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Area Patient Rights and Ethics
Applicability Legacy Henry Ford Health System-wide
Document Types Policy and Procedure

Treatment of Self and Family Members

Scope

This policy applies to all HFHS Health Care Providers as defined below.

Background

The AMA Code of Ethics Opinion 8.19 states that physicians should only treat themselves or family members in an emergency since it may compromise a providers' professional objectivity. In the State of Michigan, a physician who treats self or family members is considered in violation of this AMA Code of Ethics opinion and could give rise to an administrative action against the physician's medical license. In addition, many third-party payors have policies that bar claims for reimbursement for services rendered by physicians to themselves or their immediate family members. This policy describes the conditions under which HFHS providers may treat themselves or their family members.

Definitions

Health Care Provider

A Health Care Provider is any Medical Staff Member, Advance Practice Provider (APP) and other person(s) who deliver direct patient care, including but not limited to residents, nurses, allied health professionals, first assists and technicians.

Family Member

Spouse or partner

Natural or adoptive parent, child, or sibling

Stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, or stepsister

Mother or father

Father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law

Grandparent or grandchild

Spouse of grandparent or grandchild and

Any other individuals who have a personal or close relationship with the Health Care Provider, whether familial or not, where the relationship is of such a nature that it could *reasonably affect* the Health Care Provider's professional judgment. This may include, but is not limited to, friends, colleagues, and staff.

Policy

Except in emergency or as otherwise provided in this policy, Health Care Providers will not treat themselves or Family Members, as defined above. This type of treatment creates a physician / patient relationship and is subject to the same legal, licensing, and ethical consequences that apply to the treatment of any patient, including the requirement that all treatment be documented. Although it may be legally permissible in the State of Michigan for providers to treat themselves or family members, HFHS Health care Providers will follow AMA ethical standards and the provisions of this policy.

In emergencies only, a limited amount of a controlled substance may be prescribed for a Health Care Provider or Family Members.

A violation of this policy could be reportable to the State Licensing board and / or could result in discipline up to and including termination.

Procedure

Recognizing that there are emergencies and on occasion other instances where it may be acceptable to treat yourself or a Family Member, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- A. In emergency settings or isolated settings where there is no other qualified Health Care Provider available, Health Care Providers should not hesitate to treat themselves or Family Members until another provider becomes available.
- B. While Health Care Providers should not serve as a primary or regular care provider for Family Members, there are situations in which routine care is acceptable for short-term, minor problems in accordance with the following:
 1. When providing such care a Health Care Provider should not engage in treatment outside of their usual scope of practice.
 2. A Health Care Provider should not initiate therapy for a long term or chronic illness for themselves or Family Members. However a one-time (short term) refill of an established medication or ordering testing for emergent or urgent situations may be permissible.

3. A Health Care Provider will not bill a third-party payor for services provided for themselves or Family Members unless the payor allows such claims.
- C. All care must be documented in the electronic medical record, including the emergency reason (required if prescribing a controlled substance) and/or isolated circumstances. ALL prescriptions must be ePrescribed, including controlled and non-controlled medications, unless an exception is met. (See legacy Henry Ford Health OPA to Address Michigan ePrescribing Mandate). If the patient does not have an HFHS MRN, the patients' name, DOB, and demographic information can be provided to Registration and a MRN issued.

Related Documents

Helios tipsheet [HFHS OPA to Address Michigan ePrescribing Mandate](#)

References/External Regulations

American Medical Association. (2012). *Opinion 8.19 Self-Treatment or Treatment of Immediate Family Members*. [AMA Code of Medical Ethics' Opinion on Physicians Treating Family Members | Journal of Ethics | American Medical Association \(ama-assn.org\)](#)

State of Michigan. Public Act 134, 135, 136. [2020-PA-0134.pdf \(mi.gov\)](#); [2020-PA-0135.pdf \(mi.gov\)](#); [2020-PA-0136.pdf \(mi.gov\)](#)

State of Michigan. Public Health Code - Act 368 of 1978. MCL 333.16221(b)(vi). [Michigan Legislature - Section 333.16221](#)

All Revision Dates

2/23/2022

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Chair, System Clinical Effectiveness Council	Adnan Munkarah: EVP & Chief Clinical Officer [KP]	2/23/2022
Pharmacy Review	Rox Gatia: Dir- Pharmacy	11/29/2021
System Policy Management Office	System Policy Management Offic	11/24/2021
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Document Owner	Katie Berg: Mgr- Medical Staff Svcs	11/24/2021

Standards

No standards are associated with this document

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