

El Paso - Ambulatory Clinic Policy and Procedure

Title: TERMINATION OF THE PHYSICIAN/PATIENT RELATIONSHIP	Policy Number: EP 6.3
Regulation Reference: Reasonable Practice Standards	Effective Date: 5/2014

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso (TTUHSC at El Paso) to establish guidelines and provide support when terminating the Physician/Patient relationship for any reason.

Scope and Distribution:

This policy applies and will be distributed to all TTUHSC at El Paso, also known as Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso.

Procedure:

1. The termination process must be initiated by an attending/faculty physician. Staff or residents may give input into the process but it remains up to the discretion of an attending/faculty physician to make the final decision. If a physician declines to treat an established patient with the intent to permanently terminate the relationship, a termination letter must be sent.
2. Risk Management should be contacted by staff that are unfamiliar with the process or need additional information. Termination letter templates have been provided for use to the Clinic Administrators and Directors in English and Spanish. Most common reasons for terminations have also been provided translated into Spanish.
3. Risk Management should always be consulted prior to termination of a pregnant patient.
4. The Risk Manager will work with the clinic personnel or departments, as necessary, to confirm that the approved letter template (English & Spanish) is used. If a physician wishes to make any changes to the format of the termination letter, it must be reviewed and approved first by Risk Management.
5. A copy of the termination letter no longer has to be approved by Risk Management prior to mailing AS LONG as the template has been appropriately used. Please send a copy of the letter to Risk Management afterwards so that periodic audits may be done to assure the templates are properly used.
6. Clinical staff should verify that:
 - a. The termination letter includes reasonable notice to the patient, (at least 30 days from receipt of the notice, except in extreme circumstances involving threats of violence), affording the patient an opportunity to find other medical care and is signed by an attending/faculty physician.
 - b. The medical record documentation supports the reason for termination as stated in the termination letter.
 - c. The department chairperson has been made aware of the planned termination before notice is sent to the patient.
 - d. The termination letter is sent by both certified mail return receipt requested and regular mail and, once returned, the receipt is kept in the medical record.
 - e. If the termination of the relationship is first initiated by the patient, then a confirmation letter should be sent instead of the termination letter to document the patient's decision to end the relationship or transfer care. A copy should also be placed or scanned into the medical record or EMR.

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7. Prior to scheduling a new patient, clinic staff should access the IDX system to determine whether the patient has been terminated from care in another clinic. If the patient has been terminated, scheduling the appointment should be postponed while the physician with whom the appointment is to be made is contacted for an opportunity to review the medical record. The physician may then make a determination as to whether the patient will be accepted for care in that clinic.
8. If the patient is not accepted, clinic staff will contact the patient regarding previous termination status. The Risk Manager should also be contacted for processing the additional clinic termination/exclusion from care in the IDX system.
9. After termination or exclusion from two clinics, the IDX system will indicate the multiple terminations. Under certain circumstances (violent behavior) TTUHSC Ambulatory Clinics in consultation with legal counsel may terminate/exclude the patient from care in all clinics.

***Note: In the above scenario, if a patient has a current and active patient/physician relationship in more than one of the TTUHSC clinics and is terminated from one, the patient can only be terminated from the other clinics at the treating physician's direction and with notice.**

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Signatory approval on file by: Michael J. Romano, M.D. Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs Clinic Operations Committee, Chair Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso	