Medical Student Supervision/Clinical Care Policy

Educational Program Committee Approved: February 20, 2013
Educational Program Committee Last Revised: February 7, 2019

Purpose

To ensure safety of patients and learners, and a supportive environment for student learning and growth in the clinical setting.

Overview

In keeping with our combined duties to patient care/safety and education of students in the practice of medicine, and in keeping with accreditation requirements, this policy describes the requirements to meet the standard of appropriate supervision in the clinical environment.

Policy

Students of the University of Louisville School of Medicine and visiting students must be appropriately supervised when participating in required or elective clinical activities.

1. Medical students may not provide care in an unsupervised fashion. Students are not credentialed independently. Students function under the direction of the credentialed staff member to whom they are assigned.

2. Supervisors must either hold a faculty appointment or be supervised in their teaching and assessment role by an individual who has a faculty appointment and may include physicians, residents, fellows, and other licensed health professionals supervising an activity within their scope of expertise or practice.

3. Students may be supervised at one of two broad levels as determined by the supervisor:
   - Direct Observation: the supervisor is present with the student and the patient
   - Immediately Available Indirect Supervision: the supervisor, while not in the presence of the student and/or patient, is immediately available to the learner and/or at the site of care to provide direct supervision

4. Determination of appropriate level of supervision is made by the supervisor, based on many factors, including:
   - Level of training of the student
   - Previous experience and skill of the student with the clinical activity and setting
   - Familiarity of the supervisor with the abilities of the student
   - Acuity of activity and level of risk to patient

5. Students may not perform procedures without direct supervision by a licensed healthcare professional practicing within their scope of practice.

6. Students participating in an intimate exam (breast, pelvic, genitourinary, or rectal) must have a chaperone with them, irrespective of the gender of the patient or the student.
Procedures
1. The supervisor reviews and independently verifies all student findings, assessments, and care plans, and documents this review.
2. The director of the clerkship or course is responsible for communicating policies and procedures related to supervision to faculty and students participating in their curriculum, and for monitoring compliance with the policies and procedures with a report to the relevant governance committee.
3. The director of the clerkship or course is responsible for developing and communicating standard procedures through which students can report concerns regarding adequate and appropriate supervision of what they may deem a violation of this policy. Procedures may include, but are not limited to reporting through the Student Affairs website (to report mistreatment or negative learning environment), direct reporting to a clerkship or course director or coordinator, and documenting concerns in course or clerkship evaluations at the end of the course or clerkship.

Expectations of Faculty and Clerkship Directors
1. Model professional behavior in interactions with patients, learners, staff and all other individuals in the health care team.
2. Inform patients and/or family members about the role of the medical student or trainee involved in patient care.
3. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate responsibility and ownership for patient care responsibilities. These opportunities include, but are not limited to taking patient histories; performing complete and/or focused physical examinations; and reporting and entering findings in the patient’s medical record with the explicit approval of the patient’s supervising attending physician. The supervising physician will be responsible for reviewing student documentation and countersigning progress notes.
4. The faculty is ultimately responsible for the evaluation, treatment, management, and documentation of patient care.

Expectations of Students
1. Maintain professional behavior standards with the supervising physician, other members of the medical team, including resident physicians, other health professionals, members of the staff, patients and any other individuals encountered in the clinical setting.
2. Maintain self-awareness of own competence and seek assistance/advice when clarification is needed.
3. Inform patients and/or family members of their status as a medical student and the name of the supervising physician under whom they are working.
4. Proactively inform the supervising physician or clerkship director concerns about levels of supervision (excessive or sub-standard).

Related LCME Standards
9.2 Faculty Appointments
9.3 Clinical Supervision of Medical Students
10.8 Visiting Students

Policy History
Approved: February 20, 2013