

SYSTEM POLICY

HR-38 - Workplace Harassment

Owner: Human Resources

Key Points

- This policy applies to all MetroHealth System (MHS) facilities and Workforce Members¹, visitors, applicants and patients.
- This policy educates employees in the recognition and prevention of illegal workplace harassment and to provide uniform guidance and procedures in accordance with local, federal and state law.

Policy

1. MHS is committed to maintaining a work and patient care environment that is free of harassment or inappropriate conduct based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, pregnancy, veteran/military status, or other characteristic protected by law or MHS policy.
2. Any such harassment or inappropriate conduct whether it is by or toward a Workforce Member, visitor, applicant or patient is strictly prohibited by MHS. This is the case whether or not the behavior also violates applicable law. This policy includes conduct that may create an intimidating or hostile environment, that may interfere with an individual's work, or that may impact employment opportunities.
3. Workforce Members are expected to use good judgment. They are further expected to express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner, and not engage in conduct that reasonably can be perceived as discriminatory, intimidating, degrading or bullying based on a protected characteristic. This includes conduct in email, text or other electronic messages, conduct on the internet or social media, and off-duty conduct that may impact the workplace. It includes conduct toward someone of the same sex or gender.
4. Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 4.1. Offensive and unwelcome verbal conduct such as lewd language, sexual descriptions, suggestions or comments.
 - 4.2. Sexual, racial, or ethnic jokes or slurs, or jokes about individual's appearance or identity.
 - 4.3. Use of offensive stereotypes.
 - 4.4. Offensive and unwelcome physical conduct such as kissing, touching, brushing up, blocking an individual's movement, leering, or sexual gestures.
 - 4.5. Sexual advances, propositions or requests for sexual activity.
 - 4.6. Sexual activity that is used as a basis for employment decisions.
 - 4.7. Offensive and unwelcome written conduct such as obscene letters or notes, sexually suggestive photographs, drawings, or cartoons.
 - 4.8. Punishment or threats for not complying with sexual requests.
 - 4.9. Punishment or threats for addressing or reporting concerns under this policy.
5. Any individual who experiences, observes, or learns about such behavior, or who has any questions about what constitutes prohibited behavior, should discuss the situation as soon as possible with their supervisor.

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Some situations can be resolved in an informal manner, and the supervisor can help. Individuals who are comfortable doing so are encouraged to first tell the offending individual that their conduct is unwelcome and to stop. However, such informal measures are not required.

6. If an individual with concerns is not comfortable reporting the concerns to their supervisor, the individual can report to the next level of management, to the Employee/Labor Relations area of Human Resources, or to The MetroHealth Ethics Line (MEL) at (216) 778-1660 or at www.metrohealth.org/compliance. Individuals are not required to report to the person who is engaging in the inappropriate behavior. These other avenues of reporting can also be used if an individual has raised concerns but does not believe that they have been resolved.
7. Prohibited conduct toward our employees or Workforce Members in connection with their work by non-MHS individuals is also a violation of this policy, including inappropriate behavior by patients or visitors. This also should be immediately reported.
8. MHS' policy is to investigate promptly and to take appropriate action to remedy these types of situations. Violations of this policy will be taken seriously. Based on the circumstances and severity, violations may subject an individual to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment. In order to address situations, however, they are brought to the attention of management as soon as possible. To support this process, individuals should fully cooperate and provide truthful information during investigations.
9. Every reasonable attempt is made by MHS to maintain confidentiality during and after an investigation. MHS generally shares information only as necessary to investigate and only with those who have a need to know. MHS may need to report certain situations outside of the MHS, such as to law enforcement or other authorities.
10. MHS wants everyone to feel comfortable sharing concerns and asking questions without worrying about retaliation. It is MHS' policy that no individual is subject to retaliation or punishment for having made a good faith complaint under this policy or for having participated in an investigation. Any concerns of retaliation should be reported immediately.

End Notes

¹ Workforce Member: Employees, providers, volunteers, trainees, and other persons whose conduct, in the performance of work for MHS, is under the direct control of such entity, whether or not they are paid by MHS.

Dates

Initiated June 1991

Reviewed/Revised: March 1997, May 1999, March 2001, December 2004, April 2008, October 2018