Nationwide Children's Hospital
GME Code of Conduct

Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) GME Code of Conduct provides guidance for resident and fellow members of the health care team regarding their interactions, relationships and discharge of daily duties and responsibilities. While the specifics of professional behavior evolve throughout the student, resident, fellow, and attending phases of a career in medicine, general principles are the same.

Professionalism Tenets
Every physician training at NCH is expected to adhere to the fundamental principles of professionalism outlined below. Each tenet includes a short list of some illustrative behaviors.

1. Honor and integrity
- Openly and honestly share information with patients, families, and the healthcare team
- Admit errors and be open to corrective measures
- Respect confidentiality

2. Excellence and scholarship
- Commit to lifelong, continuous personal, professional, and organizational learning and improvement
- Acknowledge and work to improve individual weaknesses and knowledge gaps

3. Teamwork and Communication
- Recognize and respect the contributions of each member of the healthcare team.
- Communicate openly and respectfully to optimize team function
- Enhance patient care by assisting other team members in their efforts

4. Altruism
- Place the welfare of the patient and family above self-interest, market forces, societal pressures, administrative exigencies, and other conflicts of interest

5. Caring and compassion
- Treat others with sensitivity to cultural, religious and lifestyle differences
- Share information with sincerity and compassion

6. Respect
- Honor the dignity and rights of all individuals
- Safeguard each patient's right to privacy

7. Responsibility and Duty
- Recognize one's own limitations, biases and educational needs
- Display appropriate and professional dress, hygiene and demeanor at all times
- Be prompt and honor time commitments
- Recognize and respect the trust-based relationship with patients

8. Accountability
- Honor commitments – meet deadlines, complete assignments, and fulfill team responsibilities, e.g., timely response to letters, e-mails, and phone calls; sign orders
- Comply with policies, procedures and regulatory requirements

Professionalism Lapses
NCH encourages anyone (faculty, staff, patients/families, others) to bring forward concerns about the professional conduct of a trainee. The faculty regularly evaluates and gives feedback to the Program Director on trainees' professionalism. If concerns are raised, the Program Director gathers information, assesses the situation, communicates with the trainee, makes the final decision on consequences, and documents the follow-up.

It is not possible to identify every professional or unprofessional behavior. The following examples highlight *some* behaviors which violate the code of conduct.

1. Physical, verbal or sexual abuse or harassment (in any form) of patients, coworkers, trainees, families, and visitors (including the use of foul language)
2. Public criticism of care, the program, and/or the institution (in a chart, letter, or report; verbally in a public place)
3. Inadequate, incomplete, insensitive or untimely communication related to patient care:
    - Untimely, incomplete, or inadequate hospital discharge summaries
    - Consultations that fail to address the healthcare needs of the patient or the question for the referring physician/healthcare provider to address
    - Verbal or written reports that are insensitive to the cultural, religious, ethnic or behavioral needs of the patient or the referring healthcare provider
4. Rendering patient care while impaired
    - Due to drug or alcohol dependency
    - Due to illness with any medical or psychiatric condition that has the potential to impair judgment or compromise clinical decision-making
    - Due to sleep deprivation or excessive stress
5. Inappropriate use of social media and other technology
    - Posting information or comments about faculty, colleagues, staff, or patients
    - Inappropriate postings about NCH or other institutions
    - Failure to protect PHI (personal health information) stored in electronic format
6. Inattention to patient care responsibilities
    - Not answering pages in a timely fashion when on call
    - Unsigned orders; inappropriate use of phone orders
    - Failure to accurately report duty hours and other educational compliance information
    - Inappropriate use of IPods/electronic devices during patient interaction and/or delivery of care

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