Baptist Health South Florida

POLICY NO.: BHSF-5220
TYPE: Administrative

POLICY TITLE: Ethical Objections to Participation in Patient Care

Responsible Department: Human Resources

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SUMMARY & PURPOSE:
To establish a mechanism by which an employee may request to be excused from participating in an aspect of a patient's care or treatment in situations where the prescribed care or treatment presents a conflict with the employee's cultural values, sense of ethics, or religious beliefs. In no instance will the mission of the organization be compromised. Treatment and care will be provided to all persons in need without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status sexual orientation, or ability to pay.

POLICY:
Baptist Health South Florida recognizes that there may be a treatment plan for a patient which may be in conflict with the cultural values, sense of ethics or religious beliefs of an employee. These conflicts may arise in situations including, but not limited to, termination of pregnancy, withdrawal of life support or observance of religious holy days. As such, if a particular treatment plan is likely to be encountered by an employee as part of the employee's job description, the employee should disclose this conflict at the time of hire so all parties are aware of the conflict and appropriate arrangements for the patient's care can be made. Should an unanticipated conflict arise, it is the responsibility of the employee to notify his/her supervisor or department director of his/her conflict and to request that he/she be excused from participating in an objectionable aspect of the treatment/care of the patient.

SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:
Applies to all Baptist Health South Florida employees.

PROCEDURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE:
1. The employee - Request Process:
   a. Employees who wish to request to be excused from participating in an aspect of a patient's care or treatment in situations where the prescribed care or treatment presents a conflict with the employee's

cultural values, sense of ethics, or religious beliefs must verbally notify their leader or department director as soon as the employee becomes aware of the required plan of care creating the conflict.

b. After verbally notifying their leader or department director of the conflict, the employee must complete the "Ethical Objections to Participation in Patient Care form", attachment A, describing the reasons for making the request and the specific aspects of care from which he/she is requesting to be excused from. This written request must be submitted to their leader or department director within 24 hours of the verbal notification to their leader of the conflict.

c. Examples of prescribed care or treatment which will and will not be considered to be a potential conflict with the employee's cultural values, sense of ethics, or religious beliefs include:

FOR CONSIDERATION	NOT FOR CONSIDERATION
• Termination of Pregnancy • Withdrawal of Life Support • Observance of religious holidays	• Communicable Diseases, i.e., HIV, AIDS, TB, Hepatitis C • Issues related to a patient's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status sexual orientation, or ability to pay

d. The leader or department director will consider the request and render a decision within a time frame commensurate with the urgency of the procedure. Attempts to make reasonable accommodations for all justified employee requests for exclusion from patient care or treatment where the prescribed care or treatment presents a conflict with the employee's cultural values, sense of ethics, or religious beliefs may include but are not limited to:
   i. Reassignment of care givers
   ii. Identification of another employee who can perform the treatment/care or procedure
   iii. Follow-up with the physician for alternative plan of care

2. Patient Safety:
   a. The requesting employee is responsible for providing appropriate patient care until alternate arrangements can be made. Refusal to provide care will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. In no circumstance will a request be granted if it is determined that by doing so the care of the patient will be negatively impacted.
   b. Because of staffing limitations, and the potential negative impact on patient care, it may not be possible to grant a request. In that event, employees who are otherwise eligible for transfer may request a transfer to a department or position in which conflict of care issues are less likely to occur.
   c. Each department will maintain a file which will include copies of all written requests submitted by employees and a log (please refer to Attachment B) which will reflect the date the leader was verbally notified of the conflict, the date the written request was received, reasons for the request and action taken by the leader or department director.
   d. At the end of each quarter, the department director shall forward to the facility Ethics Committee, for informational purposes only, a copy of the log, if there was a request for exclusion from patient care during that quarter.

SUPPORTING/REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION:
N/A

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ASSOCIATED FORMS:

- Attachment A: Ethical Objections to Participation in Patient Care form
- Attachment B: Ethical Objections to Participation in Patient Care - Request Log
- BHSF Administrative Policy 5250 Employee Conduct – Human Resources

ENFORCEMENT & SANCTIONS:

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.