

## **Compliance Quandary**

### **February, 2-17**

### **Use of Chaperones**

#### QUESTION:

When should a chaperone be present for a sensitive exam, and can a corrections officer take the place of a chaperone?

#### ANSWER:

UConn Health relies on professional judgment, ethical guidelines and respect for patient rights to guide use of chaperone for sensitive exams. It is helpful for units to recognize that these exams/tests can present unique challenges and to be thoughtful as to the approach, especially for patients with personal, religious or cultural reasons for requesting a chaperone.

The patient should be fully informed and prepared as to what the exam or test will entail prior to beginning the test as this is essential information and is truly material to consent. A chaperone should be available and always provided on request from patient or provider. A DOC officer cannot be used as a chaperone. A chaperone should only be UConn Health staff who are responsible to assure for privacy & dignity of the patient. If a DOC officer is present, staff should drape/position the patient to assure bodily privacy. Please see guidance below from the AMA code of Ethics regarding use of chaperones.

#### [AMA Code of Ethics](#)

##### ***1.2.4 Use of Chaperones***

Efforts to provide a comfortable and considerate atmosphere for the patient and the physician are part of respecting patients' dignity. These efforts may include providing appropriate gowns, private facilities for undressing, sensitive use of draping, and clearly explaining various components of the physical examination. They also include having chaperones available. Having chaperones present can also help prevent misunderstandings between patient and physician.

Physicians should:

- (a) Adopt a policy that patients are free to request a chaperone and ensure that the policy is communicated to patients.
- (b) Always honor a patient's request to have a chaperone.
- (c) Have an authorized member of the health care team serve as a chaperone. Physicians should establish clear expectations that chaperones will uphold professional standards of privacy and confidentiality.
- (d) In general, use a chaperone even when a patient's trusted companion is present.
- (e) Provide opportunity for private conversation with the patient without the chaperone present. Physicians should minimize inquiries or history taking of a sensitive nature during a chaperoned examination.