

UC Riverside, School of Medicine Policies and Procedures**Policy Title:** Chaperones**Policy Number:** 950-03-032

Responsible Officer:	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Office:	Clinical Affairs
Origination Date:	06/2019
Date of Revision:	01/2021, 08/2022
Scope:	UCR School of Medicine and All UCR Health Faculty Practice Locations

I. Policy Summary

To provide a standard process to protect both patients, providers, and staff during an intimate examination.

All medical consultations, examinations, or procedures have the potential to be distressing to patients. Patients may find examinations involving the genital or rectum in all individuals, or breasts in females particularly intrusive. Having trained health care professionals serve as chaperones during intimate examinations or any time the patient, legal guardian, or provider requests helps to protect both our patients and health care providers.

II. Definitions

Intimate Examination/Procedure: Any examination or procedure involving the genital or rectum in all individuals or breasts in females.

Chaperone: A member of the clinic's workforce, RN, LVN, MA, who has read, understood and signed *The Chaperone's Role* (Exhibit A) and who will act as an impartial observer of the examination or procedure. A friend or family member of the patient or any other person who is not trained UCR Health professional cannot be a Chaperone.

III. Policy Text

The presence of a Chaperone can be of reassurance to both the providers and the patients, especially when there is a need for an intimate examination to be performed, regardless of the gender of either the provider or the patient. A patient or patient's health care decision maker has the right to refuse the presence of a Chaperone. Chaperone refusal must be documented into the Electronic Health Record by the Chaperone or UCR Health-authorized staff member.

An intimate examination or procedure performed on a patient under the age of eight years old does not require the presence of a Chaperone if performed in the presence of a parent/ legal guardian. However, should the parent/legal guardian request a Chaperone, one will be provided. If the parent/legal guardian is unable

or unwilling to be present or may interfere with the examination or procedure (i.e. suspected child abuse), a Chaperone must be present.

IV. Responsibilities

UCR Health Clinical Staff

V. Procedures

- A.** Prior to any intimate examination (or procedure) as defined in this policy; inform patient that the UCR Health practice is to provide a chaperone as part of our commitment for safe and responsible care.
- B.** Provider and chaperone have responsibility to ensure that the following:
 - 1.** Privacy and confidentiality are maintained at all times (examinations should occur in closed room, private area). Preserve dignity by the use of a drape/sheet for covering body parts that are not being examined or part of the procedure.
 - 2.** The presence of a Chaperone must be documented in the Electronic Health Record.
 - 3.** A physician or other health care provider may be permitted to decline to proceed with an exam or procedure if the patient declines a chaperone. This must be documented in the Electronic Health Record.
- C.** Chaperone is to be positioned so as to appropriately and actively observe the examination or procedure as set forth in The Chaperone's Role guidelines, while also honoring the privacy and dignity of the patient.
- D.** Chaperone may also assist the provider and/or patient if requested and appropriate with examination or procedure.
- E.** If Chaperone suspects any behavior that the Chaperone or the patient feels is unacceptable the Chaperone is responsible to:
 - 1.** Understand the need for cessation of the examination or procedure if the Chaperone has a reasonable belief that the provider is engaging in inappropriate conduct.
 - 2.** Immediately report to supervisor any observed inappropriate conduct by a provider during an Intimate Examination.

F. DOCUMENTATION

The presence or refusal of a Chaperone must be documented in to the patient's Electronic Health Record. The documentation must include:

- 1.** The name and title of the Chaperone
- 2.** The presence or absence of the Chaperone during the procedure based on meeting one of the following options:
 - a. Chaperone present/required
 - b. Chaperone present/not required
 - c. Chaperone not required due to age of patient and parent/legal guardian present
 - d. Chaperone refused by patient
- 3.** Documentation will be regularly audited to ensure compliance.

G. TRAINING/EDUCATION

Physicians, advanced practice nurses and physician assistants with patient care responsibilities will complete a boundaries training course within 6 months of credentialing or re-credentialing (see related information for links to boundaries training).

Each clinical location shall develop patient education materials describing the purpose of a chaperone, the fact that a chaperone’s presence is mandated for sensitive exams, and the process for opting out or for requesting a chaperone for a non-mandated exam. Educational materials will communicate to patients what to expect during such encounters.

VI. Forms/Instructions

The Chaperone’s Role (Exhibit A)

VII. Related Information

A. American Medical Association – Boundaries for Physicians: The Code of Medical Ethics (<https://cme.ama-assn.org/Activity/5293437/Detail.aspx>)

VIII. Revision History

Revised 08/2022

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Exhibit A

The Chaperone's Role

A chaperone's principal responsibility is to protect patients from abuse. But they can also reassure or comfort patients during examinations that they might find embarrassing or distressing.

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 provider is doing, and
- Be prepared to raise concerns about a doctor's behavior or actions.

During the examination

- Ensure patients' privacy during the examination and when they are dressing and undressing e.g. use screens and gowns/sheets.
- Position yourself where you can see the patient and how the examination is being conducted.
- Explain what you are going to do before you do it and seek consent if this differs from what you have told the patient before.
- Stop the examination if the patient asks you to.
- Avoid personal remarks.

After The Exam

- The chaperone should leave the room following the examination so the consultation can continue in private.

Name

Date

Signature