

Chaperone and Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

I. PURPOSE

To guide healthcare practitioners on circumstances that warrant an in-room chaperone to be provided during sensitive or intimate physical exams, protecting the patient and practitioner.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all healthcare services provided to students on or off campus by Goucher College employed healthcare practitioners.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

This is a mandatory chaperone policy, which means that intimate examinations are not performed unless a chaperone is present. This policy should not prevent emergency evaluation and care.

IV. IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Chaperone:** A medically trained individual who is present during an examination to ensure patient and practitioner comfort, safety, privacy, and dignity. Chaperones may not be the patient's family member or guest.
- B. **Examination:** Physical exam, procedure, or treatment.
- C. **Healthcare Practitioner:** Any medical staff member employed or contracted by Goucher College, in a full or part-time capacity. This can include nurses, nurse practitioners, athletic trainers, team physicians, medical assistants (or similar). This excludes any practitioners who are leasing space on campus and/or operating under the agreement of an outside third-party.
- D. **Informed Consent:** An explanation of the exam, treatment, or procedure, reasonable alternatives, indications, and contraindications. Patient verbally acknowledges an understanding of the discussion and gives consent for treatment. Provider documents verbal consent in the patient's medical record.
- E. **Intimate Examination:** Genital, rectal, pelvic or breast exams.
- F. **Sensitive Examination:** Any examination, procedure or treatment that requires the patient to be partially disrobed.
- G. **Observer:** A non-medically trained individual (typically a relative or friend) present during an examination for patient comfort.

V. PROCEDURES

A. When are chaperones provided?

All patients visiting a medical facility on campus are informed of this policy and that they have a right to request a chaperone at any time prior to or during a medical visit for a sensitive exam, procedure or treatment.

A chaperone is provided without request and in all cases for patients who require intimate exams, as defined above. A chaperone is provided during an intimate exam even if the patient is accompanied by a trusted companion acting as an observer.

B. Who can serve as chaperone?

A chaperone may include any non-student clinical staff member trained to act as one.

C. How is a chaperone request handled?

- A chaperone is automatically offered for intimate examinations. Practitioners explain to patients the role of the chaperone in the examination.
- In the event there is no staff member available to chaperone, the examination is rescheduled.
- Practitioners document the presence of a chaperone, including the name and title of the chaperone, in the patient's record.

D. What is the role of the chaperone?

The chaperone will:

- Be sensitive and respect the patient's dignity and confidentiality.
- Reassure the patient if necessary.
- Be familiar with the procedure involved in a routine intimate examination.
- Stay throughout the examination and be able to see what the practitioner is doing.
- Stop the exam if there are any concerns about a practitioner's behavior or actions.
- Report any concerning behavior or actions to the Director of Student Health and Wellness.

E. How is an exam with a chaperone conducted?

- The attending healthcare practitioner provides an opportunity for private conversation with the patient before and after the examination without the chaperone present. The practitioner should minimize inquiries or history taking of a sensitive nature during a chaperoned examination.
- The healthcare practitioner informs the patient of components of the exam or treatment, including the elements of informed consent listed above, and obtains consent from the patient before beginning the exam. The practitioner documents this consent in the patient's medical record.
- If it is necessary to undress, the patient is given adequate time and privacy to do so, and the practitioner will knock on the door before re-entering the room.
- The patient is examined by the healthcare practitioner with chaperone present. The healthcare practitioner explains the steps they take before performing them and obtains consent from the

- patient. Unless assisting with the procedure, it is recommended that the chaperone stand near the head of the bed of a recumbent patient, or behind the standing patient.
- Efforts will be made by all practitioners to ensure patients are appropriately draped and/or gowned during their examinations.
 - The presence, name, and title of the patient chaperone should be documented in the patient's medical record by the practitioner.

VI. REPORTING NON-COMPLIANCE OR COMPLAINTS

For concerns that a practitioner has not followed this policy or for complaints about the policy, please contact the Office of Title IX (titleixcoordinator@goucher.edu) or visit their website to [submit a report](#).

VII. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

For more information or if you have any questions about this policy, contact the Director of Student Health & Wellness (student.wellness@goucher.edu).

For concerns that a practitioner has violated this policy, report to the Office of Title IX (titleixcoordinator@goucher.edu) or use the [online reporting form](#).

VIII. HISTORY

Adopted: April 4, 2019. Updated October 2019, March 2024.