

## **TERMINATION OF CARE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Purpose:**

To ensure proper warning and termination procedures related to abusive and/or noncompliant patients.

### **Definitions:**

**Abusive behavior:** Any physical or verbal action that intentionally harms or injures another person or any physical or verbal action with the intent to do such harm. This also includes harassment, manipulative behavior, and other behaviors that can be construed as abusive.

**Noncompliance:** Failure or refusal to conform to or follow rules, regulations, or the advice of another. A patient may be considered noncompliant, for example, if he/she does not adhere to the “Practice Rules” or does not follow his/her prescribed plan of care.

### **POLICY:**

Should a patient be considered noncompliant, the staff and/or provider will follow the approved procedures for issuing letters of warning and termination. Letters to the patient regarding non-compliance must be delivered directly to the patient or via certified mail with return receipt requested. Communications are not to be delivered through family members or other parties.

Should a patient engage in behavior that is considered to be abusive in nature (verbal or physical), the staff and/or provider may institute approved procedures for immediate termination or defer to approved procedures for issuing letters of warning and termination. We have a zero-tolerance policy toward a client's abusive behavior toward others, including staff or other patients, and visitors. This can also include disrupting the practice facilities that interferes with the ability to deliver services to other patients.

Reasons for which termination may be initiated:

- A patient’s repeated failure to comply with the practice rules including personal conduct
- A patient’s repeated failure to make or keep scheduled appointments
- A patient’s failure to provide accurate, complete, and current information on health status to the physician or clinical staff
- A patient’s repeated failure to comply with their plan of care. Violations may include failure to take medications as prescribed, prescription drug abuse, failure to follow personal health practices (such as diet), and other aspects of the treatment which have been explained to the patient and which are reasonable within the patient's ability to comply

## **PROCEDURE:**

The following is intended to help providers, managers, and staff be familiar with the procedures for addressing patient noncompliance and/or dismissal from the practice. Should the patient request an appeal to the termination, the request will be reviewed and considered by the office manager/physician.

### **Incidence of Abusive Behavior:**

Should a patient engage in behavior that is considered abusive in nature (verbal or physical) and is considered by the provider or staff to warrant immediate termination:

- If you at all feel that your safety is threatened, You or have another staff member dial **911** immediately
- Notify the office manager immediately
- Complete a telephone encounter and gather written statements from all staff who witnessed the event and scan miscellaneous/supporting documents to the patient's chart
- Office manager will discuss a plan of action with the physician(s)
- Only after a decision to terminate has been made by the appropriate parties the office manager will send a certified letter to the patient with a return receipt requested

A completed termination letter will need and include:

- Signature from the provider
- Release of Information form
- Comment regarding contacting their local medical society or local hospital physician referral service to whom the patient may choose to transfer their care

### **Next steps:**

- Place a copy of the termination letter in the patient's record
- Patient will be given 30 days to find another provider. Emergent/urgent care during this the 30 day window will be provided
- After 30 days from the date of the termination letter, patient will no longer be able to receive care

Should a patient engage in behavior that is considered abusive in nature (verbal or physical) but is not considered by the provider or staff to warrant immediate termination, follow these steps:

- Consult the patient's record to determine whether any prior incidents of noncompliance or abusive behavior have occurred in the past
- If this is the patient's first offense, document all events in the patient's chart

- If the patient has had prior offenses, inform office manager.
  - The office manager will develop a potential action plan if warranted