
Medical Staff - Physician Code of Conduct

Developed By:	<i>Chief of Staff</i>		
Approved By:	<i>MAC</i>	Review Frequency:	NA
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Preamble:

The Professional Staff at Halton Healthcare Services is committed to supporting a culture that values integrity, honesty, and fair dealing with each other, and to promoting a caring environment for patients, physicians, nurses, other health care workers and employees.

Halton Healthcare Services endeavours to create and promote an environment that is professional, collegial, and exemplifies outstanding patient care.

Towards these goals, Halton Healthcare Services strives to maintain a workplace that is free from abuse and harassment and that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. This includes behaviour that could be perceived as inappropriate, harassing or that does not endeavour to meet the highest standards of professionalism.

All Professional Staff are required to comply with this policy. Any allegations of inappropriate conduct will be addressed through the processes applicable to the medical/professional staff. Individuals may address concerns by contacting the Chief of the Department/Designate who will deal with the matter and if required, in conjunction with the Associate Chief of Staff and/or Chief of Staff (see Behaviour Management Flow Chart).

The Hospital will do its utmost to provide and maintain an environment which supports this code. All individuals are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. The Hospital will neither condone nor tolerate any infringement of this code. If and where any infringement does occur, the Hospital will take such corrective and/or disciplinary measures as are necessary in the circumstances.

In the case where corrective and/or disciplinary measures are taken in response to inappropriate conduct involving HHS employees and Professional Staff, remediation plans will be communicated with the appropriate Hospital Management stakeholders.

Purpose

The purposes of this Code of Conduct are to:

- clarify the expectations of all Physicians during interactions with any individual at Halton Healthcare Services.
- encourage the prompt identification and resolution of alleged inappropriate conduct
- encourage identification of concerns about the well-being of a physician whose conduct is in question.

Disruptive conduct and inappropriate workplace behaviour may be grounds for suspension or termination of a contract, or cancellation, suspension, restriction or non-renewal of privileges.

Halton Healthcare Services will follow due process for matters which have an impact upon a physician's privileges (or staff physician's employment/student's academic standings) and will abide by the Hospital's by-laws, Public Hospitals Act and any applicable Hospital (specifically, HHS Freedom from Abuse/Harassment) policies.

General Expectations

1. Consider first the well-being of the patient.
2. Interactions with patients, visitors, employees, physicians, volunteers, health care providers or any other individual shall be conducted with courtesy, honesty, respect, and dignity.
3. Any physician who feels that they are the victim of Abuse/Harassment should refer to the HHS Freedom from Abuse/Harassment Policy.
4. All physicians of Halton Healthcare Services are expected to refrain from conduct that may reasonably be considered offensive to others or disruptive to the workplace or patient care. Offensive conduct may be written, oral or behavioural. Examples of inappropriate conduct would include, but are not limited to:

Inappropriate Words

- Profane, disrespectful, insulting, demeaning or abusive language;
- Shaming others for negative outcomes;
- Demeaning comments or intimidation;
- Inappropriate arguments with patients, family members, staff or other care providers;
- Inappropriate rudeness;
- Boundary violations with patients, family members, staff or other care providers;
- Gratuitous negative comments about another physician's care (orally or in chart notes);
- Passing severe judgment or censuring colleagues or staff in front of patients, visitors or other staff;
- Outbursts of anger;
- Behaviour that others would describe as bullying;
- Insensitive comments about an individual's medical condition, appearance, situation, etc;
- Jokes or non-clinical comments about race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance or socioeconomic or educational status.

Note: Comments that are or may be perceived as being sexually harassing which are directed at patients may fall under the definition of sexual abuse at s. 1(3) in the *RHPA*. Such comments which are directed at non-patients may be professional misconduct.

Inappropriate Actions/Inaction

- Throwing or breaking things;
- Refusal to comply with known and generally accepted practice standards such that the refusal inhibits staff or other care providers from delivering quality care;
- Use or threat of unwarranted physical force with patients, family members, staff or other care providers, such as striking, punching, pushing, biting or otherwise interfering physically with an individual;
- Repeated failure to respond to calls or requests for information or persistent lateness in responding to calls for assistance when on-call or expected to be available;
- Not working collaboratively or cooperatively with others;
- Creating rigid or inflexible barriers to requests for assistance/ cooperation.

In cases where inappropriate conduct is alleged to have taken place, the Chief of the Department/Designate is to be notified. The Chief/Designate will then determine what stage of response and/or action should be initiated regarding the concern brought forward based on the Behaviour Management Process and Flow Chart.

*References:

¹⁸ This Code was developed as a consolidation of documents currently in use in some hospitals as well as practices recommended by the Disruptive Physician Behaviour Initiative.

- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Guidebook for Managing Disruptive Physician Behaviour. April 2008. <http://www.cpso.on.ca/Publications/DBPI/CPSO%20DPBI%20Guidebook.pdf>

Reviewed By/Consultation With:

MAC Executive Committee

MAC

PSA

Key Words: Harassment, Physician Behaviour, Physician Conduct, CPSO, Medical Staff

Other policies related to topic: Freedom from Abuse/Harassment, Behaviour Management, Behaviour Management Flow Chart

Signed By: _____

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