

I. Purpose

El Rio Community Health Center is dedicated to the mission of improving the health of our community through comprehensive, accessible, affordable, highest quality, compassionate care. Our vision is to be a national model of excellent healthcare. Our organizational goals are integrated within 6 pillars of operational excellence: service, people, quality, growth, financial (fiscal stewardship), and community. Clinical practitioners are granted the privilege of caring for our patients by becoming members of the El Rio Healthcare team. Within this context, El Rio Community Health Center has only the highest expectations regarding their professional conduct.

Evidence based medicine clearly indicates that intimidating and disruptive behaviors undermine a culture of safety, foster medical errors as well as adverse preventable outcomes, and lead to poor patient and associate satisfaction. (See references) The El Rio Code of Conduct is a document that expounds upon the basic premise: all intimidating and disruptive behaviors are unprofessional and will not be tolerated at El Rio Community Health Center or at any of its affiliated locations.

II. Expectations

El Rio has adopted and expects the highest standard or code of professional performance and conduct. In following this standard, we hold ourselves accountable for respectful and collegial conduct. The standard applies to everyone within the El Rio community, regardless of position or employment status. This standard supports the care and safety of patients, families, visitors, associates, clinical providers, physicians, contractors and volunteers. Safety and quality of patient care is dependent on teamwork, community and a collaborative safe work environment. We recognize that intimidating and disruptive behaviors can foster medical errors and contribute to adverse outcomes and thereby harm patients. These behaviors are not tolerated at El Rio.

Acceptable Conduct and behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Present a professional demeanor in all interactions
- Model respectful communication at all times, especially in stressful situations, with well-mannered responses and appropriate language and tone.
- Work cooperatively and respectfully with patients, other clinicians and healthcare personnel.
- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
- Support an environment that assures open communication and non-retaliatory behaviors.
- Consistent adherence to El Rio Health Center professional staff rules and regulations, policies and procedures including compliance and confidentiality policies.
- Stop, listen and consider when quality and safety concerns are expressed by anyone.
- Perform all duties within stated time lines.
- Actively participate in and cooperate with ongoing process/performance improvement and peer review activities.
- Utilization of chain of command to express concerns or report issues.

Unacceptable Conduct and behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Disrespectful conduct including demeaning, sarcastic or insulting remarks and/or conduct that can be considered abusive, passively or aggressively hostile, negligent or intimidating.
- Threatening or violent behavior including actions that expose others to risk of injury such as throwing sharp and/or contaminated instruments, phones, pens or other objects.
- Loud, angry outbursts, inappropriate gestures or obscenities directed toward or made in the presence of staff members, employees, patients or visitors.
- Sexual innuendos or harassment including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and other verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature including sexist putdowns and unwelcomed touching of a personal nature.
- Innuendos or harassment consisting of verbal or physical behavior regarding an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation and/or disability.
- Failure to raise and report errors and safety concerns or breach of confidentiality and/or compliance standards.
- Engaging in retaliatory behaviors when concerns are raised.
- Publically airing criticisms of clinic, colleagues and/or employees that are unprofessional in context of audience, time, content and/or location.

El Rio Community Health Center has a "zero tolerance" for intimidating and/or disruptive behaviors. All such behaviors will be adjudicated according to the process outlined by the Provider Behavior Policy and the Human Resource Policies where appropriate. El Rio promotes a culture of safety in which all clinical staff, employees and patients are encouraged to voice concerns and/or complaints in a non-retaliatory environment.

III. Procedure

If an individual believes the El Rio Community Health Center Code of Conduct has been violated, and it involves a provider as the attributed party, the complainant will follow the policy and procedure outlined in the Provider Behavior Policy and/or the Impaired Provider Policy. If the attributed party is not a provider, then the complainant will immediately report the suspected violation to his/her direct supervisor. If the suspected violation of the Code of Conduct involves the direct supervisor, the suspected violation should be reported to the next level in the chain of command. The expectation of management is to assess the concern(s) raised to determine if a violation of the Policy has occurred and if so, to ascertain the appropriate level of conflict resolution and/or disciplinary action required. Conflict resolution and/or disciplinary action will be managed through the appropriate Human Resources or Provider Behavior policies and procedures.

All El Rio Employees will sign the Code of Conduct at initial hiring and then yearly thereafter. Signature of the Code of Conduct constitutes a requirement for employment.

IV. References

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