



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
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IN REPLY REFER TO
BUMEDINST 6320.83A
BUMED-M3/5
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BUMED INSTRUCTION 6320.83A

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Subj: PROVISION OF STANDBYS DURING MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

Ref: (a) The Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation Standards, current edition
(b) The Joint Commission Standards for Ambulatory Care, current edition

1. Purpose. To provide policy guidance on the provision of standbys to patients to ensure their right to be interviewed and examined in an environment that provides reasonable assurances of propriety and privacy. To provide protection for providers from accusations of inappropriate behavior during the examination of patients.
2. Cancellation. BUMEDINST 6320.83.
3. Scope. Applies to all naval medical treatment facilities (MTFs) ashore and afloat.
4. Background. The provision of standbys is a necessary part of patient centered care and a prudent medical practice. References (a) and (b) state that organizations respect patient rights. Respecting patient rights includes the right to have another person present during certain parts of an examination, treatment, or procedure performed by a health professional. The standby serves as an impartial third party who is present to enable the patient to be more at ease and to protect the provider in case of allegations of misconduct.
5. Policy. Each (MTF) must have written guidance for the provision of standbys to include the following:
 - a. Benefits and purpose of using standbys.
 - b. Circumstances under which standbys may be requested, used, encouraged, or required.
 - c. Qualifications of a standby; good judgment and keen observation skills are essential.
 - d. Education and training of standbys.
 - e. Procedures for identifying and reporting possible provider misconduct.
 - f. When documentation (including standby's name) is necessary in the medical record.
 - g. How patients and staff are made aware of the availability of a standby.

6. Guidelines. The following guidelines are offered to assist in the development of local policy:

a. The use of standbys is strongly encouraged during sensitive or potentially compromising physical exams and is required when the male/female genitalia or female breasts are exposed or examined by a provider.

b. Standbys are to be present and observing throughout the medical examination, have previously received the appropriate training and familiarization with the procedures or exams being performed, and know how to report an incident or concern.

c. The name of the standby should be entered into the medical record as a routine practice.

d. Clinical providers may request a standby for any patient encounter, regardless of the type of exam being performed. They are encouraged to request a standby with any patient, even when sensitive exams are not being performed, as a protection from accusations of inappropriate conduct during the examinations.

e. Patients and staff should be informed of the availability of a standby and one must be provided if requested by the patient.

7. Action. Each MTF must determine how standbys will be used throughout the facility. This should be based on the resources available to the command, but must consider the basic requirements to provide patients and staff with a safe and private environment in which health care is delivered. The policy must be in writing and available on request.



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