

Policy and Procedure: Chaperoning Sensitive Exams

- I. Purpose:** To protect and enhance the patient’s comfort, privacy, security, and/or dignity during a sensitive examination or procedure. To prevent misunderstandings between patient and provider regarding sensitive exams.

- II. Policy:** A medical chaperone (MA, RN, or health care student) will be present and is required for all sensitive exams. A chaperone is defined as a person who accompanies and looks after another person or group of people. A sensitive exam or procedure includes, but is not limited to, an examination, palpation, placement of instruments in, or exposure of genitalia, rectum, or female breast. Chaperones shall be present for other examinations or procedures if requested by a patient or provider. A chaperone is defined as a person who accompanies and looks after another person or group of people. In this case, a chaperone acts as a witness for the patient and provider, standing in a location where they can observe the sensitive exam or procedure, including the point of physical contact, and may be able to provide assistance if needed. Should the patient decline the presence of a chaperone, they will sign the chaperone waiver form and the exam may be performed at the discretion of the provider.

- III. Procedure:**
 - a. A chaperone will be present for all sensitive examinations and procedures
 - i. The provider will explain the purpose of the chaperone policy to the patient while describing the process and purpose of the sensitive exam.
 - ii. The provider will step out of the exam room to allow the patient to undress and utilize curtains and draping to ensure maximal privacy and dignity
 - iii. The provider will return with the chaperone, or return to the exam room and turn on the call light indicator for medical assistant
 - iv. The chaperone will introduce themselves and their role in the sensitive examination or procedure
 - v. The chaperone will remain in view of the point of physical contact between the provider and patient at all times during the physical exam. Additionally, the chaperone will professionally and discretely notify the provider if:
 1. They feel the patient needs more verbal cues during the examination
 2. They need a sight line adjustment to see the point of physical contact
 3. They recommend a pause on the exam or procedure if patient discomfort is noted
 4. A time out is required to address significant patient discomfort or chaperone discomfort with actions during an exam.
 - vi. The provider will respond appropriately to chaperone cues during the sensitive exam or procedure.



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1. If a time out is called during an exam, the provider stops immediately.
 2. If a time out is called during a procedure, the provider stops when safe.
- vii. The name of the chaperone will be documented in the electronic health record under physical exam > genitourinary > chaperone:
1. The provider will use free text to document the name and credentials of the chaperone
 2. Note: Although the documentation section is listed under “genitourinary”, this procedure and documentation is not limited to genital exams. It shall be followed for rectal exams, female breast exams, and other exams at the request of the patient or provider. Be sure to chart each appropriately.
- b. A chaperone **is required** for all sensitive examinations and procedures
- i. If the patient declines the presence of a chaperone, they will sign the chaperone waiver form and the exam may be performed at the discretion of the provider.
 - ii. The chaperone waiver form will be scanned into the patient’s chart.

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Approved:

Review: