

Sexual Harassment of Students by Patients

I. Purpose:

The University of Minnesota prohibits sexual harassment, including sexual harassment of students by patients in dental clinics. Sexual harassment can take the form of subtle microaggressions (problematic compliments) or flirtations up to overt sexual harassment such as unwelcome touch, and groping. Other examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to

- Repeated sexual jokes, flirtations, advances or propositions
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Graphic verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies
- Leering, whistling, touching, pinching, assault, obscene or demeaning comments or gestures
- Display of sexually suggestive pictures or objects (from cell phone)
- Inappropriate contact in an out-of-school setting: emails, telephone calls, waiting for students outside buildings, and other forms of in-person contact.

Sexual harassment is defined in the University's *Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence* policy.

Students have responded in various ways to these forms of sexual harassment: ignored it, told the offender to stop, felt embarrassed or afraid, or suffered in silence. Some may have reported the incident to a faculty or asked a fellow student to complete the patient treatment. Currently there is no written protocol that provides the necessary steps to deal with the offensive behavior and to ensure that the issue is brought to a complete resolution. This protocol provides students, faculty and staff the strategy to deal with sexual harassment by patients in the school clinics. This does not address other forms of harassment or microaggressions in other settings and other perpetrators.

II. Policy:

This protocol assumes that patients who are registered in the dental clinics have read or are informed about the "Patient Rights and Responsibilities".

I. When a student experiences sexual harassment during patient treatment:

A. Students will stop conversation or interaction with the patient and address the behavior if possible.

1. Students are encouraged to know how to respond e.g. tell the patient, "Those comments are not appropriate in our clinic" or "We need to focus on your dental care". (The School will provide training for students to do this. Faculty will also need training to be able to assist students in doing this.)

2. Document the incident in the chart
 3. Some students may not be able to address the patient issue at the time but are encouraged to report it to the Group Leader or full time faculty after patient encounter.
- B. Students are encouraged to report the incident to a Group Leader or any full time faculty.
- C. Upon receiving a student report that a patient engaged in sexual harassment, faculty provide the student with resources for support. (See appendix)
- D. Faculty speaks with patient at the student's request and warns patient. Document warning in the chart
1. Faculty may elect to sign and provide a warning letter to the patient with a clear description of the sexual harassment. Patient signs the letter and is given a copy.
 2. If patient changes behavior, treatment may continue. If patient fails to change, then they are dismissed.
 - i. Faculty forwards dismissal request to the Quality and Compliance Officer and Manager of Patient Experience. They notify patient of dismissal.
 3. If student is not comfortable to continue with the patient, the faculty will re-assign patient to another student immediately to finish the appointment. Ensure that a faculty is present to monitor the appointment.
 4. Faculty should inform the student that they will be sharing the report with other appropriate University offices, including EOAA.
 5. Faculty notifies Student Scheduling Coordinator regarding re-assignment of patient to another color group on another floor. The Group Leader in the new group and student's current group should be notified about the incident.
 6. In cases of egregious behavior, if a patient physically contacts the provider, or if the patient becomes combative when a warning is being issued, the patient will be dismissed immediately from the clinic. UMPD will be contacted if necessary to remove the patient. This information will be conveyed to the Quality and Compliance Officer, the Manager of Patient Experience, and the Student Scheduling Coordinator. The chart will be blocked immediately.
- E. Inform patient about consequences of offensive behavior
1. If incident is not reported immediately and patient has been reassigned, patient is notified by the Patient Advocate by phone or by letter about the offense and their reassignment prior to next appointment.
 2. If patient could not be contacted by Patient Advocate prior to next appointment and written warning is needed, patient will receive it at next appointment. Privacy needs to be observed as much as possible during this process.
 - i. If student is still comfortable seeing the patient, the student will deliver the letter with faculty support. Patient has to sign the letter prior to resuming treatment.
 - ii. If student is not comfortable seeing the patient, then faculty will re-assign the patient prior to any treatment. Patient may be re-assigned within the same color group or to another group on a different floor depending on severity of offense or comfort of student.
 3. Notify other faculty or departments (e.g. Oral Surgery) about incident
 - i. Pop up window will call attention to warning letter. (This will be done with a sticky note that appears with the patient card and an alert code on the patient card that will trigger the red flag). Quality and Compliance Office and Manager of Patient Experience are notified through AxiUm (describe step in letter)
 - ii. Notify Assistant Dean of the Office of Student and Resident Affairs about the incident and re-assignment or dismissal of patient to facilitate reporting and coordination with EOAA.

- F. Follow up with the student to share what responsive steps were taken, as appropriate; ask whether they require any additional supportive measures; provide resources; let them know that retaliation for reporting their concerns is prohibited; and to encourage them to contact you or another appropriate office if they experience retaliation or other misconduct.

III. Definition(s):

- Students: For the purposes of this policy, students are those enrolled in the doctor of dental surgery, dental therapy, or dental hygiene programs.

Policy Owner:	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Student and Resident Affairs Clinical Affairs
External References:	https://eoaa.umn.edu/sites/eoaa.dl.umn.edu/files/800093_eoaa_brochure.pdf http://aurora.umn.edu/ https://counseling.umn.edu/ https://boynton.umn.edu/clinics/mental-health https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1za7gs9S2H0 https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/when-perpetrators-are-patients
Related Policies:	
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