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| Department: Rural Health Clinic | **Policy #: RHC.0223** |
| **Policy: Termination of Patient/Provider Relationship** | **Effective Date: 03/2008; 06/2013** |
| **COP Tag:** |  |

**Policy:**

It is the policy of HOSPITAL to terminate a patient/provider relationship only where “good cause” exists and has been documented. A provider’s ability to terminate the relationship is subject to many general and specific exceptions.

For example:

1. A provider should not stop treating a patient who is in an unstable condition.
2. A provider should not discontinue treatment of a patient from a particular special population or other protected group based solely on the patient’s membership in such population or group; and
3. With ever growing managed care arrangements, a provider’s ability to terminate the provider/patient relationship is often restricted by the contractual arrangement with the managed care plan for patients covered by the plan.

**Procedure:**

Examples of situations in which termination may be necessary include:

1. Medical non-compliance
	1. A patient always has the right to choose: therefore has to be willing to accept the consequences
	2. Determine the reason for non-compliance (e.g. physical or mental disorder, drug use)
2. Consistent rude, abusive behavior.
3. Breach of pain contracts
4. Threatening or intimidating behavior
5. Refusal to abide by the Clinic’s administrative/operational rules and procedures.
6. Repeated failure to make a good faith obligation to meet financial obligations.
	1. Staff must document if failure is due to unwillingness to pay or inability to pay.
	2. Staff must never condition provision of emergency care on payment of outstanding balances.
	3. If one provider terminates the relationship with a patient, the relationship between the clinic and the patient will be terminated.

2. Appropriate steps to terminate the patient-physician relationship should include:

* 1. The request for termination must be completed by the requesting party and approved by the physician.
	2. Giving the patient written notice by mail or if such notice is not feasible, in person.
	3. Reasonable notice shall be given to the patient. Except in extreme circumstances, the notice may be from 1 week to 4 weeks affording the patient an opportunity to find other medical care and.
	4. The medical record documentation supports the decision for termination: however, the letter to the patient does not have to give a specific reason for the dismissal.
	5. If the patient is in a managed care plan and the terminating physician is the primary care physician, the plan will be notified that the patient will need to select a new primary care physician.
	6. Offering to transfer records to a newly-designated physician upon signed patient authorization to do so.