

WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL (WCRH)

ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

SUBJECT: Code of Conduct

NO: AM 1.7

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/1/08

PAGE: 1 of 5

REVIEWED/REVISED: 2/09; 02/10; 2/11; 6/12; 8/12; 1/13; 1/14 :1/15; 1/16; 1/17; 1/18; 1/21; 1/24

TJC – Sentinel Alert #40 July, 2008

PURPOSE: Intimidating and disruptive behaviors can foster medical errors, contribute to poor patient satisfaction and lead to serious preventable adverse events, increase the cost of care and cause employees to seek new positions in a more professional environment. Safety and quality of patient care is dependent on teamwork, communication and a collaborative work environment. To ensure quality of care and to promote a culture of safety, behaviors that threaten the performance of the health care team must be addressed.

POLICY: All intimidating and disruptive behaviors are unprofessional and are not condoned or allowed by WCRH; WCRH shall not tolerate any such behaviors. Intimidating and disruptive behaviors include overt actions such as verbal outbursts and physical threats, as well as passive activities such as refusing to perform assigned tasks or quietly exhibiting uncooperative attitudes during routine activities. Intimidating and disruptive behaviors may be manifested by health care professionals in positions of authority. Such behaviors include reluctance or refusal to answer questions, return phone calls or pages, condescending language or voice intonation, and impatience with questions. Overt and passive behaviors undermine team effectiveness and can compromise the safety of patients.

PROCEDURE: This Code of Conduct applies to all WCRH employees or contracted agents ("staff") and members of the medical staff ("physicians") and is meant to reinforce an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation for all who work or practice at WCRH.

Definitions:

Expected Behavior: conforming to or equal to appropriate or permissible standards of behavior.

Disruptive Behavior: to throw into disorder or turmoil or to interrupt to the extent of interrupting patient care.

Intimidating Behavior: to induce fear or a sense of inferiority into another.

Standards of Behavior:

1. Expected Behaviors:

- a. Communication will take place in a timely fashion, involving the appropriate person(s) in an appropriate setting.
- b. Communication, including spoken remarks, written documents and e-mails, shall be honest and direct and conducted in a professional, constructive, respectful, courteous and efficient manner.
- c. Telephone communications shall be respectful and professional. Initiators shall prepare for their call by gathering all necessary information, organizing their questions or comments in the appropriate manner and coordinating with others who need to reach the same individual about other issues. Receivers will respond in a courteous and professional manner.
- d. Cooperation and availability are expected of physicians and staff on call. When individuals are paged, they will respond promptly and appropriately.
- e. A variety of experience levels exists and tolerance for those who are learning is expected.
- f. Deal with issues /behaviors, not the person.
- g. Accept diversity in working styles.
- h. Take personal responsibility for words and behaviors as well as responses to people and events.
- i. Response to patients/families who are involved in or witness intimidating and/or disruptive behaviors shall include hearing and empathizing with their concerns, thanking them for their concerns and apologizing.

2. Unacceptable Behaviors:

- a. Shouting or yelling.
- b. Use of profanity directed at another individual or healthcare professional.
- c. Slamming or throwing of objects in anger or disgust.
- d. Hostile, condemning or demeaning communications.
- e. Criticism of performance and/or competency delivered in an inappropriate location, i.e., not in private, and not aimed at performance improvement.
- f. Other behavior demonstrating disrespect, intimidation or disruption to the delivery of quality patient care.

- g. Retaliation against any person who addresses or reports unacceptable behavior.

Process for Managing Disruptive and Inappropriate Behaviors:

The optimal way to address inappropriate conduct is a face-to face meeting between the parties involved using the following steps:

1. The person who was aggrieved is expected to address the issue with the other party in a timely manner and private setting using this Code of Conduct as a reference.
2. The meeting may be more productive after a “cooling off” period of a few hours or a few days so that the parties involved may gain perspective on the precipitating events and process breakdowns that may have been contributing factors.
3. If facilitation of the discussion is needed, the department manager or other appropriate person may serve as facilitators.
4. Sincere apologies should be encouraged and every reasonable attempt should be made to defuse the situation without further intervention.
5. If clinical care/hospital process deficiencies are discovered during this face-to-face meeting, these concerns need to be addressed by the Hospital's leadership for improvement.
6. No documentation of incidents resolved by the parties is required.
7. Anonymous reports shall be forwarded to the Compliance Officer for investigation and resolution.

Unresolved Issues:

1. Written Report for Unresolved Issues:

- a. If the issue is not resolved after a reasonable attempt by the parties involved, the situation may be reported using the Code of Conduct Report (see attached form). The completed form will be sent to the Benefits Coordinator or other appropriate person who will log all concerns.
- b. Concerns will be reviewed by the Human Resource Committee. For concerns regarding a physician this review will include a physician appointed by the WCRH Medical Executive Committee. Each review will include view points of all involved parties and possible clinical

care/hospital process deficiencies that may have contributed to the situation.

2. Action for Unresolved Issues:

- a. If the complaint is found to have merit by the Human Resource Committee and the reviewing physician, the following action will be taken:
 - (1) The immediate supervisor and the Benefits Coordinator shall be sent a copy of the complaint and the review. They shall develop a plan for appropriate counseling and intervention.
 - (2) For physicians, a copy of the complaint and the review shall be sent to the Medical Executive Committee who will develop a plan for appropriate counseling and intervention.
- b. Any action reported in accordance with the Code of Conduct that requires review or follow-up is not considered by WCRH to be disciplinary action; however, actions reported may result in disciplinary action. Any necessary staff disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with WCRH policies. For physicians, any necessary disciplinary action will be taken only after the Medical Executive Committee makes a determination that it is appropriate to take corrective action as defined in the Medical Staff Policies and By-Laws.
- c. To protect privacy, written reports containing individual's names or departments will not be transmitted by e-mail.
- d. A summary of action taken will be sent to the Benefits Coordinator and logged with the original complaint.
- e. Data trends will be conducted by the Benefits Coordinator and reported at least annually to the Medical Executive Committee, Hospital Administration and the Governing Board.

Approved: _____
Administrator

Medical Director

Member, Governing Board

**Weisman Children's Rehabilitation Hospital
Code of Conduct Report**

(Send completed report to the Benefits Coordinator)

Date of Event:_____ Time of Event:_____ Location of Event:_____

1. Describe the situation which you found to be unacceptable:

2. What circumstances precipitated this event?

3. Names of Patient/Family, Employee or Medical Staff Involved:

4. List all who witnessed the event:

5. How do you think this situation impacted patient care, hospital operations, your work or your team member's work?

6. What did you or others do to address this conduct?

Name of Person completing this form:_____ Department:_____
(Not required)

Note: If the behavior you experienced involves any form of harassment (including, but not limited to harassment based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability), violence, or the threat of violence, please contact any member of management of the Benefits Coordinator.

