Medical Education Policy: Professionalism Boundaries - Resident

Facility: CMC
Origin Date:
Revision Date: January 2014
Sponsor: GMEC

1. PURPOSE:
This policy outlines for resident and faculty physicians (residents and faculty) expected standards of behavior relating to sexual and romantic relationships and proper professional boundaries to be maintained with patients, former patients and patient families.

2. SCOPE:
This policy applies to resident and faculty in all ACGME, Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME), and Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited graduate medical education programs sponsored by Carilion Clinic (CC) or AOA accredited Carilion-based programs sponsored by the Via College of Osteopathic Medicine as well as to medical students on approved rotations at CC. This policy applies to faculty, residents and medical students when they are at CC or participating in any program or activity connected to CC.

3. DEFINITIONS:

4. PROCEDURE:

   Standards of Behavior

   A. Romantic Relationship or Sexual Contact

   It is unacceptable for a resident or faculty physician to have a romantic relationship or sexual contact with a patient while the physician-patient or medical relationship between the physician and the patient exists. It is unacceptable for a resident or faculty physician to have a romantic relationship or sexual contact with a former patient for, at least, two (2) years after the termination of the physician-patient relationship.
   There may be special circumstances, such as a medical emergency, when a physician needs to provide medical care to a patient with whom the physician
has had or is having a sexual or romantic relationship. The treating relationship should end as soon as it is medically safe. If such a circumstance occurs, the Program Director, the Designated Institutional Official, the Administrative Director of Medical Education, or the Director of Osteopathic Medical Education must be informed of the situation by the respective physician as soon as possible. Program Directors must promptly notify the Designated Institutional Official, the Director of Osteopathic Medical Education, or the Administrative Director of Medical Education of any such disclosures.

B. Maintaining Professional Boundaries
Physicians are expected to maintain proper professional boundaries with patients, former patients and patients' immediate family when the potential for misuse or exploitation of a physician-patient relationship exists. Examples of conduct the physician should avoid include, but are not limited to:

1. Excessive/inappropriate time spent with a patient or patient family that is non-diagnostic and non-therapeutic.
2. First name or "pet name" familiarity unless the physician/patient interaction and quality of care is positively affected by its usage. Such familiarity has the potential for being misconstrued as socially provocative or flirtatious.
3. Flirtatious behavior or language.
4. Behavior or language that indicates an interest in developing a dating, social or romantic relationship with a patient, patient family member or former patient.
5. Dating of patients or former patients.
6. Behavior or language directed to patients, former patients and patients' family that is of a sexual nature.
7. Acceptance of any personal gift from a patient, a former patient or patient’s family that is more than a small token of thanks for the professional care.

C. There are many other interactions that may call into question the professional behavior of physicians. Physicians are expected to be sensitive in their role as health care professionals and to maintain proper professional boundaries. Physicians are expected to serve as role models for the entire health care team.
Remedial Action

A faculty member or resident who fails to comply with this policy is subject to remedial action, including but not limited to, elimination of employment. A medical student who fails to comply with this policy is subject to corrective or disciplinary action up to and including removal of the student from the educational rotation. Such removal will be reported to the student’s academic institution.

[See also “Fraternization” policy]

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Dept./Committee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Harrington, MD</td>
<td>DIO</td>
<td>GMEC</td>
<td>March 11, 2007</td>
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<td>Daniel Harrington, MD</td>
<td>DIO</td>
<td>GMEC</td>
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<td>Donald Kees, MD</td>
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<td>January 21, 2014</td>
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