

# HARRIS HEALTH SYSTEM

## POLICY AND REGULATIONS MANUAL

Policy No: 2580  
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Effective Date: 12/1999  
Board Motion No: 99.12-485  
Last Review Date: 10/13/2020  
Due For Review: 10/13/2023

**TITLE: TRAVEL GUIDELINES AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

**PURPOSE:** To establish standards providing the business traveler with a reasonable level of service and comfort at the most economical rate and to provide guidelines regarding requests for reimbursement of travel and other business expenses incurred while conducting Harris Health System business.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Harris Health System (Harris Health) will reimburse employees as provided in this policy, for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for authorized travel while conducting Harris Health business.

### **POLICY ELABORATIONS:**

Employees:

Employee travel authorization requests, expense reporting and related workflow approval process will be automated. Employees must complete and submit travel authorization requests and expense reports online via Harris Health's PeopleSoft travel and expense reporting module as part of the employee self-service feature. Travel authorization requests must be submitted forty-five (45) days prior to a trip to ensure more economical ticket prices are obtained. Payments for seminar and registration fees and lodging costs are to be requested in advance and paid by Harris Health directly to the vendor. Other expenses incurred may be reimbursed after completion of the trip. Reimbursement will be via direct deposit.

Non-Employees:

The process for non-employee travel and expense reporting and reimbursement is not automated. Non-Harris Health employees will need to continue using the following forms for requesting travel and other business expense reimbursement. Travel authorization requests must be submitted using Form 283777 Authorization form for Travel and Conference Expense and requests for reimbursement of expenses incurred by non-employees must be submitted using Form 280448 Travel and Business Expense Report.

### I. DEFINITIONS:

- A. **AUTHORIZED TRAVEL:** Travel request substantiated on Form 283777, Authorization Form for Travel & Conference Expense by non-employees and online by employees, approved by the employee's management team.
- B. **AUTHORIZATION FORM FOR TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE EXPENSE:** Form used for all travel and external education expense, completed and approved prior to travel. (An "approved" form authorizes Harris Health's Travel Agency to make travel arrangements).
- C. **TRAVEL AND BUSINESS EXPENSE REPORT (Form 280448):** Form used by non-employees to report expenses incurred and to request reimbursement and created online by employees

### II. REIMBURSEMENT:

- A. Harris Health shall reimburse employees for actual reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for Authorized Travel as follows:

1. Conferences, Training Programs, and Meetings:

Conferences, training programs, and meetings shall be limited to those pertinent to the requesting department's basic assignments and the individual's area of employment and necessary to conduct Harris Health business. All opportunities for required training shall be sought and obtained at the least possible cost. (See Harris Health Policy 6.46 Professional Dues, Conferences, and Seminars for continuing education and conference guidelines).

2. Seminar, Registration Fees and Related Hotel/Lodging Costs:

Seminar, registration fees, and any related hotel/lodging costs should be paid in advance by Harris Health directly to the vendor. Such requests for payments shall be documented on Form 281099 Accounts Payable Voucher Request, and submitted to Accounts Payable. A copy of the approved Authorization for Travel must be attached to the voucher

request. Travel advances will not be issued for such expenses. If not paid in advance by Harris Health. Employee may be reimbursed for expenses incurred after completion of the trip and upon submission of a Travel and Business Expense Report. (Form 280448 or online).

3. Out of Pocket Expense Reimbursement:

Out of pocket expense reimbursement shall require completion of an Travel and Business Expense Report Form 280448 or online with supporting receipts attached. The online travel and expense reporting system facilitates uploading of receipts.

4. Personal Expenses for Meals:

Personal expenses for meals incurred while on out-of-town Harris Health business shall be charged to a personal credit card or paid in cash and submitted for reimbursement on Travel and Business Expense Report. (Form 280448 or online. Itemized receipts for meals shall be required for reimbursement. When attending seminars, reimbursement will not be made for meals when included in the seminar/conference fee.

5. Expenditures Beyond Normal and Customary Travel and Business Expenses:

The following expenditures beyond normal and customary travel and business expenses will not be reimbursed including, but not limited to:

- a. Bar charges;
- b. Entertainment expenses;
- c. Valet parking, if self-service parking is available;
- d. Expenses incurred as a result of extending a trip beyond the business requirements of that trip;
- e. Fines for traffic violations;
- f. Expenses for family child, pet and home and property care during trip;
- g. In-room movies;
- h. Gifts or purchase of clothing and/or personal items;

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- i. First class airline seat upgrades;
- j. Social club dues, airline club and rental car club membership fees;
- k. Spouse, children, etc., travel expenses. (If a spouse, dependent or guest accompanies the employee, the difference in hotel room rates above the single rate, etc., must be deducted).
- l. Travel insurance; and
- m. Gift cards.

Note: If an employee is planning to incur a travel or business expense and is uncertain whether the expenditure would qualify for reimbursement, they should contact the Harris Health Accounts Payable department.

- B. Harris Health has designated travel agencies for procuring **airline tickets, hotel accommodations, and rental cars**. Employees may procure airline tickets directly if there is a cost savings for Harris Health. Any exception in which the employee purchases airline tickets directly from a non-designated travel agency or online must be substantiated by cost savings, documented on the travel authorization request, and attached to the expense report.

1. Harris Health's designated travel agency for ticket retrieval is:

<u>Travel Agency</u>	<u>Contact Number:</u>
National Travel	1-877-717-7768

2. In the event an employee encounters a travel emergency and must change travel plans, he or she must contact the Harris Health designated travel agency to coordinate changes. The employee shall be required to provide his/her employee number to the travel agent.

- C. Reimbursement may occur for the following items provided the employee was performing Harris Health duties and there is reasonable documentation to support the expense:

1. **Air Travel:**

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- a. Airline reservations are to be made through the designated travel agency and require an approved Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense (283777 or online). Reservation should be made for the lowest cost ticket, typically a nonrefundable ticket.
- b. Airline ticket purchases should be made by the designated travel agency unless the employee shows documented evidence of a cost savings in purchasing the ticket themselves. If the employee finds a less expensive ticket rate and chooses to purchase airfare on their own, the employee should understand that airfare not purchased through the designated travel agency will not be reimbursed until after the trip has been taken and the employee submits their expense report for the trip. An airfare quote from the designated travel agency is required to prove the self-purchased airfare is less expensive.

### 2. **Automobile Mileage:**

- a. Mileage will be based on the current governmental rate, the most direct distance to the business destination, and will not exceed available airfare rates for that particular destination. Any additional expense will be at the personal expense of the employee. An online map showing the number of roundtrip miles from their home or work location (whichever is closer) to the airport or travel location should be attached to the reimbursement request. When a personal vehicle is used for local travel such as pavilion to pavilion, reimbursement is based on mileage in excess of the normal work commute.
- b. Personal automobile mileage should be documented on Form 280972 "Request for Mileage Reimbursement," attached to a voucher and submitted to Accounts Payable. Reimbursement will be included on the employee's subsequent paycheck when no other travel expenses were incurred.

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### 3. **Automobile Maintenance:**

Operational, maintenance and repair costs shall be reimbursed only for Harris Health owned, leased, or rented vehicles. The cost of repairs to an employee's personal automobile damaged while acting in the course and scope of duties for Harris Health may be reimbursable only to the limit of the deductible applicable to the employee's personal automobile insurance.

### 4. **Car Rental:**

Taxicabs should be utilized for local transportation while on out-of-town Harris Health business. In the event it is economically more efficient to rent a car, the employee should consider the cost of optional insurance if their personal auto insurance does not cover car rentals. Car rentals are to be procured from the designated travel agency using an approved Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense.

### 5. **Lodging:**

Lodging requests may be procured from the designated travel agency using an approved **Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense**. The arrangements should utilize the most economical, single occupancy lodging convenient to the business at hand. In those situations where a seminar/workshop, etc., is held at a hotel which offers reduced room rates for participants, the employee may make lodging reservations directly with the hotel. A request for advance payment to the hotel should be made by Accounts Payable Voucher Request form (281099). Otherwise, the cost of lodging will be paid by the employee and reimbursed based upon submission of a Travel and Business Expense Report with appropriate receipts attached.

### 6. **Meals:**

a. Employee only - Personal meal expenditures incurred while on out-of-town Harris Health business shall be reimbursed based on actual expenses with supporting receipts. The receipt should be a detailed

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cash register or credit card receipt. The “cash tab” from the restaurant check is **NOT** acceptable.

- b. Employee and other staff or non-employee guests - Reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for business meals by a Harris Health employee such as in-house staff meetings, outside business meetings, applicant interviews, etc. may be reimbursable if Harris Health business was conducted during the meal. A **Travel and Business Expense Report** must be submitted with:

- i. Cash or credit card receipt;
- ii. Date and location of meal/event;
- iii. Purpose of business discussed;
- iv. Individuals present, their titles and departments or attendee sign in sheets; and
- v. Expenditures for business meals should **NOT** be submitted to Petty Cash for reimbursement.

### 7. **Recognition or Appreciation Events:**

Expenditures related to appreciation or recognition events for Harris Health employees are not reimbursable UNLESS authorized by the Pavilion Administrator. (See Harris Health Policy 6.18 Employee Recognition Programs/Retirement/Condolences/Funded Events/Non-Patient Food for guidelines).

### 8. **Miscellaneous Travel Expenses:**

Expenses for taxis, limousines (only for group transportation to/from the airport), tips (if reasonable and customary), tolls, public transportation fares, parking, and laundry (trips > than 1-week) shall be reimbursed with appropriate documentation and justification.

### 9. **Miscellaneous Business Expenses:**

Cost of professional memberships (dues) and professional magazine subscriptions shall be paid directly to the Vendor by Harris Health in accordance with Policy 6.46 “Professional Dues, Conferences and

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Seminar” upon submission of an approved **Accounts Payable Voucher Request (281099)** to Accounts payable.

### 10. **Gift Cards:**

Purchases of gift cards to be distributed to Harris Health employees are NOT reimbursable.

- D. Combining personal and business travel is acceptable if the Harris Health travel guidelines are followed and there is NO additional cost to Harris Health. Qualified business expenses will be reimbursed. The employee MUST separate expenses incurred for business purposes and personal expenses. Harris Health will reimburse the employee for weekend lodging and meals with PRIOR approval of the employee’s supervisor. The employee MUST substantiate the savings to the Harris Health as a result of extending the trip. A cost comparison showing savings must be attached to the Travel and Business Expense Report (280448) for weekend reimbursement.
- E. Expenditures incurred for which the employee is requesting reimbursement shall be documented on the Travel and Business Expense Report via the online travel and expense reporting system.
1. Original receipts shall be required and uploaded for all travel and business expenditures. Any item on the expense report, excluding tips NOT supported by an original receipt shall be deducted from the reimbursement request.
  2. The approved Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense will automatically be attached to the expense report.

Effective May 2017 reimbursement will be processed electronically in accordance with the deposit instructions on file provided by the employee for payroll and compensation direct deposit.

### III. **PROCEDURES:**

See Appendix A.



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### REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Harris Health System Form 281099 Accounts Payable Voucher Request

Harris Health System Form 280448 Travel and Business Expense Report – (for Non-employee use only).

Harris Health System Form 281022 Texas Sales Tax Exemption Certificate Notice – Tax Exempt Numbers Do Not Exist

Harris Health System Form 280972 Request for Mileage Reimbursement

Harris Health System Form 283777 Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense – (for Non-employee use only).

### OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

Harris Health System Chief Financial Officer, Fiscal Administration

### REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective Date	Version# (If Applicable)	Review or Revision Date (Indicate Reviewed or Revised)	Reviewed or Approved by: (If Board of Managers Approved, include Board Motion#)
		Reviewed 8/23/12	Fiscal Administration
		Revised 10/1999	Fiscal Administration
		Reviewed 11/1999	HCHD Policy Review Committee
12/1999	1.0		Board of Managers (99.12-485)
	2.0	Reviewed 9/21/2007	Fiscal Administration
		Approved 10/2/2007	HCHD Policy Review Committee
	3.0	Revised/Approved 4/11/2017	Structure and Organizational Standards Committee
		Revised/Approved 10/13/2020	Structure and Organizational Standards Committee

### APPENDIX A PROCEDURES

#### A. Employees:

1. Submit "Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense" and a copy of the seminar brochure, if applicable, for approval. Effective May 2017 this request and approval process is online as part of the PeopleSoft Travel and Expense Module.
2. The employee will receive a workflow notification of approval or denial of their request for travel.
3. Purchase plane tickets and reserve car rentals and hotel accommodations 45-days in advance either directly or with the designated travel agency, whichever is most cost effective for Harris Health.
4. Make arrangements for accommodations directly with hotel when reduced rates are available for attending seminar/workshops, etc., if applicable.
5. Complete and submit to Accounts Payable the **Accounts Payable Voucher Request (281099)** for registration/tuition and/or hotel. Attach a copy of approved authorization for travel to the voucher request.
6. Submit approved Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense to Travel Agency for airline, lodging, car rental.
7. Take copy of **Texas Sales Tax Exemption Certificate**  
Request and obtain receipts for expenditures for expense report reimbursement of lodging, transportation, meals, etc.
8. Complete and attach original receipts to **Travel and Business Expense Report**.
9. Complete and Submit Travel and Business Expense Report online within 5-working days after the travel return date or occurrence of the business expense.

**NOTE:** If the ONLY expenditure incurred is the airline fare, the employee is NOT required to complete a Travel and Business Expense Report.

#### B. Department Head, Administrator:

1. Review, and approve Authorization Form for Travel and Conference Expense.
2. Approve completed request forms as appropriate:
  - a. Schedule Change Request (280393);
  - b. Accounts Payable Voucher Request (281099) (registration/tuition/hotel); and
  - c. Employee Expense Report.

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### C. Travel Agency:

1. Procures airline tickets, lodging, car rentals at most economical rate.
2. Emails travel itinerary, e-ticket/flight confirmation, to designated employee.

### D. Accounts Payable:

1. Reviews completed voucher requests for direct Vendor payment (registration/tuition/hotel) and pays in advance, approved requests directly to the Vendor(s).
2. Reviews Travel and Business Expense Report for accuracy. Processes reimbursement via direct deposit if appropriate in the next normal processing cycle.