is not something that can be taught. It is something that was given to each of us and it is the reason why we are all here. It is why we were called to work at HopeHealth, and it is the reason tomorrow morning every lobby and every exam room across our HopeHealth locations will be filled with returning patients and new patients. Integrity is a blessing.



INTEGRITY

We hold ourselves to the highest ethical and moral standards. We are transparent with our interactions with employees, patients, family members and business partners.

