Employees As Patients

EMPLOYER (KPCCH) AS HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

KPCCH exercises a dual role as both a health care provider and as an employer. KPCCH, as an employer, has no superior rights beyond those of any other employer to access the confidential medical information in its employees’ or patients’ medical records. KPCCH desires to maintain a clear distinction between these roles in its operations and insists that its employees also make clear distinctions and act appropriately. The primary purpose of this policy is to protect our employees’ and patients’ rights to privacy and the confidentiality of their records and medical information when they are seen at KPCCH as a patient.

Therefore, all policies and procedures regarding confidentiality of patient information must be rigidly adhered to, and will be strictly enforced, when KPCCH employees are seen as patients at Konza Prairie Community Health Center and Dental Center.

KPCCH EMPLOYEE AS PATIENT

All policies and procedures which apply to patients and patient visits are equally applicable when the patient being seen is a KPCCH employee. These policies and procedures have been developed to provide equitable and efficient service to all of our clients and patients, and to ensure a consistently high standard of health care. Any deviation from these standards, however well intentioned, poses the risk of compromising these standards to the detriment of KPCCH, the employee, and other patients.

KPCCH employees, when seen as a patient at the Health Center, or when acting as the parent, guardian, or representative of a patient, will temporarily forfeit their rights of access to staff, records, and areas of the clinic which are not accessible to the ordinary patient.

FAMILY MEMBERS OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AS PATIENTS

To ensure a uniformly high standard of care to all of its patients, KPCCH insists that its Health Care Provider employees maintain a clear separation at all times between their responsibilities as health care providers and as family members. For this reason KPCCH Health Care Providers may not provide direct patient care to family members at KPCCH.

For purposes of this paragraph the term “immediate family member” shall include the following: a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward or a child an employee has accepted the duties and responsibilities of raising; a biological, foster or adoptive parent, a stepparent or a legal guardian; a current spouse or domestic partner; or a legal guardian, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, grandparent, grandchild, or mother-, father-, sister-, brother-, son-, or daughter-in-law.
In particular, the following procedures will apply:

1. If a staff member has a medical concern, they must make an appointment to discuss it.
2. All employee appointments will be properly scheduled through the front desk. Employee patients must report promptly for their appointments at the reception window in the waiting room, or by phone. Employees may wait for their appointment at their regular workstation rather than in the waiting room, but must inform the receptionist that this is the case. If an employee is late for a scheduled appointment, or cannot be located at the time of appointment, the visit will be rescheduled.
3. All services provided in the clinic will go through the regular channels of the office, just like it is for any other patient.
4. Employee-patients needing prescription refills should contact their pharmacy or schedule an appointment through the front desk.
5. Employee-patients wishing lab results should also contact the appropriate clinical staff member.
6. Employee-patients wishing access to, or release of, their medical records should contact the health information department by phone.
7. All staff members requiring an appointment should expect to take time off for that appointment.
8. Visits to providers should occur during the provider’s regularly scheduled clinic time.
9. Staff members must not discuss their own health issues if a provider approaches them regarding issues pertaining to another patient.
10. Same day or urgent visits require a scheduled appointment just as other patients are required to have.
11. If the provider approaches a staff member regarding their health, it should be through the correct channels (i.e. phone message, lab letters, etc.). If personal contact is required, the staff member needs to make an appointment.
12. If a staff member continues to violate the policy, discussions will be held with the clinic manager and the staff member, and disciplinary action may be initiated (e.g. permanent note in employee personnel file).
13. All providers to stop providing advice outside of the context of an appointment.
14. No KPCHC employee is permitted to access their own medical record in the EHR. The EHR has been configured to no longer permit this, and the employee will get a system generation notification.
15. Once the employee is in the exam room, the employee will be first and foremost a patient, and then an employee.
16. Everything will be documented, including dispensing of sample or stock meds.

Advantages to providing care for the staff of KPCHC by providers within the clinic:

1. Access to care with minimal time off for appointments.
2. The staff knows the providers and may feel more comfortable with the provider’s standard of care.
3. KPCHC provides excellent comprehensive care for acute and chronic conditions.
4. Having staff use our services may help us identify areas in need of improvement and may give staff a different viewpoint for the difficulties encountered by other patients.
5. Improved access to a provider may enhance communication with a provider and a closer relationship to the provider may improve outcomes.
Disadvantages to providing care for the staff KPCHC by providers within the clinic.

1. Easy access to providers may result in “curbside consults” by staff that disrupt the provider or may encroach on time set aside for other patients or for administrative duties of the provider.
2. Care outside a scheduled appointment for a patient who is a staff member may result in poor care as the records may not be accessed or appointments may be hurried.
3. Acute needs may be met but there will be a lack of focus on preventive care that accompanies a scheduled, planned visit.
4. Liability issues arise for providers giving advice or treatment without documentation.
5. Privacy concerns may make it difficult for a staff member being seen in the same clinic in which they work. Drawing sensitive labs (such as HIV tests) or doing other tests (i.e. STD testing) that are in the patient’s best interest may be deferred or not done because of other staff members involvement in the processing issues inherent in our system.
6. Cost issues become a concern when the provider is not certain about the finances of the staff member and care may be different because visits are not charged or the staff member does not want to be charged.
7. Limit setting with staff may become difficult because of the close working relationships. Limits set by providers may differ and may result in staff taking advantage of providers who are less likely to set limits. Fear by the providers that staff members may not be as helpful to them in the future for their other patients’ needs may prompt them to provide advice. In addition, this may make providers hesitant to access the staffs’ other skills because of concern that the provider will have to engage in a conversation regarding that staff member’s health.
8. Difficulty in safeguarding records making employees reluctant to share personal medical information that could be pertinent to care.
9. Physician may not be objective if employee needs time off.

With my signature, I acknowledge, that I have received the “Employees As Patients” policy.