

POLICY

Chaperone Policy

This Policy is Applicable to the following Corewell Health sites:

Corewell Health East (CHE) One Epic Ecosystem (OEE), Beaumont Pharmacy Solutions, Beaumont Post Acute Care, Continuing Care (CHW), Corewell Health Beaumont Grosse Pointe Hospital, Corewell Health Beaumont Troy Hospital, Corewell Health Big Rapids Hospital, Corewell Health Dearborn Hospital, Corewell Health Farmington Hills Hospital, Corewell Health Gerber Hospital, Corewell Health Grand Rapids Hospitals (Blodgett Hospital, Butterworth Hospital, Helen DeVos Children's Hospital), Corewell Health Greenville Hospital, Corewell Health Ludington Hospital, Corewell Health Medical Group East, Corewell Health Medical Group West, Corewell Health Pennox Hospital, Corewell Health Reed City Hospital, Corewell Health South (Niles, St. Joseph, and Watervliet Hospitals.; Corewell Health Medical Group South; Applicable Corewell Health South Regional Sites), Corewell Health Taylor Hospital, Corewell Health Trenton Hospital, Corewell Health Wayne Hospital, Corewell Health William Beaumont University Hospital, Corewell Health Zeeland Hospital, Corporate (Legacy Beaumont Health), Corporate (Legacy Spectrum Health System), Outpatient/Physician Practices (CHW)

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Department Area:	One Epic Ecosystem (OEE), Patient Care

1. Purpose

To provide a consistent, standard, and safe care environment within Corewell Health. There are physical, psychological, and cultural reasons why chaperones are sometimes needed. This policy promotes respect for patient dignity and for the professional nature of the examination or procedure.

The use of chaperones is a part of Corewell Health's efforts for safe and responsible care. Maintaining and fostering a culture of mutual accountability, ongoing education for providers and patients, and appropriate response to suspected unprofessional or unsafe behavior is paramount to our mission.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Chaperone** – a clinical caregiver, medical assistant, or other licensed, registered, or certified individual with knowledge of the role and acts as an impartial observer of the sensitive examination or procedure. A physician resident or physician fellow may also be a chaperone. Specific to [Section 3.2.5](#), only a medical assistant or another licensee or registered individual can act as a chaperone.
- 2.2. **Bystander** – a parent, guardian, family member, friend of the patient, student, or clerical staff may serve as a bystander who attends the examination or procedure at the patient's request but will not be considered a chaperone.

- 2.3. **Provider** – a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, certified nurse mid-wife, psychologist, physical therapist, or occupational therapist
- 2.4. **Sensitive examination or procedure** – a physical examination or procedure involving penetration or palpation of the vagina, penis, testicles, rectum, or breast (regardless of gender). The patient/patient's legal representative may provide additional personal and cultural preferences may broaden the definition of a sensitive examination or procedure.
- 2.5. **Minor** – anyone under 18 years of age, excluding emancipated minors.
- 2.6. **Medical emergency** – a circumstance that, in the provider's good faith medical judgment, creates an immediate threat of serious risk to the life or physical health of the patient.

3. Policy

3.1. General Requirements for All Patients

- 3.1.1. All patients, providers and clinical staff are entitled to have a chaperone present for sensitive examinations and procedures.
 - 3.1.1.1. Except as discussed in [Section 3.2.5](#), for adult and minor patients, any clinical staff member as outlined in [Section 2.1](#) may act as a chaperone for a sensitive examination or procedure.
- 3.1.2. Prior to an episode of care that may include a sensitive exam or procedure, providers or clinical staff will discuss the role of the chaperone with the patient/patient's legal representative and ask if they would like a chaperone present. In the event that the patient/patient's legal representative is not able to participate in the discussion when a chaperone is offered for a sensitive exam, a chaperone will be provided.
- 3.1.3. Unless specifically requested or as discussed in [Section 3.2.5](#), a chaperone will not be offered in the following situations:
 - 3.1.3.1. Exams or procedures necessary and associated with a medical emergency.
 - 3.1.3.2. Surgical/procedural areas where multiple Corewell Health staff members are present for the procedure.
 - 3.1.3.3. Performing an Electrocardiogram and placement/removal of ECG/EKG electrodes.
 - 3.1.3.4. Physical exam of the newborn/infant up to one (1) year of age.
 - 3.1.3.5. Measuring patient temperature.
 - 3.1.3.6. Rectal, vaginal, urethral administered medications.
 - 3.1.3.7. Changing of diapers or adult incontinence pads.
 - 3.1.3.8. Insertion/placement/removal of fecal or urinary collection devices.
 - 3.1.3.9. Insertion/placement/removal of arterial or venous lines in the groin area.
 - 3.1.3.10. Assisting with breastfeeding. Reference Infant Feeding Policy.
- 3.1.4. If a patient/patient's legal representative requests a chaperone and a chaperone is not available, the sensitive examination or procedure will be postponed or rescheduled for a time when a chaperone is available unless the examination or procedure is deemed a medical emergency by the performing provider.
- 3.1.5. If the patient/patient's legal representative declines a chaperone and the sensitive examination or procedure is not urgent or emergent, the provider may proceed with the examination absent a chaperone. If the provider does not agree to perform the sensitive examination or procedure without a chaperone, the provider may reschedule the sensitive examination or procedure or ask that the patient reschedule with another provider.
- 3.1.6. A patient/patient's legal representative request for a same gender chaperone during examination or a procedure of a sensitive area that implicates a patient's

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expectations of privacy may be accommodated by the provider/clinical staff if one is available.

- 3.1.7. If a patient/patient's legal representative requests a chaperone for a non-sensitive examination or procedure, reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the request. If a chaperone is not available, a bystander, as defined in [Section 2.2](#), may be offered if the patient is in agreement. If a bystander is not available, then the non-sensitive examination or procedure may be postponed or rescheduled for a time when one is available unless the examination or procedure is deemed a medical emergency by the performing provider.

3.2. Provider and/or Clinical Staff Responsibilities

- 3.2.1. If the chaperone is not directly involved in the patient's care, keep inquiries and history-taking, especially those of a sensitive nature, to a minimum as appropriate.
- 3.2.2. Obtain explicit and separate consent from the patient/patient legal representative if photographs or images will be taken. See [Patient Photography Videotaping Imaging](#)
- 3.2.3. If the provider and/or clinical staff is in a department that has additional standard work/processes regarding sensitive examinations or procedures, that standard work/processes shall be followed and developed in alignment with this policy. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this policy shall govern in the event that department standard work or processes are inconsistent with or less stringent than this policy.
- 3.2.4. For sensitive examinations or procedures, the following practices shall be followed:
 - 3.2.4.1. The scope of the examination and the reasons for examination shall be explained to the patient. If appropriate, written information clearly stating why and how the procedure is to be performed shall be available for patient education.
 - 3.2.4.2. The provider and/or clinical staff shall provide privacy for a patient to dress and undress.
 - 3.2.4.3. A patient must be provided with an adequate gown or drape.
 - 3.2.4.4. All exams shall follow established Corewell Health standards for infection prevention.
- 3.2.5. For medical treatment, procedures or examinations involving the vaginal or anal penetration of a minor, the following additional conditions must be met:
 - 3.2.5.1. The medical treatment, procedure, or examination is within the scope of practice of the provider's health profession.
 - 3.2.5.2. A chaperone is in the room while the medical treatment, procedure, or examination is performed, unless a parent, guardian or person acting in loco parentis of the minor waives the requirement.
 - 3.2.5.3. Before the care is provided, the provider must obtain the written consent from the parent, guardian or person acting in loco parentis of the minor on this form.
 - 3.2.5.3.1. If consent was obtained within the prior six (6) months for the same medical treatment, procedure, or examination, a new consent is not required.
 - 3.2.5.4. The additional conditions required in [Section 3.2.5](#) are not required if the medical treatment, procedure, or examination is:
 - 3.2.5.4.1. necessary and is associated with or incident to a medical emergency.
 - 3.2.5.4.2. primarily related to the patient's urological, gastrointestinal, reproductive, gynecological, or sexual health.

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- 3.2.5.4.3.** performed for purposes of a sexual assault medical forensic examination.
- 3.2.5.4.4.** performed for the purpose of measuring the patient's temperature.
- 3.2.5.4.5.** performed for the purpose of rectally administering a drug or medicine.

3.3. Chaperone Responsibilities

3.3.1. Clinical staff members working as chaperones shall be:

- 3.3.1.1.** Knowledgeable regarding when a chaperone may be needed.
- 3.3.1.2.** Aware of the examination or procedure being planned.
- 3.3.1.3.** Familiar with the examination or procedure.
- 3.3.1.4.** An active observer during the sensitive examination or procedure. Stand in a location to observe the sensitive examination or procedure and the provider performing the sensitive examination or procedure.

3.3.2. A chaperone has the right and responsibility to stop a sensitive procedure or examination if they feel that the provider's behavior is inappropriate or unacceptable:

- 3.3.2.1.** Reporting is required in all circumstances regardless of mental status, medication, patient condition, or previous history of the patient or employee per [If a Physical Assault or Other Allegations of Misconduct Involving a Patient-Investigating Allegation and Notification](#).
- 3.3.2.2.** The chaperone must report any unprofessional, questionable behaviors, allegations of misconduct or non-compliance with this policy by:
 - 3.3.2.2.1.** Immediately report to department leadership, or
 - 3.3.2.2.2.** Call the **Integrity Help Line: 877.319.0266** or Integrity Help Line Website: <http://spectrumhealth.alertline.com/gcs/welcom>
 - 3.3.2.2.3.** The chaperone must also submit a patient safety event report via RL: https://rl6.rlsolutions.com/SpectrumHealth_Prod/Homecenter/Client/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fSpectrumHealth_Prod
 - 3.3.2.2.4.** Patients should be directed to contact patient relations at (616) 391-2624 to report any concerns or behavior that is inappropriate or unacceptable.

3.4. Documentation

3.4.1. Provider and/or clinical staff performing the sensitive examination or procedure shall document:

- 3.4.1.1.** The conversation regarding the role of the chaperone.
- 3.4.1.2.** The decision regarding the presence of a chaperone during the sensitive exam or procedure (if the patient declined or requested a chaperone).
- 3.4.1.3.** That a chaperone was present for the exam if one was provided including; the presence, name and title of the chaperone present during the sensitive examination.
- 3.4.1.4.** If the chaperone conversation was omitted due to a medical emergency.

3.4.2. If a medical service provided to a patient on or after October 10, 2023 involves the vaginal or anal penetration of the patient and does not meet one of the following exceptions:

- 3.4.2.1.** necessary and is associated with or incident to a medical emergency;
- 3.4.2.2.** primarily related to the patient's urological, gastrointestinal, reproductive, gynecological, or sexual health;
- 3.4.2.3.** performed for the purpose of measuring the patient's temperature; or
- 3.4.2.4.** performed for the purpose of rectally administering a drug or medicine.
- 3.4.2.5.** the provider and/or clinical staff shall expressly state in the patient's record that vaginal or anal penetration was performed.

4. Revisions

Corewell Health reserves the right to alter, amend, modify, or eliminate this document at any time without prior written notice.

5. Policies Superseded and Replaced: This policy supersedes and replaces the following policies as of the effective date of this policy: [Chaperone Guideline, PolicySTAT ID 11497009], [Chaperone Policy, PolicyTech Reference #23408, Spectrum Health]

6. References

- [General, Treatment and Release of Information form](#)
- [Patient Photography Videotaping Imaging](#)
- [If a Physical Assault or Other Allegations of Misconduct Involving a Patient-Investigating Allegation and Notification](#)
- [Responding to Patient, Member or Visitor Bias](#)
- [Integrity Help Line Website](#)
- Event Report via the ERS

7. Policy Development and Approval

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8. Keywords:

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