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Owner Misty Woodard:  
Hendrick Health  
Director, Risk  
Management -  
Risk M  
Policy Area Risk  
Management  
Policy Number 4.4211

## Termination of Patient Provider Relationship

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### RM.HH.4.4211

#### PURPOSE:

To ensure proper patient notification and warning regarding behavior that may terminate the patient-provider relationship.

#### SCOPE:

All Hendrick Clinic Locations. All Rural Health Clinics, All On-campus and off-campus hospital-based and clinic-based services.

#### DEFINITIONS:

**Abusive / Abusive Behavior:** Any physical or verbal action that intentionally harms or injures another person or any physical or verbal action with the intent to do such harm. This also includes harassment, manipulative behavior, and other behaviors that can be construed as Abusive.

**Non-Compliance:** Failure or refusal to conform to or follow rules, regulations, or the advice of another. A patient may be considered non-compliant, for example, if he/she does not adhere to the "Department or Clinic Practice Rules" or does not follow his/her prescribed plan of care.

**Same Day Cancellation:** any patient who cancels an appointment within 24 hours of their scheduled appointment.

**Rolling 12 Month Period:** a rolling 12 month period is defined as 12 months from a scheduled

appointment date.

## **POLICY:**

This policy outlines unacceptable behaviors which may result in patient warnings, dismissal or termination.

Should a patient engage in behavior that is considered to be Abusive in nature (verbal or physical), the staff and/or provider may choose to discuss this behavior with the patient, issue a patient warning letter, or provide notification of immediate termination. Hendrick Medical Center and all affiliated facilities ("Hendrick Health") has a zero-tolerance policy for Abusive Behavior toward others, including physicians, Advanced Practice Providers (APPs), staff, patients, and visitors.

This policy is intended to provide guidance to physicians, Advanced Practice Providers (APPs), directors, managers, and staff on appropriate protocol and procedures for addressing patient's consistent Non-Compliance with provider treatment recommendations, Abusive or threatening language, Non-Compliance with pain management or controlled substance contract, and/or no show for appointments to include unscheduled cancellations.

A patient's request for transfer or termination will be honored and all associated hand-off communication, release of information and required documentation will be provided. Unilateral transfers are allowed within the organization when there is another provider available and willing to accept the patient.

## **Patient Behaviors that may result in warning notifications or patient termination:**

### **Non-Compliance with Patient Care Recommendations**

- A. A patient's failure to provide accurate, complete, and current information on health status to the physician or clinical staff
- B. A patient's repeated failure to comply with their plan of care
- C. Violations may include failure to take medications as prescribed, prescription drug abuse, failure to follow personal health practices (such as diet), and other aspects of the treatment which have been explained to the patient and which are reasonable within the patient's ability to comply
- D. Leaves against medical advice
- E. Refuses to cooperate with staff or colleagues
- F. Insists on being his or her "own doctor" and disputes provider judgment
- G. Abuses prescription drugs; uses illicit drugs
- H. Violates controlled substance contract
- I. Forges a prescription or medical note

## Hendrick Clinic's No-Show Appointment Policy

- A. Hendrick Clinic's No-Show Appointment Policy is as follows:
  - 1. A 24-hour cancellation notice is required.
  - 2. If you have a total of three (3) no-show appointments within a Rolling Twelve (12) Month Period, you may be discharged from the clinic practice. For example: If you see the provider in the clinic on 3/1/2024, you cannot accumulate three (3) no-show appointments before 3/1/2025.
  - 3. Each physician, APP or clinic practice has the discretion to determine if the Same Day Cancellation is considered a no-show.

### No-Show for Procedures:

- A. A patient is notified of the no-show policy and required to sign acknowledgment at the time of initial registration (see attached).
- B. A patient's appointment status is automatically or manually updated by marking the system "no-show" for no-show when the patient fails to cancel an appointment prior to the scheduled appointment or when the patient does not show for the appointment.
- C. "No show" is denoted in the patient's chart. The clinical assistant and the provider determine one of the following actions, which is documented in the patient's chart:
  - 1. No follow-up necessary.
  - 2. Follow-up urgent. Locate patient immediately.
  - 3. Follow-up necessary. Contact patient and schedule visit in \_\_\_\_ days.
  - 4. Follow-up advised. Contact patient and schedule visit in \_\_\_\_ weeks.
  - 5. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Clinical Assistant \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6. Record details of the communication with the patient:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- D. Action must be taken according to the decision of the clinical team reviewing the chart. If necessary, responsibility is assigned for follow-up. If the patient is to be contacted in the future, a recall is generated in the practice management system to alert the Practice that the contact should be made in the specified time period.

### Legal Threats or Lawsuits

- A. Threatens lawsuits
- B. Active lawsuit

### Non-Compliance with Hospital or Clinic Policies (No-Shows and Non-Payment)

- A. Repeatedly disputes fees that are accurate; failure to pay his/her bills
- B. Failure to make or keep scheduled appointments or showing up without an appointment (non-scheduled appointments)
- C. Non-Compliance with Hendrick Health's "Patient/Visitor Videography or Photography Policy"

- D. Repeated failure to comply with the hospital, department or clinic rules including personal conduct

### **Threatening Behavior to Provider, Staff or other Patients**

- A. Displays a threatening, hostile attitude
- B. Threatens physician and/or staff with physical harm
- C. Threatens patients with physical harm
- D. Verbally abusive to other patients, provider or staff
- E. Causes physical harm to physicians, care providers, patients or staff

### **Immediate Threat of Harm**

Should a patient engage in behavior that is considered Abusive in nature (verbal or physical) and is considered by the provider or staff to warrant immediate termination:

- A. If you at all feel that your safety is threatened, You or another staff member follow Hendrick's safety policy and dial 911.
- B. When feasible, notify the department or office manager/director immediately.
  - 1. Notify Hendrick Health's Safety Office at 325-670-2987
  - 2. Complete a Risk or Safety Event Report: [RL Event Report Link](#)
- C. Complete a note in the patient's medical record and gather written statements from all staff who witnessed the event and scan miscellaneous/supporting documents to the patient's chart.
- D. Department or Office manager/director will discuss a plan of action with the physician(s), Risk Management and Compliance.
- E. An immediate patient termination letter will be issued after a decision to terminate has been made by the appropriate parties including the Compliance and Legal departments.

## **PROCEDURE:**

**Prior to initiating a "dismissal or termination letter" staff will contact the Compliance and Integrity department and will also complete a compliance event report ([RL Event Report Link](#)) to ensure the termination process is well documented and appropriate. In the event of a request for dismissal or termination from the entire organization or clinical group, final approval will be reviewed and determined by the Legal Department and/or General Counsel.**

Hendrick Health will adhere to the legal obligations when discharging or terminating the patient-provider relationship. These obligations are: (1) to provide for continuity of patient care; (2) to document, inform and make the patient aware of the consequences of following or not following recommended treatment; (3) to give reasonable notice of intent to discontinue treatment.

- A. Providers who are confronted with a "unresolved disruptive behaviors" or "Non-Compliance with treatment recommendations" may elect to initiate a formal process for terminating the provider-patient relationship.

- B. The provider, if at all possible, should review the reasons for terminating the patient-provider relationship with the patient. The physician and staff should document all previous discussions with the patient regarding Non-Compliance with practice policies (e.g. no-shows, repeat cancellations, non-payment of bill), Non-Compliance with treatment recommendations and/or repeat incidences of Abusive or threatening behaviors.
- C. Providers should issue warning notifications to patients who are non-compliant with department or practice policies or who is verbally Abusive to providers, staff or other patients. These warnings should be filed in the medical record.
- D. If a personal discussion is not possible or if the patient's behavior warrants immediate dismissal, the provider sends the written notice of termination by certified mail.
- E. If the patient is in a post-operative period or in an acute medical episode, or an obstetric patient, physicians should, whenever possible, facilitate a transfer of care with a referral to another physician.
- F. If the transfer of care is arranged, the physicians must document the name of the new physician, appointment date and time details, along with what details are shared with the transfer.
- G. The treating provider informs the patient in writing that he/she does not intend to continue providing care.

## Documentation:

- A. This notification must be documented in the patient's permanent medical record, along with the reason(s) for withdrawing from the individual's medical care. Careful documentation is especially important when the reason for the termination is the patient Non-Compliance or philosophical differences with respect to medical care and treatment.
- B. Comment regarding contacting their local medical society or local hospital physician referral service to whom the patient may choose to transfer their care to should be included in the letter.
- C. Reason for the termination will be included in the termination letter and in the medical record.
- D. This written notification will be placed on letterhead and sent by first class mail and by certified mail with return receipt requested. A copy of the letter and the delivery receipt are filed in the patient's permanent medical record.
- E. The patient is provided a 30-day advanced written notification in order to allow the patient time to find a new provider or transfer to another office.
- F. A specific date of termination is indicated on the termination letter.
- G. The letter will indicate that care is continued during the transition phase for the 30-day time-frame.
- H. The letter will include a notation that the medical records will be forwarded to the subsequent treating provider at the patient's request.
- I. A copy of a medical record release form is included with the termination letter.
- J. If a patient who requires further medical care terminates the provider-patient relationship, the provider confirms the termination with a letter clearly stating the patient should procure

another provider without delay. This notification to the patient is sent by certified mail with a copy of the notification and the receipt of delivery included in the permanent medical record.

## Reporting:

The Compliance and Integrity Department will provide a summary of patient termination events to the System Leadership Corporate Compliance Committee and the Hendrick Provider Network (HPN) Compliance and Finance Committee.

## References and Resources:

- 22 Tex. Admin. Code § 190.8(1)(J) subjects physicians to discipline for “termination of patient care without providing reasonable notice to the patient.”
- Texas Cod Provider Violation Guidelines.pdf (attached)
- Texas Medical Association F&Q Article on Patient Termination (attached)

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## Attachments

 [Patient Physician Termination Sept 2017 final.pdf](#)

 [Texas Code 1908 Violation Guidelines.pdf](#)

## Approval Signatures

| Step Description                                       | Approver   | Date      |
|--|--|-----------|
| CAO, Hendrick Clinic                                   | Ronald Holder Jr: Chief Administrative Officer, Hendrick Clinic & HA | 7/16/2025 |
| Clinic Quality and Compliance Committee                | Donna Jennings: Hendrick Health Director, Compliance & Integrity -   | 7/1/2025  |
| Director, Hendrick Clinic Access Center - HC-Administr | Elisha Wharton: Director, Hendrick Clinic - Primary Care & Clinic    | 6/25/2025 |
| Director, Hendrick Clinic Access Center - HC-Administr | Donna Jennings: Hendrick Health Director, Compliance & Integrity -   | 6/23/2025 |