

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Medical Staff
Citizenship and
Code of Professional Conduct Policy

To fulfill our commitment as the medical and allied health staff to the mission and goals of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH), all members of the Medical and Allied Health Professionals Staffs are expected to adhere to this Citizenship and Code of Professional Conduct Policy in all their interactions with all patients, families, colleagues, other health professionals, hospital employees, students, other trainees and the public.

This Citizenship and Code of Professional Conduct Policy is a series of principles and subsidiary rules that govern professional interactions. Failure to meet the professional obligations described below may represent a violation of the policy. Items marked with an asterisk (*) indicate behaviors that also may violate federal or state laws or regulations.

1. Respect for Persons

The basis of all human interactions is to treat each other with respect and dignity, without regard to station, degree, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, gender, disability and/or disease. To accomplish this we will:

- Exhibit professionalism at all times and treat patients, families, colleagues, other health professionals, hospital employees, students, other trainees and the public with the same degree of courtesy, respect and dignity we would wish them to show us.
- Treat patients with kindness and gentleness.
- Respect the privacy and modesty of patients.
- Not use offensive language, verbally or in writing, when referring to patients or their illnesses.
- Not shout or use offensive, threatening or intimidating language when interacting with any others in the community.
- Not harass others physically, verbally, psychologically, or sexually.*
- Not abuse one's power or position for sexual and/or romantic ends.
- Not abuse one's power or position for personal gains.
- Not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, race, disability, age, or sexual orientation.*
- Respect cultural differences.
- Refer to patients by their names when in their presence not by their diseases or conditions.
- Treat all physicians, other health professionals, hospital employees, students, and other trainees as professionals in a professional manner.
- Not exhibit uncooperative attitudes during routine activities.
- Answer questions, and return phone calls and pages in a timely manner
- Not use condescending language or voice intonation to exhibit impatience with questions or other members of the healthcare team.
- Exhibit behaviors that do not undermine team effectiveness.
- Cooperate and communicate with other members of the health care team in a dignified, professional manner.

2. Respect for Patient Confidentiality

The confidentiality of patient communication and information is the basis of professional care. To realize its achievement, we will:

- Not share the medical or personal details of a patient with anyone except those health care professionals integral to the well being of the patient or within the context of an educational

endeavor.* If patient cases are discussed for educational purposes, patient confidentiality will be preserved.

- Not discuss patients or their illnesses in public places where the conversation may be overheard.
- Not publicly identify patients, in spoken words or in writing, without the patient's permission.
- Not invite or permit unauthorized persons into patient care areas of the institution.
- Not share confidential passwords.
- Not look up confidential data on patients unless the information is necessary for the care of that patient.*

3. Honesty, Integrity and Candor

Honesty, integrity and candor are the foundations of good physician-patient, professional-professional and teacher-student relationships. To this end, we will:

- Be truthful, honest and clear in all communication, verbal and /or written.
- Acknowledge an unanticipated outcome to colleagues and patients when the result of a treatment or procedure differs significantly from what was anticipated without blaming, shaming or publicly criticizing others.
- Address clinical concerns with colleagues in a direct and respectful manner.
- Protect the integrity of clinical decision making, regardless of financial impact.
- Not knowingly mislead others.
- Not cheat, plagiarize, or otherwise act dishonestly.
- Address dissatisfaction with policies, practices, or behavior through appropriate medical staff and/or administrative channels.

4. Responsibility for Patient Care

Patients and Patient Care are our reason for being. To maintain our responsibility for their care, we will:

- Obtain the patient's informed consent for diagnostic tests or therapies.
- Assume 24-hour responsibility for the patients under our care; when off duty, or on vacation, assure that our patients are adequately cared for by another practitioner.
- Not abandon a patient. If unable/unwilling to continue care, we have the obligation to assist in making a referral to another competent practitioner willing to care for the patient.
- Participate in clinical improvement activities.
- Adhere to the RRC Duty Hour Requirements to ensure all trainees have adequate rest and sleep during their training.
- Follow up on ordered laboratory tests and complete patient record documentation conscientiously.
- Coordinate with our team about the timing of information sharing with patients and their families to present a coherent and consistent treatment plan.
- Charge patients or their insurers only for clinical services provided or supervised, and only in accordance with all applicable legal and ethical requirements.*
- Not document items in the medical record that were not performed.
- Not abuse alcohol or drugs.

5. Awareness of Limitations, Professional Growth

Lifelong learning is critical to the competent practice of our profession. To achieve this end, we will:

- Be aware of our personal limitations and deficiencies in knowledge and abilities. We will know when and whom to ask for supervision, assistance, or consultation.
- Know when and for whom to provide appropriate supervision.
- Have all patient workups and orders countersigned as appropriate.
- Not perform professional duties when ill, distraught, or overcome with personal problems.

- Not engage in unsupervised patient care in areas or situations where we are not adequately trained or not competent to perform procedures even when ordered or asked to by a superior or other person in a more powerful position.

6. Deportment as a Professional

Patients and their families expect appropriate dress and identification. To fulfill this, we will:

- Clearly identify ourselves, our roles and our professional levels to patients and staff and wear a name tag.
- Dress in a neat, clean, professionally appropriate manner.
- Maintain professional composure despite the stresses of fatigue, professional pressures, or personal problems.
- Not introduce medical students as "doctor" or allow medical students to be introduced as "doctor."
- Not write offensive or judgmental comments in patients' charts.
- Avoid disparaging and critical comments about colleagues and their medical decisions in the presence of patients and/or other members of the healthcare team.
- Avoid the use of first names without permission in addressing others.

7. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest are common and inevitable. To avoid conflicts of interest undermining our science, practice and teaching, we will:

- Declare all conflicts when lecturing, writing or serving on professional bodies.
- Resolve all clinical conflicts of interest in favor of the patient.
- Not accept non-educational gifts of value from for-profit companies such as drug companies or medical equipment vendors or suppliers.
- Not refer patients to laboratories or other agencies in which we have a direct financial stake. *
- Not accept a "kickback" for any patient referral.*

8. Responsibility for Peer Behavior

Peer review, reporting and monitoring is integral to our role as professionals who are allowed the privilege of self-regulation. Toward this end, we will:

- Take the initiative to identify and help rehabilitate impaired physicians with the assistance of the Physicians Health Committee or the Allied Health Committee as appropriate.
- Report serious breaches of the Citizenship and Code of Professional Conduct Policy to the appropriate person.
- Indicate disapproval or seek appropriate intervention when observing or after being informed of less serious breaches.
- Report illegal* acts to the appropriate internal authorities.

9. Respect for Personal Ethics

Each individual's beliefs and ethical principles will be respected. Toward this end, we will:

- Inform patients and their families of available treatment options that are consistent with acceptable standards of medical and nursing care.
- Respect patient wishes, including advanced directive, living wills, etc., consistent with acceptable standards of care.
- Not force our colleagues to participate in interventions which are against their beliefs or ethical principles.

10. Respect for Property and Laws

Adherence to the law is integral to professional behavior. To fulfill our commitment, we will:

- Adhere to the regulations, policies and procedures of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital as they apply, including but not limited to policies governing compliance, The Emergency Medical treatment and Labor Act, HIPAA, Advance Directives, Conflict of Interest, fire safety, hazardous waste disposal, and universal precautions.
- Adhere to local, state, and federal laws and regulations.*
- Not misappropriate, destroy, damage, or misuse property.*

11. Integrity in Research

Integrity in performing research underlies the public's trust in awarding us the resources to perform such research. To maintain this trust, we will:

- Adhere to the ethical, institutional and Federal regulations that govern research using human subjects and animals and the use of personal health information for research purposes.*
- Not minimize research-related risks and ensure that research participants have the information needed to make informed decisions about research participation.
- Maintain patient safety when performing medical research.
- Ensure confidentiality of all participants in human subjects' research.
- Report research results honestly and without exaggeration in scientific and scholarly presentations and publications, and to the public and press.
- Give proper credit to colleagues and others who participated in the research when publishing and presenting research results.
- Avoid potential conflicts of interest in research; disclose funding sources, company ownership, and other potential conflicts of interest in written and spoken research presentations and informed consent documents; and to promote objectivity in research by developing study designs that ensure against investigator bias.

EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE AT RWJUH.

Although it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of all types of conduct or behavior that will not be tolerated at RWJUH, the following are some examples of behaviors that would be considered as being in violation of this Citizenship and Code of Conduct Policy:

1. Statements directed at individuals that are personal, degrading, demeaning, and/or beyond the bounds of fair professional comment.
2. Abusive or threatening behavior of any kind, such as the use of profanity, vulgarity, inappropriate gestures, or violent, intimidating or threatening language or behavior.
3. Inappropriate conduct, such as throwing of instruments or equipment or other objects, inappropriate touching, fighting or assault/battery, or making threats to engage in any such conduct.
4. Unlawful harassment or discrimination based on a person's sex, gender, race, ancestry, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, medical condition, religion, marital status, or any other characteristic or condition that is protected by federal, state or local law.
5. Unlawful retaliation against any individual who engages in activity protected under any federal, state or local law.

6. Entries in patient medical records, or other official documents, which impugn the quality of care in the hospital or disparage or attack the patient, or particular physicians, nurses, hospital staff or hospital policy.
7. Falsification of patient medical records or other hospital documents.
8. Stealing, abuse or mishandling of hospital funds or equipment.
9. Unauthorized destruction of hospital property or equipment.
10. Failure or refusal to obey safety rules or in any way willfully creating a hazard.
11. Unauthorized use, possession or storage of any firearms, explosives or other dangerous weapons on hospital property.
12. Failure or refusal to abide by Medical Staff requirements as delineated in the Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules and Regulations including but not limited to, call issues, response times, medical record keeping, or failure to participate on assigned committees.
13. Failure or refusal to comply with applicable RWJUH Policies and Procedures.
14. Unwillingness to work cooperatively and harmoniously with other members of the Medical Staff and/or Hospital employees.
15. Unreasonable failure or refusal to meet with Medical Board representatives, Administration and/or members of the Board of Directors to discuss allegations or concerns regarding conduct in violation of this Citizenship and Code of Conduct Policy.

RWJUH policy requires all members of the medical staff and allied health staff to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. When the application of a law or regulation is uncertain, the advice of Hospital legal counsel shall be obtained.