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Owner **Hank Hanigan:**
Chief Executive
Officer
Policy Area **Administration**

Patient Nondiscrimination Policy & Procedure

Purpose

To ensure that all patients, people eligible to become patients, and their companions and visitors of Whitman Hospital and Medical Clinics (WHMC) including those who have limited English proficiency (LEP) and/or who have communication disabilities, (such as being blind, deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind), are treated equally in a welcoming and nondiscriminatory manner consistent with applicable state and federal law.

Definitions

Nondiscriminatory Service: Service to either a patient or visitor that is provided irrespective of age, race, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability including limited English proficiency, association, veteran, military status or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

Auxiliary Aids and Services: Qualified interpreters on-site or through video remote interpreting, note takers; real-time computer-aided transcription services; written materials; exchange of written notes; telephone handset amplifiers; assistive listening devices, assistive listening systems, telephones compatible with hearing aids; closed caption decoders; voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs) videophones, and captioned telephones, or other effective methods of making orally delivered information available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Qualified Individual with Disability: An individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

Qualified Interpreter: An interpreter, who via a video remote interpreting (VRI) service or an on-site appearance, is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

Service Animal: Animal that is trained for the purpose of assisting or accommodating a sensory, mental or physical disability of a person with a disability, including but not limited to: guiding persons with vision impairments, alerting persons with hearing impairments, and assisting persons with mobility impairments. A therapy animal is an animal that provides emotional support or passive comfort that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of a disability. A therapy animal (also known as an emotional support animal or comfort animal) is not a service animal under this policy. Access for therapy animals is evaluated similar to any other request for accommodation and should be directed to the ADA Coordinator.

Applicability

Whitman Hospital and Medical Clinic personnel including employees, medical staff members, contracted services providers, volunteers, vendors and any other individuals providing services to or on behalf of WHMC.

Policy

WHMC will provide equal access to its facilities, services, and visitors in a welcoming and nondiscriminatory manner that respects, protects and promotes patient rights. Equal access includes physical and language accommodations for disabled persons including limited English proficiency (LEP) to provide individuals with meaningful access to programs, activities, benefits, services, and vital information.

Procedure

1. **Notice.** Notice will be provided to patients regarding this Nondiscrimination Policy and WHMC's commitment to providing access to and the provision of services in a welcoming, equal and nondiscriminatory manner as defined above. WHMC will provide notices pursuant to Section 1557 of the patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and RCW 49.60 as places of public accommodation.
2. **Provision of Services.** WHMC personnel will determine eligibility for and provide services, financial aid and other benefits to all patients in an equal and nondiscriminatory manner as defined above.
3. **Reasonable Accommodations.** WHMC personnel will inform patients of the availability of and make reasonable accommodations for patients consistent with federal and state requirements. This includes, for example, informing patients of their right to appropriate auxiliary aids and services such as qualified language interpreters for limited English proficiency patients and sign language interpreters for hearing-impaired patients and how to obtain these aids and services. Aids and services will be provided free of charge and in a timely manner when such aids and services are necessary to ensure an equal opportunity to

participate to individuals with disabilities or to provide meaning access to individuals with limited English proficiency.

4. Visitation Rights. Visitation will be offered to patients in the same, nondiscriminatory manner as services are provided and in accordance with the Visitation Policy. Notice of these visitation rights will be given to the patient or the patient's support person at the same time as they receive their overall patient rights.
5. Complaints. Any person who believes that he, she or another person has been subjected to discrimination may file a complaint. WHMC Personnel shall assist in processing the complaint by following the Patient Complaint and Service Recovery Policy and Procedure. Any WHMC personnel receiving this type of complaint, patient or visitor discrimination complaint, will refer the patient or visitor to the, Director of Quality, WHMC 1200 W. Fairview St. Colfax, WA 99111, 509-397-5712, and file a complaint without fear of retaliation.

When this policy is approved, the Director of Quality must transmit a copy to the Senior Executive Assistant to CEO, who must ensure the policy is posted on the WHMC website and a copy is transmitted to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) website by emailing a copy to: HospitalPolicies@doh.wa.gov.

COPY

References

Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act

Americans with Disability ACT

Civil Rights Act of 1964

RCW 49.60

Attachments

[Nondiscrimination Notice](#)

Approval Signatures

Step Description

Approver

Date

COPY