

Goucher College Student Health Center POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 0008
EFFECTIVE DATE: 04/04/2019
REVISED/REVIEWED:

DEPARTMENT: Goucher College Student Health Center
SUBJECT: Sensitive Exam Chaperone/ Sexual Abuse Prevention
PURPOSE: To create a policy guiding clinicians on circumstances that warrant an in-room chaperone be provided during a physical exam.

POLICY:

When are chaperones provided?

- All patients visiting the Student Health Center will be informed of this policy and that they have a right to request a chaperone at any time prior to or during a medical visit that will require the patient to be partially or completely disrobed.
- A chaperone will be provided without request and in all cases for patients who require genital, rectal, pelvic or breast exams ["intimate examinations"].
 - A patient has the right to decline a medical chaperone during an intimate examination. Clinicians are not required to proceed if they do not feel comfortable performing the exam without a medical chaperone. If a clinician is not comfortable proceeding without a medical chaperone, they will discuss and document alternatives acceptable to both patient and clinician.

Who can serve as a chaperone?

- A chaperone may include any non-student staff member of the Student Health Center.
- A chaperone will be present during an intimate examination even if the student is accompanied by a trusted companion.

How is a chaperone request handled?

- The request for a chaperone will always be honored.
- Clinicians will explain to patients the role of the medical chaperone in the examination.
- In the event there is no staff member available to chaperone, the examination will be rescheduled.

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 clinician is doing, and
 - be prepared to raise concerns about a clinician's behavior or actions.

How is an exam with a chaperone conducted?

- The attending clinician will provide opportunity for private conversation with the patient before or after the examination without the chaperone present. Clinicians should minimize inquiries or history taking of a sensitive nature during a chaperoned examination.
- If and when it is necessary to undress, the student will be given adequate time and privacy to do so, and the staff member will knock on the door before re-entering the room.
- The student will be examined by the nurse practitioner with a nurse or other staff member present to chaperone. 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 clinicians to ensure patients are appropriately draped and/or gowned during their examinations.
- The presence and name of the patient chaperone, or that a chaperone was offered but declined, should be documented in the patient's medical record by the clinician.

APPROVED APRIL 2019