Cellular Phones: Personal Cellular Phones in the Workplace

I. PURPOSE:
   A. To outline the use of personal cellular telephones (cell phones) at work, including special issues related to camera phones, use of personal cell phones in patient care areas and safe use of cell phones by employees while driving vehicles for work purposes.

II. DEFINITIONS:
   A. **Cellular Phone** is a mobile telephone device that uses multiple base stations (cells) to cover a geographic area; sometimes referred to as a "feature" phone.
   B. **PDA** is a cellular telephone with PIM features
   C. **Public Area** includes hallways, waiting rooms, and other areas where patients, families or visitors may be present. It does not include the Cafeteria or staff break rooms.
   D. **Smart Phone** is a cellular telephone device with information access. It provides voice service as well as any combination of Personal Information Management (PIM) features, e-mail, text messaging, pager, Web access, etc.
   E. **Personal Electronic Devices** include ipads, itablets, e-readers (Nook, Kindle or similar products) and are defined as any hand held device capable of accessing the internet, transmitting and receiving message or capturing images.
   F. **Work/Clinical Areas** include patient rooms, unit hallways and work stations, and test and treatment areas for ancillary departments.

III. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE:
   A. Cellular phone, Smart phone, PDA and Personal Electronic devices in this procedure are collectively referred to as "cell phones."
   B. Devices that do not have communication (voice, texting, and/or e-mail) or photography capabilities are not covered by this procedure.
   C. For purposes of this procedure, "employees" refers to individuals employed by Palomar Health, contract labor, students, and volunteers.

IV. STEPS OF PROCEDURE:
   A. **Personal Cell Phones**
      1. Personal calls during the work hours can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others in work areas.
         a. Employees may only use personal cell phones during breaks and meal times when not in work areas.
         b. Employees are prohibited from use or possession of personal cell phones in all patient care, clinical areas, or where patient care is being delivered.
         c. Employees are prohibited from accessing the internet with their cell phone via any Palomar Health resource(s) (i.e. wifi and or Palomar Health network) to access prohibited sites and or to transmit or receive inappropriate messages.
         d. The use of personal cell phones in public areas must not prevent or interfere with the delivery of excellent customer service to our patients, family members, or visitors.
      2. Personal calls should be made on non-work time and employees are expected to inform friends and family members of Palomar Health's policy.
3. Employees are prohibited from downloading protected health information to their phones or other hand held devices.
4. Palomar Health is not liable for the loss or damage of personal cellular phones brought into the workplace.

B. Safe Use of Cell Phones
1. In the interest of safety of our employees and other drivers, all employees driving vehicles for work purposes or on work time are expected to follow applicable state or federal laws or regulations regarding the use of cell phones.
2. Employees cited for traffic violations related to, or resulting from the use of their cell phone while driving vehicles for work purposes will be solely responsible for all civil actions.
3. Employees are prohibited from texting or operating any handheld device while driving vehicles for work purposes.

C. Special Responsibilities for Leadership
1. Leadership Staff are expected to serve as role models for proper compliance with the provisions of this procedure.
2. Palomar Health Leaders are expected to provide feedback to any employee observed to be in violation of the steps of this procedure while on any Palomar Health campus.
3. Violations of this procedure are subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

V. PUBLICATION HISTORY:

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[Reviewed on 2/3/2015 by David Abel: Next Review Date is 2/2/2017.]

**VI.**

**References:**

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