

### **Article 43 – Health and Safety**

A. The Hospital and the VFNHP recognize that bargaining unit employees may be exposed to workplace situations that pose risks to health. Consistent with hospital policies and the requirements of state and federal law, the Hospital agrees to protect the health of the bargaining unit employees and provide a safe work environment. To that end, the Hospital agrees to provide:

1. A program of infectious and communicable disease control as required by state and federal law.
2. Physical examination health tests and immunizations as required by the Hospital, state and federal law at no cost to the employee.
3. Material data safety sheets as required by state or federal law.
4. Needle protection systems as required by state or federal law.
5. All safety equipment and related training necessary to perform the duties of the position including appropriate levels of PPE needed to protect bargaining unit employees as recommended by the CDC guidelines and/or the Vermont Department of Health and/or as required by Hospital policies and procedures, state and federal law.
6. The employee is responsible for using appropriate safety equipment when required and will contact their supervisor when safety supplies or equipment are depleted or in disrepair. The employer shall replenish or repair such supplies and equipment when notified. Employees are responsible for taking good care of all safety equipment.

B. Only bargaining unit employees trained to work with hazardous materials shall do so. The Hospital shall pay for the cost of appropriate training.

C. Bargaining unit employees may raise safety complaints/concerns at any time without fear of reprisal for making the safety complaint/concern consistent with the Healthcare Whistleblower's Protection Act, 21 V.S.A., Section 507.

D. Bargaining unit employees and the Hospital will be required to follow all written Hospital policies and procedures affecting health and safety.

E. The Hospital shall continue to work with the VFNHP to ensure that written policies, procedures and protocols affecting health and safety are reviewed with the VFNHP, are readily

available to bargaining unit employees and updates are brought to the attention of the bargaining unit employees in a timely fashion.

F. The VFNHP may select two (2) members of the Environment of Care Committee, one (1) member of the PPE Committee, one (1) member of the Biobranh Committee, one (1) member of the Workplace Violence Committee, and two (2) members of the Safe Mobility Program Committee.

The Safe Mobility Program Committee will review any current policies and programs and develop a comprehensive program to teach and support correct patient handling. The committee will make recommendations addressing equipment, training, protocols and procedures.

G. For the protection and safety of employees, patients and families, and confidential medical information, the hospital will update and implement a behavioral warning process for patients and/or families photographing, audio recording, and video recording staff.

#### H. Visitor Safety

UVMHC will require visitors to be credentialed based on the requirements established by the Workplace Violence Committee, with the method of their choosing, prior to visiting a patient on an inpatient unit.

#### I. Off Unit Policy

Recognizing the autonomy of patients, nurses will not be held responsible for the actions of patients who misuse off unit policies. Nurses are responsible for following the off-unit policy, including documenting non-adherence and informing patients of UVMHC policies and procedures.

#### J. Workplace Violence

1. Nurse name badges, except where required by law, will not include the staff member's last name, if the bargaining unit employee makes that request.
2. If a bargaining unit employee is required to work in any work area without another staff member present in their direct vicinity, they can request to have another staff member present when there is a reasonable concern related to personal safety. Such requests will be granted. Additional staff member does not need to be a nurse but must be familiar with area safety protocols, and able to report a safety/violent incident through the proper channels.
3. UVMHC will continue to notify all employees by email of heightened security

situations, as is the current practice.

4. De-escalating trainings will be made available to any nurse requesting the course. Such trainings will continue to be made available to any nurse who requests to take the course on an ongoing basis.

#### K. Ongoing Safety Processes

1. UVMMC will continue to prioritize staff safety. At regular (at least quarterly) meetings of the Workplace Violence Committee. UVMMC will collaborate with bargaining unit employees and the VFNHP on, among other issues, policy development and review related to workplace safety, enhanced security, appropriate screening of patients and families, personal protective equipment and other safety devices available to bargaining unit employees.
2. UVMMC shall maintain an updated policy on workplace violence, establishing a goal of zero harm to all UVMMC patients, employees, and visitors and zero tolerance for workplace violence. The policy shall include, but will not be limited to, processes for responding to, reporting, and documenting violent or threatening situations.
3. If a bargaining unit employee is a victim of or witness to a workplace violence incident, as defined by UVMMC policy, and the employee requests time off from work to recover from physical or mental injuries caused by the violence, such requests shall not be unreasonably denied. Employees who take time off pursuant to this section will be placed on paid administrative leave for any missed scheduled hours on the day of the injury. For any time off after the day of the injury, the employee may elect to take the time as scheduled CTO or excused unpaid time.
4. If a bargaining unit employee is assaulted at work and receives an injury covered by workers' compensation, UVMMC will provide paid leave of absence at the employee's base rate for any scheduled shifts during the workers compensation elimination period that the employee is unable to work to the extent that such paid leave is not provided by workers' compensation.