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<b>Clinical Chaperone</b>	Revised Date: 08/29/2023

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the UCI Student Health Center to provide and utilize trained and independent chaperones for sensitive examinations and procedures, and when requested for non-sensitive examinations and care.

**PURPOSE**

To provide a standard process to protect patients, providers, and staff from abuse or allegations of abuse.

All medical consultations, examinations, or procedures have the potential to be distressing to patients. Patients may find examinations involving the genitals or rectum in all individuals, or breasts in females particularly intrusive. Having trained health care professionals serve as chaperones during sensitive examinations or any time the patient, legal guardian, or provider requests assistance, protects both our patients and health care providers.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all UCI Student Health patients and clinical staff.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Sensitive Examination/Procedure:** Any examination or procedure involving the genitals or rectum in all individuals or breasts in female-identifying individuals.

**Trained and Independent Chaperone:** An approved member of the clinical workforce, who has received the required training on professional boundaries and the University’s Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy.

**Licensed Health Care Providers:** An “LIP” is a licensed independent practitioner defined as an individual, as permitted by law and regulation, and also by the organization, to provide care and services without direction or supervision within the scope of the individual’s license and consistent with the privileges granted by the organization.

**POLICY:**

- I. A copy of the UCI’s Student Health Center’s Notice of Chaperone Policy shall be given to all (UCI Student Health Center patients one time, at the time of service.
- II. A Trained Chaperone is assigned to witness sensitive examinations and, if sexual misconduct occurs or if they believe it may have occurred, must immediately intervene if practicable, and in any event to report it immediately to their supervisor.

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- III. A Chaperone must be present in an examination room during sensitive examinations and procedures performed by a Licensed Healthcare Provider (LIP), (examinations and procedures involving the genital or rectum in all individuals, or breasts in female-identifying individuals), unless an exception is met as detailed in the policy.
- IV. The presence of a Chaperone is required under this policy regardless of the gender, gender identity, or gender expression of either the patient or the provider.
- V. A patient may request a chaperone for any other examination or procedure that is not an intimate examination.
- VI. This policy does not preclude a patient from choosing to have a family member or other caregiver present in addition to the Chaperone.
- VII. Chaperone assignment must rotate so that no chaperone is exclusive or dedicated to one provider.
- VIII. All patient, regardless of age, are covered under this Policy.
- IX. The following may not act as clinical chaperones
  - a. A Licensed Independent Practitioner, (LIP) (MD/DO), physician assistant (PA), nurse practitioner (NP), may not act as a chaperone.
  - b. Rotating students, interns, residents in training
  - c. Family, friends, caregivers and significant others

**TRAINING:**

Completion of initial and annual training is required for staff to act as a chaperone. Staff members returning from leave have 30 calendar days to complete annual competency requirements. Chaperone training must be documented in the employee’s Human Resources Record. Training must include:

- A. Professional Boundaries
- B. The University’s Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy

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**PROCEDURE FOR CHAPERONING SENSITIVE EXAMINATIONS**

- I. Prior to any sensitive examination (or procedure) as defined in this policy; inform patient that the (UCI Student Health Center’s practice is to provide a chaperone as part of our commitment for safe and responsible care.
  
- II. Provider and chaperone have responsibility to ensure that the following:
  - A. Privacy and confidentiality are maintained at all times (examinations should occur in closed rooms, private area). Preserve dignity by the use of a drape/sheet for covering body parts that are not being examined or are part of the procedure.
  
  - B. The presence of a Chaperone must be documented in the Electronic Health Record.
  
- III. Chaperone is to be positioned so as to have unhindered visibility and actively observe the examination or procedure as set forth in the Training, while also honoring the privacy and dignity of the patient.
  
- IV. Chaperone may also assist the provider and/or patient if requested and appropriate with examination or procedure.
  
- V. If Chaperone suspects any behavior that the Chaperone, the patient, or the provider (LIP) feels is unacceptable or inappropriate, the Chaperone is responsible to:
  - A. Understand the need for cessation of the examination or procedure if the Chaperone has a reasonable belief, based on the Chaperone’s Training, that the provider is engaging in inappropriate conduct.
  
  - B. Immediately report to supervisor any observed inappropriate conduct by a provider during an Intimate Examination.
  
  - C. Document the concerns in the Electronic Incident Reporting Module (RL Solutions) or via the Whistleblower Hotline (1-800-403-4744)

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**DOCUMENTATION:**

The presence or refusal of a Chaperone must be documented in the patient’s Electronic Health Record.

The documentation must include:

1. The name and title of the Chaperone
2. The presence or absence of the Chaperone during the procedure based on meeting one of the following options:
  - a. Chaperone present/required
  - b. Chaperone present/not required
  - c. Chaperone declined by the patient

**EXCEPTION TO THIS POLICY**

- I. A patient or patient’s health care decision maker has the right to refuse the presence of a Chaperone. Chaperone refusal must be documented into the Electronic Health Record by the Chaperone or UCI Student Health Center authorized staff member.
- II. A sensitive examination or procedure performed on a patient under the age of eight years old does not require the presence of a Chaperone if performed in the presence of a parent/legal guardian and the parent/legal guardian, declines a Chaperone. However, should the parent/legal guardian request a Chaperone, one will be provided.
  - a. If the parent/legal guardian is unable or unwilling to be present or may interfere with examination or procedure (i.e., suspected child abuse), a Chaperone must be present.
- III. The provider may decline to perform the examination that is sensitive in nature if the patient declines a chaperone and the provider is uncomfortable performing the examination without a chaperone present.

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## AUDITING

The UCI Student Health Center will audit adherence to this policy by issuing surveys to chaperones at the end of the first two quarters of implementing the chaperone system, and twice a year thereafter.

## REFERENCES

*University of California- Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment Interim Policy- 08/14/20*