DEPARTMENT: Medical Staff

TITLE: Use of Chaperones During the Physical Examination or Treatment of the Pediatric Patient in Inpatient and Outpatient Settings

PURPOSE:
To outline the principles and processes regarding use of a chaperone in inpatient and outpatient settings

DEFINITIONS:
Potentially embarrassing or psychologically stressful part of the physical exam: Those aspects of the physical examination that involve the inspection, palpation or internal visualization of the ano-rectal area, genitalia, reproductive organs or breasts.

Medical Staff Member: A physician (MD/DO), dentist, podiatrist, or affiliate professional staff member (such as an advanced practice nurse, physician assistant or other health care professionals acting within the scope of his/her license), who has completed the credentials evaluation process and has clinical privileges delineated by the Medical Staff of the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children.

Physician-in-Training – A physician, including residents or fellows, who provides patient care services while participating in medical education and training opportunities sponsored by the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children and the Nemours Children’s Clinic/Delaware Valley, or other sponsoring institutions through formal affiliation agreements coordinated by the Graduate Medical Education Director.

Physician Designee – A physician-in-training, Physician Assistant, or Advanced Practice Nurse who provides patient care services under a collaborative or supervisory agreement with an Attending Physician.

Member of the Health Care Team – Any clinical personnel involved in the medical/clinical care and treatment of the patient.

Third Party – A parent, legal guardian, or other caretaker who accompanies the patient.

Chaperone – An adult member of the health care team who is 21 years of age or older, acting under the direction of the physician or the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children or who is a licensed health care professional, and who is the same gender of the patient when practicable.

Minor – individual under18 years of age

POLICY:
Parents, legal guardians, other caretakers, and when appropriate, patients will be advised of the right to have a 3rd party or chaperone present during certain portions of the physical examination.
- Such notice will be provided via written materials (Patients’ Right Handbook) and/or signage.
The presence of a 3rd party or chaperone during the physical examination shall be documented by the physician, physician-in-training or physician designee and include the name of the adult (18 years of age or over) person present and serving in the 3rd party or chaperone role when such examination/treatment is provided.

OUTPATIENT/OFFICE-BASED SETTING
- A 3rd party or chaperone SHALL be present when a physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee provides treatment to a minor patient who is disrobed or partially disrobed.
- A 3rd party or chaperone SHALL be present during an outpatient physical examination involving the breast, genitalia, or rectum regardless of the gender of the physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee and the patient.
- The minor patient and/or physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee may request a private consultation without the presence of the 3rd party BEFORE or AFTER the physical examination.
- The minor patient may decline the presence of a 3rd party only with the consent of a parent, guardian or other caretaker.
- The physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee may request the presence of a chaperone, when in their judgment the use of a chaperone is advisable to protect the patient and/or medical staff member.
  - If a chaperone is requested by the physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee and declined by the patient and his or her parent, guardian, or other caretaker, the physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee shall document this fact in the patient’s record and may choose not to perform the examination without the presence of a chaperone.
- This policy does not apply when rendering emergency care.

INPATIENT SETTING
- A 3rd party or a chaperone SHOULD be present during any part of the physical examination that is potentially embarrassing, sensitive, or physically/psychologically uncomfortable such as examination of the breast, ano-rectal area, and/or genitalia.
- The patient, parent, guardian or other caretaker may request the presence of a chaperone at any time.
- The physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee may request the presence of a chaperone, when in their judgment; the use of a chaperone is advisable to protect the patient and/or medical staff member.
  - If a chaperone is requested by the physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee and declined by the patient and his or her parent, guardian, or other caretaker, the physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee shall document this fact in the patient’s record and may choose not to perform the examination without the presence of a chaperone.
- To assure timely care and treatment, if the parent, guardian, caretaker or chaperone is not available, the physician, physician-in-training, or physician designee may perform the examination in accordance with the AMA/AAP guidelines.
- This policy does not apply when rendering emergency care.
- This policy does not apply to necessary examinations or treatments of patients in intensive care units such as premature or critically ill infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

RESPONSIBILITY:
It is the responsibility of the member of the Medical Staff, physician-in-training, and physician designee to adhere to these guidelines.
REFERENCES:
American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine “The Use of Chaperones During the Physical Examination of the Pediatric Patient, 1996.
Delaware House Bill 456 as Amended

Date Approved: July 19, 2010, Revision 9/20/2010, Revision 11/9/10, Revision 1/6/11 (required by DE State)

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Magdy Attia, MD  Steven Cook, MD,
Medical Staff President Hospital Medical Director

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Kevin Churchwell, MD  B. J. Clark, MD
Administrator/Chief Executive Officer Chief Executive of the Practice