

**MEDICAL STAFF BYLAWS, POLICIES, AND
RULES AND REGULATIONS
OF
VIRTUA HEALTH**

**MEDICAL STAFF AND
ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDER
CREDENTIALS POLICY**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
1. GENERAL	1
1.A. DEFINITIONS.....	1
1.B. ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS	4
1.C. DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS	5
1.D. HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES	5
2. QUALIFICATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES	6
2.A. QUALIFICATIONS.....	6
2.A.1. Threshold Eligibility Criteria.....	6
2.A.2. Waiver of Threshold Eligibility Criteria	10
2.A.3. Factors for Evaluation	11
2.A.4. No Entitlement to Appointment.....	12
2.A.5. Nondiscrimination	10
2.B. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT AND REAPPOINTMENT.....	13

2.B.1.	Basic Responsibilities and Requirements	13
2.B.2.	Burden of Providing Information	17
2.C.	APPLICATION.....	18
2.C.1.	Information	18
2.C.2.	Grant of Immunity and Authorization to Obtain/Release Information	19
3.	PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENT.....	23
3.A.	PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENT	23
3.A.1.	Request for Application	23
3.A.2.	Initial Review of Application	23
3.A.3.	Steps to Be Followed for All Initial Applicants	24
3.A.4.	Department Chair/Section Chief Procedure	24
3.A.5.	Credentials Committee Procedure	25
3.A.6.	MEC Recommendation	25
3.A.7.	Board Action	26
3.A.8.	Time Periods for Processing.....	27
3.B.	FPPE TO CONFIRM COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM.....	27
3.B.1.	General.....	27
3.B.2.	Oversight/Responsibilities	28
3.B.3.	Method	29
3.B.4.	Selection of FPPE Evaluator(s)	29

3.B.5.	Duration of FPPE	29
3.B.6.	FPPE – Minimum Clinical Activity	29
3.B.7.	Responsibilities of Evaluators	30
3.B.8.	Responsibilities of the Practitioner Undergoing FPPE	31
3.B.9.	FPPE for Remediation	32
4.	CLINICAL PRIVILEGES	33
4.A.	CLINICAL PRIVILEGES.....	33
4.A.1.	General.....	33
4.A.2.	Privilege Modifications, Waivers and Resignations	35
4.A.3.	Clinical Privileges for New Procedures	38
4.A.4.	Clinical Privileges That Cross Specialty Lines	40
4.A.5.	Physicians in Training.....	42
4.A.6.	Telemedicine Privileges	42
4.B.	TEMPORARY CLINICAL PRIVILEGES	44
4.B.1.	Eligibility to Request Temporary Clinical Privileges	44
4.B.2.	Supervision Requirements.....	47
4.B.3.	Withdrawal of Temporary Clinical Privileges.....	47
4.C.	EMERGENCY SITUATIONS	48
4.D.	DISASTER PRIVILEGES.....	48
4.E.	ONGOING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EVALUATION (“OPPE”)	49

4.E.1.	General.....	49
4.E.2.	Oversight/Responsibilities	50
4.E.3.	Method	50
4.E.4.	OPPE Data Cycle.....	50
4.E.5.	OPPE for Remediation	51
5.	PROCEDURE FOR REAPPOINTMENT	53
5.A.	GENERAL	53
5.B.	ELIGIBILITY FOR REAPPOINTMENT	53
5.C.	FACTORS FOR EVALUATION	54
5.D.	REAPPOINTMENT APPLICATION	54
5.E.	PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR REAPPOINTMENT	55
5.F.	REAPPOINTMENT AFTER AGE 70	55
5.G.	CONDITIONAL REAPPOINTMENTS	56
5.H.	POTENTIAL ADVERSE RECOMMENDATION	57
5.I.	TIME PERIODS FOR PROCESSING	57

6.	QUESTIONS INVOLVING PRACTITIONERS.....	58
6.A.	COLLEGIAL EFFORTS AND PROGRESSIVE STEPS.....	58
6.B.	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES.....	60
6.C.	PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSION OR RESTRICTION OF CLINICAL PRIVILEGES	60
6.C.1.	Grounds for Precautionary Suspension or Restriction/ Requests to Voluntarily Refrain	60
6.C.2.	Review Process	61
6.C.3.	Care of Patients.....	61
6.D.	INVESTIGATIONS.....	62
6.D.1.	Initial Review.....	62
6.D.2.	Initiation of Investigation.....	63

6.D.3.	Investigative Procedure	64
6.D.4.	Recommendation	67
6.E.	AUTOMATIC RELINQUISHMENT	68
6.E.1.	General.....	69
6.E.2.	Triggers for Automatic Relinquishment.....	69
6.E.3.	Request for Reinstatement.....	73
6.F.	LEAVES OF ABSENCE	73
6.F.1.	Initiation.....	74
6.F.2.	Duties of Member on Leave	74
6.F.3.	Reinstatement	75
6.G.	ACTION AT ANOTHER VIRTUA HEALTH HOSPITAL.....	76
7.	HEARING AND APPEAL PROCEDURES.....	78
7.A.	INITIATION OF HEARING	78
7.A.1.	Grounds for Hearing	78
7.A.2.	Actions Not Grounds for Hearing	79
7.B.	THE HEARING	81
7.B.1.	Notice of Recommendation.....	81

7.B.2.	Request for Hearing	82
7.B.3.	Notice of Hearing and Statement of Reasons.....	82
7.B.4.	Hearing Panel, Presiding Officer, and Hearing Officer.....	82
7.B.5.	Counsel	85
7.C.	PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES	85
7.C.1.	General Procedures	85
7.C.2.	Time Frames.....	86
7.C.3.	Witness List.....	86
7.C.4.	Provision of Relevant Information.....	87
7.C.5.	Pre-Hearing Conference	88
7.C.6.	Stipulations	88
7.C.7.	Provision of Information to the Hearing Panel.....	89

7.D.	HEARING PROCEDURES.....	89
7.D.1.	Rights of Both Sides and the Hearing Panel at the Hearing.....	89
7.D.2.	Record of Hearing.....	90
7.D.3.	Failure to Appear.....	90
7.D.4.	Presence of Hearing Panel Members.....	90
7.D.5.	Persons to Be Present.....	90
7.D.6.	Order of Presentation.....	90
7.D.7.	Admissibility of Evidence.....	91
7.D.8.	Post-Hearing Statement.....	91
7.D.9.	Postponements and Extensions.....	91
7.E.	HEARING CONCLUSION, DELIBERATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	91
7.E.1.	Basis of Hearing Panel Recommendation.....	91
7.E.2.	Deliberations and Recommendation of the Hearing Panel.....	91
7.E.3.	Disposition of Hearing Panel Report.....	92
7.F.	APPEAL PROCEDURE.....	92
7.F.1.	Time for Appeal.....	92
7.F.2.	Grounds for Appeal.....	92
7.F.3.	Time, Place and Notice.....	93
7.F.4.	Nature of Appellate Review.....	93
7.G.	BOARD ACTION.....	94

7.G.1. Final Decision of the Board	94
7.G.2. Further Review.....	94
7.G.3. Right to One Hearing and One Appeal Only	94

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES FOR CREDENTIALING, PRIVILEGING, AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	95
8.A.1. General Principles	95
8.A.2. Process for Identifying Conflicts of Interest	96
8.A.3. Implementation of Conflict of Interest Guidelines in Appendix D	96

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PEER REVIEW PROTECTION..... 102

9.A. CONFIDENTIALITY 102

9.B. PEER REVIEW PROTECTION..... 102

10. AMENDMENTS AND ADOPTION 104

APPENDIX A – CHECKLIST IN SUPPORT OF PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSION PROCESS

APPENDIX B – CHECKLIST IN SUPPORT OF INVESTIGATION PROCESS

APPENDIX C – CHECKLIST IN SUPPORT OF HEARING PROCESS

APPENDIX D – CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

ARTICLE 1

GENERAL

1.A. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply to terms used in this Policy:

- (1) “ADMINISTRATIVE PHYSICIAN LEADERS” means the Vice President of Medical Affairs at Virtua Health or any Virtua Hospital, the Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Clinical Officer, or a Medical Director at Virtua North or Virtua South, as applicable.

- (2) “ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS” means a type of provider who provides a medical level of care or performs surgical tasks in accordance with New Jersey law, his or her clinical privileges granted by the Hospital, and the following practice guidelines:
 - Certified Nurse Midwives – may provide maternity care and well woman care services **independent** of any physician.

 - Nurse Practitioners (with the exception of CRNAs) – may provide services in **collaboration** with a physician (the “Collaborating Physician”), as defined in his or her written joint protocol. For purposes of this Policy, “collaboration” means the ongoing process by which a Collaborating Physician and an Advanced Practice Provider engage in practice, consistent with agreed upon parameters in a written joint protocol.

 - Physician Assistants and CRNAs – may provide services under the **supervision** of a physician (the “Supervising Physician”), as defined in his or her written supervision agreement. For purpose of this Policy, “supervision” means the supervision of an Advanced Practice Provider by a Supervising Physician with the same clinical privileges. Supervision may or may not require the actual presence of the Supervising Physician, but that does require, at a minimum, that the Supervising Physician be readily available for consultation. The requisite level of supervision (general, direct, or personal) shall be determined at the time an Advanced Practice Provider is credentialed and shall be consistent with any applicable written supervision or collaboration agreement that may exist.

(“General” supervision means that the physician is immediately available by phone, “direct” supervision means that the physician is on the Hospital’s campus, and “personal” supervision means that the physician is in the same room.)

- (3) “BOARD” means the Virtua Board, or its designated committee, which has the overall responsibility for Virtua – Memorial Hospital Burlington County (“Virtua North”) and Virtua – West Jersey Health System (“Virtua South”).
- (4) “CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER” or “CEO” means the individual appointed by the Board to act on its behalf in the overall administration of Virtua Health as applicable. For purposes of this document, the CEO may appoint a designee (including but not limited to the CCO or CMO) to execute his/her responsibilities with regard to the medical staff and its bylaws.
- (5) “CLINICAL PRIVILEGES” or “PRIVILEGES” means the authorization granted by the Board to render specific patient care services, for which the Medical Staff Leaders and Board have developed eligibility and other credentialing criteria and focused and ongoing professional practice evaluation standards.
- (6) “CORE PRIVILEGES” means a defined grouping of privileges for a specialty or subspecialty that includes the fundamental patient care services that are routinely taught in residency and/or fellowship training for that specialty or subspecialty and which have been determined by the Medical Staff Leaders and Board to require closely related skills and experience.
- (7) “DAYS” means calendar days unless otherwise specified.
- (8) “DENTIST” means a doctor of dental surgery (“D.D.S.”) or doctor of dental medicine (“D.M.D.”).
- (9) “DIVISION” shall mean the Medical Staff of Virtua North or Virtua South.
- (10) “HOSPITAL” means Virtua – Memorial Hospital Burlington County (“Virtua North”) or Virtua – West Jersey Health System (“Virtua South”), as applicable.

- (11) "MEDICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE" ("MEC") means the Medical Staff Executive Committee at Virtua North or Virtua South, as applicable.
- (12) "MEDICAL STAFF" means all physicians, dentists, and podiatrists who have been appointed to the Medical Staff at Virtua North and/or Virtua South, as applicable.
- (13) "MEDICAL STAFF LEADER" means any Medical Staff Officer, Department Chair, Section Chief, and committee chair at Virtua North or Virtua South, as applicable.
- (14) "MEDICAL STAFF SERVICES" means the Medical Affairs Office at Virtua North or Virtua South, as applicable, or any delegated Credentials Verification Organization ("CVO").
- (15) "MEMBER" means any physician, dentist, or podiatrist who has been granted Medical Staff appointment at Virtua North and/or Virtua South, as applicable.
- (16) "NOTICE" means written communication by regular U.S. mail, Hospital mail, hand delivery, e-mail, facsimile, website, or other electronic method.
- (17) "ORGANIZED HEALTH CARE ARRANGEMENT" ("OHCA") means the term used by the HIPAA Privacy Rule which permits the Hospital and Medical Staff to use joint notice of privacy practices information when patients are admitted to the Hospital. Practically speaking, being part of an OHCA allows the members of the Medical Staff to rely upon the Hospital's notice of privacy practices and therefore relieves members of the Medical Staff and Advanced Practice Providers of their responsibility to provide a separate notice when members consult or otherwise treat Hospital inpatients.
- (18) "PERMISSION TO PRACTICE" means the authorization granted to Advanced Practice Providers to exercise clinical privileges at the Hospital.
- (19) "PHYSICIAN" means both doctors of medicine ("M.D.s") and doctors of osteopathy ("D.O.s").
- (20) "PODIATRIST" means a doctor of podiatric medicine ("D.P.M.").

- (21) "PRACTITIONER" means any individual who has been granted clinical privileges and/or membership by the Board, including, but not limited to, members of the Medical Staff and Advanced Practice Provider Staff.
- (22) "SPECIAL NOTICE" means hand delivery, certified mail (return receipt requested), or overnight delivery service providing receipt.
- (23) "SPECIAL PRIVILEGES" means privileges that fall outside of the core privileges for a given specialty, which require additional education, training, and/or experience beyond that required for core privileges in order to demonstrate competence.
- (24) "TELEMEDICINE" means the exchange of medical information from one site to another via electronic communications for the purpose of providing patient care, treatment, and services.
- (25) "VIRTUA HEALTH" means Virtua Health System.
- (26) "VIRTUA NORTH" means Virtua – Memorial Hospital Burlington County.
- (27) "VIRTUA SOUTH" means Virtua – West Jersey Health System.

For ease of use, and unless specified otherwise, any reference in this Policy to a member of Hospital administration, a Medical Staff Leader, or a Medical Staff committee shall be interpreted as a reference to a member of Hospital administration, a Medical Staff Leader, or a Medical Staff committee at Virtua North or Virtua South, as applicable.

1.B. ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS

Unless specified otherwise, Advanced Practice Providers who seek permission to practice at the Hospital shall be subject to the same terms and conditions of appointment and reappointment as specified for members of the Medical Staff. Applications for permission to practice by Advanced Practice Providers shall be submitted and processed in the same manner as outlined for Medical Staff members in this Policy. For ease of use, when applicable to an Advanced

Practice Provider, any reference in this Policy to “appointment” or “reappointment” shall be interpreted as a reference to initial or continued permission to practice.

1.C. DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS

- (1) When a function under this Policy is to be carried out by a member of Hospital administration, by a Medical Staff member, or by a Medical Staff committee, the individual, or the committee through its chair, may delegate performance of the function to a qualified designee who is a practitioner or Hospital employee (or a committee of such individuals). Any such designee must treat and maintain all credentialing, privileging, and peer review information in a strictly confidential manner and is bound by all other terms, conditions, and requirements of the Medical Staff Bylaws and related policies. In addition, the delegating individual or committee is responsible for ensuring that the designee appropriately performs the function in question. In addition, if the designee is performing ongoing functions, the delegation is subject to the review of the applicable MEC.

- (2) When a Medical Staff member is unavailable or unable to perform a necessary function under this Policy, one or more of the Medical Staff Leaders may perform the function personally or delegate it to another appropriate individual.

1.D. HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES

- (1) Any member of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff who is employed by a Virtua-affiliated group is bound by all of the same conditions and requirements in this Policy that apply to members who are not employed by a Virtua-affiliated group.

- (2) If a concern about an employed member’s clinical competence, conduct or behavior arises, the concern may be reviewed and addressed in accordance with this or another Medical Staff policy. This provision does not preclude the Virtua-affiliated group from addressing an issue in accordance with its employment policies/manuals or in accordance with the terms of any applicable employment contract.

ARTICLE 2

QUALIFICATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.A. QUALIFICATIONS

2.A.1. Threshold Eligibility Criteria:

- (a) To be eligible to apply for initial appointment or reappointment to the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff, practitioners must:
 - (1) have a current, unrestricted license to practice in New Jersey that is not subject to probation and have never had a license to practice revoked or suspended by any state licensing agency;
 - (2) where applicable to their practice, have a current, unrestricted DEA or CDS registration;
 - (3) be available on a continuous basis, either personally or by arranging appropriate coverage, to (i) respond to the needs of any of their patients who have been admitted to the Hospital and (ii) respond to Emergency Department patients during those times when they are on call in a prompt, efficient, and conscientious manner. (“Appropriate coverage” means coverage by another credentialed practitioner with appropriate specialty-specific privileges as determined by the Credentials Committee.) Compliance with this eligibility requirement means that the practitioner must document that he or she is willing and able to:
 - (i) respond, via phone, to an initial contact from the Hospital; and
 - (ii) appear in person (or via technology-enabled direct communication and evaluation, i.e., telemedicine) to any urgent request to attend to a patient after being requested to do so; or

- (iii) appear in person (or via telemedicine) to any routine request to attend to a patient;

within the time frames outlined in the Medical Staff Rules and Regulations or as otherwise specified in departmental or Hospital rules;

- (4) have current, valid professional liability insurance coverage in a form and in amounts satisfactory to the Hospital;
- (5) have not been convicted of, or entered a plea of guilty or no contest to, Medicare, Medicaid, or other federal or state governmental or private third-party payer fraud or program abuse, nor have been required to pay civil monetary penalties for the same;
- (6) have not been, and are not currently, excluded, precluded, or debarred from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, or other federal or state governmental health care program;
- (7) have not had Medical Staff appointment, permission to practice, or clinical privileges denied, revoked, suspended, or terminated by any health care facility or health plan for reasons related to clinical competence or professional conduct;
- (8) have not resigned Medical Staff appointment, permission to practice, or relinquished privileges during a Medical Staff investigation or in exchange for not conducting such an investigation;
- (9) have not been convicted of, or entered a plea of guilty or no contest, to any indictable offense or felony; or to any misdemeanor or disorderly persons offense relating to controlled substances, illegal drugs, insurance or health care fraud or abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, or violence;

- (10) agree to personally fulfill all responsibilities regarding emergency service call coverage for their specialty or to obtain appropriate coverage (as determined by the Credentials Committee) by another member of the Medical Staff;
- (11) have or agree to make appropriate coverage arrangements (as determined by the Credentials Committee) with other members of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff (as applicable) for those times when the individual will be unavailable;
- (12) demonstrate recent clinical activity in their primary area of practice during the last two years;
- (13) if applying for privileges in an area that is covered by an exclusive contract, meet the specific requirements set forth in that contract;
- (14) document compliance with all applicable training and educational protocols as well as orientation requirements that may be adopted by the MEC or required by the Board, including, but not limited to, those involving electronic medical records, the privacy and security of protected health information, infection control, and patient safety;
- (15) provide documentation showing evidence of any immunizations, vaccinations, and/or screening tests required by Medical Staff or Hospital policy;
- (16) have successfully completed:
 - (i) a residency or fellowship training program approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (“ACGME”) or the American Osteopathic Association in the specialty in which the applicant seeks clinical privileges;
 - (ii) a dental training program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association; or

(iii) a podiatric surgical residency program accredited by the Council on Podiatric Medical Education of the American Podiatric Medical Association or American Board of Podiatric Medicine;

* This requirement does not apply to board certified applicants who are seeking membership to (i) the Department of Family Practice who completed medical school prior to June 30, 1986, or (ii) the Department of Emergency Medicine who completed medical school prior to June 30, 1989.

(17) must satisfy the following board certification requirements:

New Medical Staff Members

Must be certified in their primary area of practice at the Hospital by the appropriate specialty/subspecialty board of the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Dental Association, the American Board of Podiatric Medicine, or the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery, as applicable. Those applicants who are not board certified at the time of application but who have completed their residency or fellowship training within the last five years shall be eligible for Medical Staff appointment. However, in order to remain eligible, those applicants must achieve board certification in their primary area of practice within five years from the date of completion of their residency or fellowship training.

Existing Medical Staff Members

(i) Those Medical Staff members appointed on or after April 1, 2003, are required to maintain board certification with the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Dental Association, the American Board of Podiatric Medicine, or the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery, as applicable in their primary area of practice at the Hospital. Recertification will be assessed at the time of reappointment. Lapses may be remedied pursuant to Section 2.A.2 of this Policy.

- (ii) Those existing Medical Staff members who were appointed to the Medical Staff prior to April 1, 2003 are encouraged to maintain board certification, but are not required to do so.
- (b) In addition to the applicable criteria outlined in (a) above, an Advanced Practice Provider must have a written supervision or collaborative agreement, if applicable, with a Supervising Physician or Collaborating Physician in order to be eligible to apply for initial and continued permission to practice at the Hospital. Such agreement must meet all applicable requirements of state law and Hospital policy.

2.A.2. Waiver of Threshold Eligibility Criteria:

- (a) Any applicant who does not satisfy one or more of the threshold eligibility criteria outlined above may request that it be waived. The applicant requesting the waiver bears the burden of demonstrating (i) that he or she is otherwise qualified, and (ii) exceptional circumstances exist (e.g., when there is a demonstrated Hospital or Medical Staff need for the services in question). Exceptional circumstances generally do not include situations where a waiver is sought for the convenience of an applicant (e.g., applicants who wish to defer taking Board examinations).
- (b) A request for a waiver shall be submitted to the relevant Department Chair for consideration. In reviewing the request for a waiver, the Department Chair may consider the specific qualifications of the applicant in question, input from the relevant Section Chief, and the best interests of the Hospital and the communities it serves. Additionally, the Department Chair may, in his or her discretion, consider the application form and other information supplied by the applicant. The Department Chair's recommendation will be forwarded to the MEC. Any recommendation to grant a waiver must include the specific basis for the recommendation.
- (c) The MEC shall review the recommendation of the Department Chair and make a recommendation to the Board regarding whether to grant or deny the request for a waiver. Any recommendation to grant a waiver must include the specific basis for the recommendation.
- (d) No applicant is entitled to a waiver or to a hearing if the Board determines not to grant a waiver. A determination that an applicant is not entitled to a waiver is not a "denial" of appointment or clinical privileges. Rather, that individual is ineligible to request

appointment or clinical privileges. A determination of ineligibility is not a matter that is reportable to either the state board or the National Practitioner Data Bank.

- (e) The granting of a waiver in a particular case does not set a precedent for any other applicant or group of applicants.
- (f) If a waiver is granted that does not specifically include a time limitation, the waiver is considered to be permanent and the individual does not have to request a waiver at subsequent reappointment cycles.
- (g) An application for appointment that does not satisfy an eligibility criterion will not be processed until the Board has determined that a waiver should be granted.

2.A.3. Factors for Evaluation:

The six ACGME general competencies (patient care, medical knowledge, professionalism, system-based practice, practice-based learning, and interpersonal communications) will be evaluated as part of the appointment and reappointment processes, as reflected in the following factors:

- (a) relevant training, experience, and demonstrated current competence, including medical/clinical knowledge, technical and clinical skills, and clinical judgment, and an understanding of the contexts and systems within which care is provided;
- (b) adherence to the ethics of their profession, continuous professional development, an understanding of and sensitivity to diversity, and responsible attitude toward patients and their profession;
- (c) good reputation and character;
- (d) ability to safely and competently perform the clinical privileges requested;

- (e) ability to work harmoniously with others, including, but not limited to, interpersonal and communication skills sufficient to enable them to maintain professional relationships with patients, families, and other members of health care teams; and
- (f) recognition of the importance of, and willingness to support, the Hospital's and Medical Staff's commitment to quality care and a recognition that interpersonal skills and collegiality are essential to the provision of quality patient care.

2.A.4. No Entitlement to Appointment:

No individual is entitled to receive an application or to be appointed or reappointed to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff, or to be granted particular clinical privileges merely because he or she:

- (a) is employed by the Hospital or its subsidiaries or has a contract with the Hospital;
- (b) is or is not a member or employee of any particular physician group;
- (c) is licensed to practice a profession in this or any other state;
- (d) is a member of any particular professional organization;
- (e) has had in the past, or currently has, Medical Staff appointment or privileges at any hospital or health care facility;
- (f) resides in the geographic service area of the Hospital; or
- (g) is affiliated with, or under contract to, any managed care plan, insurance plan, HMO, PPO, or other entity.

2.A.5. Nondiscrimination:

Neither the Hospital nor the Medical Staff shall discriminate in granting staff membership and/or clinical privileges on the basis of national origin, culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic background, religion, or disability unrelated to the provision of patient care to the extent the individual is otherwise qualified.

2.B. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT AND REAPPOINTMENT

2.B.1. Basic Responsibilities and Requirements:

- (a) As a condition of being granted appointment or reappointment, and as a condition of ongoing membership, every member specifically agrees to the following:
 - (1) to provide continuous and timely quality care to all patients for whom the individual has responsibility;
 - (2) to abide by all Bylaws, policies, and Rules and Regulations of the Hospital and Medical Staff in force during the time the individual is appointed;
 - (3) to participate in Medical Staff affairs through committee service, participation in quality improvement and professional practice evaluation activities, and by performing such other reasonable duties and responsibilities as may be assigned;
 - (4) to abide by the Virtua Corporate Compliance Code (<https://www.virtua.org/about/corporate-compliance-code-of-conduct>) and generally recognized professional and ethical principles applicable to the individual's profession;
 - (5) within the scope of his or her privileges, to provide scheduled emergency service call coverage (i.e., a member must complete any scheduled emergency service call obligations or arrange appropriate coverage), consultations, and care for unassigned patients;

- (6) to comply with clinical practice or evidence-based medicine protocols pertinent to his or her medical specialty, as may be adopted by the Medical Staff or the Medical Staff leadership, including those related to national patient safety initiatives and core measures, or to clearly document the clinical reasons for variance;
- (7) to comply with all applicable training and educational protocols as well as orientation requirements that may be adopted by the MEC or required by the Board, including, but not limited to, those involving electronic medical records, computerized physician order entry (“CPOE”), the privacy and security of protected health information, infection control, and patient safety;
- (8) to inform Medical Staff Services or the VPMA, in writing or via e-mail, as soon as possible but in all cases within 10 days, of any change in the practitioner’s status or any change in the information provided on the individual’s application form. This information shall be provided with or without request, and shall include, but not be limited to:
- any and all complaints regarding, or changes in, licensure status or DEA or CDS registration,
 - adverse changes in professional liability insurance coverage,
 - the filing of a professional liability lawsuit against the practitioner,
 - changes in the practitioner’s status (appointment, privileges, and/or scope of practice) at any other hospital or health care entity as a result of peer review activities or in order to avoid initiation of peer review activities,
 - changes in the practitioner’s employment status at any medical group or hospital as a result of issues related to clinical competence or professional conduct,

- any arrest, charge, indictment, conviction, or a plea of guilty or no contest pertaining to (1) any indictable offense or felony or (2) any misdemeanor or disorderly persons offense involving (i) controlled substances; (ii) illegal drugs; (iii) Medicare, Medicaid, or insurance or health care fraud or abuse; (iv) child abuse; (v) elder abuse; or (vi) violence against another,
 - exclusion or preclusion from participation in Medicare/Medicaid or any sanctions imposed,
 - any changes in the practitioner’s ability to safely and competently exercise clinical privileges or perform the duties and responsibilities of appointment or permission to practice because of health status issues, including, but not limited to, a physical, mental, or emotional condition that could adversely affect the practitioner’s ability to practice safely and competently, or impairment due to addiction, alcohol use, or other similar issue (all of which shall be referred for review under the Medical Staff’s health policy),
 - any referral to a state board health-related program, and
 - any charge of, or arrest for, driving under the influence (“DUI”) (which shall be referred for review under the Medical Staff’s health policy);
- (9) to immediately submit to an appropriate evaluation, which may include diagnostic testing (including, but not limited to, a blood and/or urine test) and/or a complete physical, mental, and/or behavioral evaluation, if at least two Medical Staff Leaders (or one Medical Staff Leader and one member of Hospital administration) are concerned with the individual’s ability to safely and competently care for patients. The health care professional(s) to perform the testing and/or evaluations shall be determined by the Medical Staff Leaders and the member must execute all appropriate releases to permit the sharing of information with the Medical Staff Leaders;
- (10) to meet with Medical Staff Leaders and/or Hospital administration upon request, to provide information regarding professional qualifications upon written request, and to participate in collegial efforts as may be requested;

- (11) to appear for personal or phone interviews in regard to an application for initial appointment or reappointment;
- (12) to maintain and monitor a current Hospital e-mail address with Medical Staff Services, which will be the primary mechanism used to communicate all Medical Staff information to the member;
- (13) to provide valid contact information in order to facilitate practitioner-to-practitioner communication (e.g., mobile phone number or valid answering service information);
- (14) to refrain from illegal fee splitting or other illegal inducements relating to patient referral;
- (15) to refrain from delegating responsibility for hospitalized patients to any individual who is not qualified or adequately supervised;
- (16) to seek consultation whenever required or necessary;
- (17) to complete in a timely and legible manner all medical and other required records, containing all information required by the Hospital, and to utilize the electronic medical record as required with respect to health care delivered in the Hospital;
- (18) to cooperate with all utilization oversight activities;
- (19) to participate in an Organized Health Care Arrangement with the Hospital and abide by the terms of the Hospital's Notice of Privacy Practices with respect to health care delivered in the Hospital;
- (20) to perform all services and conduct himself/herself in a professional manner;

- (21) to promptly pay any applicable dues, assessments, and/or fines;
- (22) to satisfy continuing medical education requirements; and
- (23) that, if there is any misstatement in, or omission from, the application, the Hospital may stop processing the application (or, if appointment has been granted prior to the discovery of a misstatement or omission, appointment and privileges may be deemed to be automatically relinquished). In either situation, there shall be no entitlement to a hearing or appeal. The individual will be informed in writing of the nature of the misstatement or omission and permitted to provide a written response for the Credentials Committee's consideration. If the determination is made to not process an application or that appointment and privileges should be automatically relinquished pursuant to this provision, the individual may not reapply to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff for a period of at least two years.

(b) In addition to the applicable responsibilities outlined in (a) above, as a condition of initial and continued permission to practice at the Hospital, an Advanced Practice Provider specifically agrees to the following:

- (1) to refrain from deceiving patients as to his or her status as an Advanced Practice Provider; and
- (2) to strictly comply with the standards of practice applicable to the functioning of Advanced Practice Providers, as set forth in Hospital and Medical Staff policy.

2.B.2. Burden of Providing Information:

- (a) Individuals seeking appointment and reappointment have the burden of producing information deemed adequate by the Hospital for a proper evaluation of current competence, character, ethics, and other qualifications and for resolving any doubts about an individual's qualifications. The information to be produced includes such quality data and other information as may be needed to assist in an appropriate assessment of overall qualifications for appointment, reappointment, and current clinical competence for any requested clinical privileges, including, but not limited to, information from other hospitals, information from the individual's office practice, information from insurers or managed care organizations in which the individual

participates, and/or receipt of confidential evaluation forms completed by referring/referred to physicians.

- (b) Individuals seeking appointment and reappointment have the burden of providing evidence that all the statements made and information given on the application are accurate and complete.
- (c) An application shall be complete when all questions on the application form have been answered, all supporting documentation has been supplied, all information has been verified from primary sources, and all application fees have been paid. An application shall become incomplete if the need arises for new, additional, or clarifying information at any time during the credentialing process. Whenever there is a need for new, additional, or clarifying information – outside of the normal, routine credentialing process – the application will not be processed until the information is provided. If the application continues to be incomplete 30 days after the individual has been notified by Special Notice of the need for new, additional, or clarifying information, the application shall be deemed to be withdrawn.
- (d) The individual seeking appointment or reappointment is responsible for providing a complete application, including adequate responses from references. An incomplete application shall not be processed.

2.C. APPLICATION

2.C.1. Information:

- (a) Applications for appointment and reappointment shall contain a request for specific clinical privileges and shall require detailed information concerning the individual's professional qualifications. The applications for initial appointment and reappointment existing now and as may be revised are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Policy.
- (b) In addition to other information, the applications shall seek the following:

- (1) information as to whether the applicant's medical staff appointment, permission to practice, or clinical privileges have been voluntarily or involuntarily relinquished, withdrawn, denied, revoked, suspended, subjected to probationary or other conditions, reduced, limited, terminated, or not renewed at any other hospital, health care facility, or other organization, or are currently being investigated or challenged;
 - (2) information as to whether the applicant's license to practice any relevant profession in any state, DEA or CDS registration, or any state's controlled substance license has been voluntarily or involuntarily suspended, modified, terminated, restricted, or relinquished or is currently being investigated or challenged;
 - (3) information concerning the applicant's professional liability litigation experience, including past and pending claims, final judgments, or settlements; the substance of the allegations as well as the findings and the ultimate disposition; and any additional information concerning such proceedings or actions as the Credentials Committee, the MEC, or the Board may request;
 - (4) current information regarding the applicant's ability to safely and competently exercise the clinical privileges requested;
 - (5) information on the citizenship and/or visa status; and
 - (6) a copy of a government-issued photo identification.
- (c) The applicant shall sign the application and certify that he or she is able to perform the privileges requested and the responsibilities of appointment.

2.C.2. Grant of Immunity and Authorization to Obtain/Release Information:

By requesting an application and/or applying for appointment, reappointment, or clinical privileges, the individual expressly accepts the conditions set forth in this Section:

(a) Immunity:

The individual releases from any and all liability, extends immunity to, and agrees not to sue the Hospital or the Board, any member of the Medical Staff or the Board, their authorized representatives, and third parties who provide information for any matter relating to appointment, reappointment, clinical privileges, or the individual's qualifications for the same. This immunity covers any actions, recommendations, communications, and/or disclosures involving the individual that are made, taken, or received by the Hospital, its authorized agents, or third parties in the course of credentialing and peer review activities. This immunity also extends to any reports that are made to government regulatory and licensing boards or agencies pursuant to federal or state law.

(b) Authorization to Obtain Information from Third Parties:

The individual specifically authorizes the Hospital, Medical Staff Leaders, and their authorized representatives (1) to consult with any third party who may have information bearing on the individual's professional qualifications, credentials, clinical competence, character, ability to perform safely and competently, ethics, behavior, or any other matter reasonably having a bearing on his or her qualifications for initial and continued appointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff, and (2) to obtain any and all communications, reports, records, statements, documents, recommendations or disclosures of third parties that may be relevant to such questions. The individual also specifically authorizes third parties to release this information to the Hospital and its authorized representatives upon request. Further, the individual agrees to sign necessary consent forms to permit a consumer reporting agency to conduct a criminal background check on the individual and report the results to the Hospital.

(c) Authorization to Release Information to Third Parties:

The individual also authorizes Hospital representatives to release information to (i) other hospitals, health care facilities, managed care organizations, and their agents when information is requested in order to evaluate his or her professional qualifications for appointment, privileges, and/or participation at the requesting organization/facility, and (ii) government regulatory and licensure boards or agencies pursuant to federal or state law. The specific process for the release of information shall be coordinated by Medical Staff Services.

(d) Authorization to Share Information Among Virtua Health Entities:

The individual specifically authorizes the Virtua Health hospitals, medical staffs, and Virtua Health affiliated physician groups to share with one another credentialing, peer review, and other information and documentation pertaining to the individual's clinical competence, professional conduct, and health. This information and documentation may be shared at any time, including, but not limited to, any initial evaluation of an individual's qualifications, any periodic reassessment of those qualifications, or when a question is raised about the individual.

(e) Hearing and Appeal Procedures:

The individual agrees that the hearing and appeal procedures set forth in this Policy are the sole and exclusive remedy with respect to any professional review action taken by the Hospital.

(f) Legal Actions:

If, despite this Section, an individual (or an individual's representative) institutes legal action challenging any credentialing, privileging, peer review, or other action affecting appointment or privileges, or any report that may be made to a regulatory board or agency, and does not prevail, he or she shall reimburse the Hospital and any member of the Medical Staff or Board involved in the action for all costs incurred in defending such legal action, including reasonable attorney's fees, expert witness fees, and lost revenues.

(g) Scope of Section:

All of the provisions in this Section 2.C.2 are applicable in the following situations:

- (1) whether or not appointment or clinical privileges are granted;
- (2) throughout the term of any appointment or reappointment period and thereafter;

- (3) should appointment, reappointment, or clinical privileges be revoked, reduced, restricted, suspended, and/or otherwise affected as part of the Hospital's professional review activities;
- (4) as applicable, to any third-party inquiries received after the individual leaves the Hospital about his or her tenure as a member of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff; and
- (5) as applicable, to any reports that may be made to government regulatory and licensing board or agencies pursuant to federal or state law.

ARTICLE 3

PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENT

3.A. PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENT

3.A.1. Request for Application:

- (a) Applications for appointment shall be in writing and submitted by email to Medical Staff Services (Maffairs@virtua.org).
- (b) An individual seeking initial appointment will be sent electronically a copy of the Bylaws, Policies and Rules and Regulations which outlines the threshold eligibility criteria for appointment and the applicable criteria for the clinical privileges being sought, and an application form.
- (c) Applications may be provided to residents or fellows who are in the final six months of their training. Such applications may be processed, but final action on the applications shall not become effective until all applicable threshold eligibility criteria are satisfied.

3.A.2. Initial Review of Application:

- (a) A completed application form with copies of all required documents must be returned to Medical Staff Services within 30 days after receipt. The application may be signed by the applicant electronically and must be accompanied by any required application fee.
- (b) As a preliminary step, the application shall be reviewed by Medical Staff Services to determine that all questions have been answered and that the individual satisfies all threshold eligibility criteria. Incomplete applications shall not be processed. Individuals who fail to return completed applications or fail to meet the threshold eligibility criteria shall be notified that their applications shall not be processed. A determination of ineligibility does not entitle the individual to the hearing and appeal rights outlined in

this Policy and is not reportable to any state agency or to the National Practitioner Data Bank.

- (c) Medical Staff Services shall oversee the process of gathering and verifying relevant information, and confirming that all references and other information or materials deemed pertinent have been received. Once an application is complete, it shall be transmitted, along with all supporting documentation, to the applicable Department Chair and/or Section Chief.

3.A.3. Steps to Be Followed for All Initial Applicants:

- (a) Evidence of the applicant's character, professional competence, qualifications, behavior, and ethical standing shall be examined. This information may be contained in the application, and obtained from peer references (from the same discipline where practicable) and from other available sources, including the applicant's past or current Department Chairs at other health care entities, residency training director, and others who may have knowledge about the applicant's education, training, experience, and ability to work with others.
- (b) An interview(s) with the applicant may be conducted. The purpose of the interview is to discuss and review any aspect of the applicant's application, qualifications, and requested clinical privileges. This interview normally will be conducted by the Department Chair or the Section Chief. However, the Credentials Committee may also contact any applicant to request an interview with the committee or its representatives.

3.A.4. Department Chair/Section Chief Procedure:

- (a) Medical Staff Services shall transmit the complete application and all supporting materials to the relevant Department Chair(s) and/or Section Chief(s) based on the clinical privileges being sought. The Department Chair and/or Section Chief shall communicate by e-mail with Medical Staff Services his or her approval or conditions of approval for appointment and the clinical privileges requested.
- (b) The Department Chair and/or Section Chief shall be available to the Credentials Committee, the MEC, and the Board to answer any questions that may be raised with respect to the report and findings of that individual.

- (c) In addition to review by the Department Chair and/or Section Chief, all Advanced Practice Providers who are seeking permission to practice as advanced practice nurses shall also be evaluated by the Chief Nursing Officer.

3.A.5. Credentials Committee Procedure:

- (a) The Credentials Committee shall review the applicant's file, including approval and any conditions for appointment provided by the Department Chair and/or Section Chief (and the Chief Nursing Officer, when applicable) and make a recommendation.
- (b) The Credentials Committee may use the expertise of the Department Chair and/or Section Chief or any member of the department, section, or an outside consultant, if additional information is required regarding the applicant's qualifications.

3.A.6. MEC Recommendation:

- (a) At its next regular meeting after receipt of the written findings and recommendation of the Credentials Committee, the MEC shall:
 - (1) adopt the findings and recommendation of the Credentials Committee, as its own; or
 - (2) refer the matter back to the Credentials Committee for further consideration and responses to specific questions raised by the MEC prior to its final recommendation; or
 - (3) state its reasons in its report and recommendation, along with supporting information, for its disagreement with the Credentials Committee's recommendation.
- (b) If the recommendation of the MEC is to appoint, the recommendation shall be forwarded to the Board.

- (c) If the recommendation of the MEC is unfavorable and would entitle the applicant to request a hearing in accordance with Section 7.A.1(a) of this Policy, the MEC shall forward its recommendation to the CEO (or designee), who shall promptly send Special Notice to the applicant. The CEO (or designee) shall then hold the application until after the applicant has completed or waived a hearing and appeal.

3.A.7. Board Action:

- (a) Expedited Review Process: The Board's Quality and Safety Subcommittee may act on appointment, reappointment, and clinical privileges if there has been a favorable recommendation from the Credentials Committee and the MEC and there is no evidence of any of the following:
 - (1) a current or previously successful challenge to any license or registration;
 - (2) an involuntary termination, limitation, reduction, denial, or loss of appointment or privileges at any other hospital or other entity; or
 - (3) an unusual pattern of, or an excessive number of, professional liability actions resulting in a final judgment against the applicant.

Any decision reached by the Quality and Safety Subcommittee to appoint shall be effective immediately and shall be forwarded to the Board for ratification at its next meeting.

- (b) Full Board Review Process: When there has been no delegation to the Board Committee, upon receipt of a recommendation that the applicant be granted appointment and clinical privileges, the Board may:
 - (1) appoint the applicant and grant clinical privileges as recommended; or
 - (2) refer the matter back to the Credentials Committee or MEC for additional research or information; or

- (3) reject or modify the recommendation.

- (c) If the Board determines to reject a favorable recommendation, it should first discuss the matter with the Chair of the Credentials Committee and the Chair of the MEC. If the Board's determination remains unfavorable to the applicant, the CEO (or designee) shall promptly send Special Notice to the applicant that the applicant is entitled to request a hearing.

- (d) Any final decision by the Board to grant, deny, revise or revoke appointment and/or clinical privileges will be disseminated to appropriate individuals and, as required, reported to appropriate entities.

3.A.8. Time Periods for Processing:

Once an application is deemed complete, it is expected to be processed within 120 days, unless it becomes incomplete. This time period is intended to be a guideline only and shall not create any right for the applicant to have the application processed within this precise time period.

3.B. FPPE TO CONFIRM COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM

3.B.1. General:

- (a) The purpose of Focused Practice Professional Evaluations ("FPPE") is to establish a systematic evaluation process to ensure that there is sufficient information available to confirm the current competence of practitioners who initially request privileges at the Hospital.

- (b) FPPE may be performed using prospective, concurrent or retrospective approaches. FPPE includes one or more of the following:
 - (1) presentation of cases with planned treatment outlined for concurrent review or review of case documentation (prospective) evaluation;

- (2) real-time observation of a procedure (concurrent) evaluation; and/or
 - (3) review of a case after care has been completed, which may include interviews with personnel involved in the care of the patient (retrospective) evaluation.
- (c) Privilege-specific FPPE will occur under the following circumstances:
- (1) upon initial appointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff when clinical privileges are appointed;
 - (2) when a new clinical privilege is granted to an existing member of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff;
 - (3) when a question arises regarding a currently privileged practitioner's ability to provide safe, high quality patient care; and/or
 - (4) at time of reappointment for practitioners who have reached age 70 and older.
- (d) Each department shall define the appropriate evaluation method to determine what constitutes a practitioner's current competency.
- (e) Individuals requesting membership but not exercising privileges are not required to undergo FPPE.

3.B.2. Oversight/Responsibilities:

The Department Chair functions to define a practitioner's FPPE, evaluate upon completion and communicate his or her findings to the Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee is charged with the responsibility of monitoring FPPE completion. The Committee accomplishes this oversight by submitting regular reports related to the progress of each practitioner, who is required to undergo FPPE to the MEC and the Board.

3.B.3. Method:

FPPE may be performed using prospective, concurrent, or retrospective approaches, as defined above. The appropriate methods for an FPPE evaluation will be determined by the Department Chair. Virtua's FPPE forms must be utilized.

3.B.4. Selection of FPPE Evaluator(s):

The Department Chair shall be responsible for selecting the evaluators(s). All practitioners with relevant privileges within each department must serve as evaluators when asked to do so. It is essential that the FPPE be conducted in a way that avoids conflict of interest or circumstances that suggest a conflict of interest. If external review is necessary, the external review process delineated in the Rules and Regulations shall be followed.

3.B.5. Duration of FPPE:

For a new applicant to the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff, the duration of the FPPE shall be six months. If an applicant is unable to complete FPPE during the first six months, he or she may request an extension. The FPPE period may be extended by the Department Chair if initial concerns are raised that require further evaluation or there is insufficient activity during the initial period. Extensions will be granted in six-month increments provided the FPPE period does not exceed one reappointment cycle.

3.B.6. FPPE – Minimum Clinical Activity:

- (a) When a practitioner cannot complete the defined FPPE within one reappointment cycle due to low volume, the Department Chair at his or her discretion will make the determination to continue the practitioner's FPPE or remove the privilege for failure to complete FPPE. Removal of clinical privileges for numerical reasons is administrative and not reportable.

- (b) For existing members of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff requesting a new privilege, the Department Chair will determine the minimum number

of cases that will be required to satisfy FPPE. The cases shall be representative of the practitioner's requested privileges.

- (c) The FPPE period may be extended by the Department Chair if initial concerns are raised that require further evaluation or there is insufficient activity during the initial period, provided the FPPE period does not exceed one reappointment cycle. If the FPPE for an increase in privilege has not been satisfied within a full reappointment cycle, the privilege will be voluntarily relinquished by the practitioner.

3.B.7. Responsibilities of Evaluators:

- (a) The role of the evaluator is to review and observe cases, not to be a supervisor or act as a consultant. The practitioner who is serving solely as an evaluator is an agent of the Hospital. The evaluator receives no compensation directly or indirectly from any patient for this service.
- (b) Evaluators must be members in good standing of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff and must have unrestricted privileges to perform any procedure(s) to be evaluated.
- (c) Evaluators will monitor those portions of the medical care rendered by the practitioner that are sufficient to be able to judge the quality of care provided in relationship to the privilege(s) requested.
- (d) Evaluators will ensure the confidentiality of the FPPE results and forms.
- (e) If at any time during the FPPE period, the evaluator has concerns about the practitioner's competency to perform specific clinical privileges or care related to a specific patient(s), the evaluator should promptly notify the respective Department Chair.
- (f) If during the initial period of FPPE the evaluator feels there may be imminent danger to the health and safety of any individual, the continuation of the privilege(s) requested and FPPE are subject to being discontinued by the Department Chair or CMO.

3.B.8. Responsibilities of the Practitioner Undergoing FPPE:

- (a) The practitioner must provide the necessary cases to the evaluator for review in a timely manner. If applicable, the practitioner must obtain agreement from the evaluator to attend and observe the procedure and/or the practitioner must provide the evaluator with access to all information regarding the patient's clinical history and care, pertinent physical findings, lab and x-ray results; the course of treatment or management, including a copy of the H&P, operative reports, consultations, and discharge summaries, when requested.
- (b) The practitioner has the option of requesting from the Department Chair, a change of evaluator if disagreements with the current evaluator may adversely affect his or her ability to complete his/her FPPE.
- (c) It is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure documentation of the satisfactory completion of his or her FPPE, including the completion and delivery of FPPE forms to the designated party noted on the forms.
- (d) If the practitioner fails to complete his/her FPPE requirements prior to the expiration of the FPPE period, the privileges that are the subject of FPPE shall be deemed to be voluntarily relinquished by the practitioner and the practitioner shall immediately stop performing these privileges. If the practitioner's appointment or clinical privileges are deemed to be voluntarily relinquished for failure to complete FPPE requirements, the practitioner shall be notified in writing before a report of that voluntary relinquishment is made to the MEC.
- (e) The practitioner shall be given an opportunity to request, within ten days, a meeting with the Department Chair and the CMO, at which time the practitioner shall have an opportunity to explain or discuss extenuating circumstances involving his or her failure to complete FPPE and provide sufficient clinical experience for a satisfactory evaluation and why the evaluation period should be extended. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Department Chair in conjunction with the CMO shall review the practitioner's request and notify him or her within ten days of their decision.
- (f) The practitioner shall not be entitled to a hearing or other procedural rights as set forth in the Article 7 for any privilege that is voluntarily relinquished.

3.B.9. FPPE for Remediation:

- (a) When a question arises, regarding a currently privileged practitioner's professional performance that may affect the provision of safe and high quality patient care, the practitioner may be moved from OPPE to FPPE at the discretion of the Department Chair.

- (b) The following are examples of situations that may require moving from OPPE to FPPE:
 - (1) Sentinel Events – as defined by the Joint Commission.

 - (2) Near Misses – any process variation which did not affect the outcome, but for which a recurrence carries a significant chance of a serious adverse outcome.

 - (3) Serious Events – an event, occurrence or situation involving the clinical care of a patient that results in death or compromises patient safety and results in an unanticipated injury requiring the delivery of additional health care services.

 - (4) Unusual pattern of behavior or pattern of care.

 - (5) Professional practice that impacts on the quality of care and patient safety.

 - (6) Other complaints/issues that may arise that are referred by the President of the Medical Staff, Department Chair, CMO, or Medical Director.

- (c) The decision to assign a period of performance monitoring to further assess current competence will be based on the evaluation of a practitioner's current clinical competence, practice behavior and ability to perform the requested privileges that are at issue. Other existing privileges in good standing should not be affected by this decision. The terms, methods and duration of the evaluation period shall be determined by the Department Chair.

ARTICLE 4

CLINICAL PRIVILEGES

4.A. CLINICAL PRIVILEGES

4.A.1. General:

- (a) Appointment or reappointment shall not confer any clinical privileges or right to admit or treat patients at the Hospital. Each individual who has been appointed to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff has the burden of establishing his or her qualifications and current competence for all clinical privileges requested and is entitled to exercise only those clinical privileges specifically granted by the Board.
- (b) For privilege requests to be processed, the applicant must satisfy any applicable threshold eligibility criteria, as determined by the applicable Department Chairs and/or Section Chiefs. The report of the Department Chairs and/or Section Chiefs shall be forwarded to the Chair of the Credentials Committee and processed as a part of the initial application for staff appointment.
- (c) If an individual wishes to exercise privileges at both Virtua North and Virtua South, the individual must designate a Primary and Secondary Hospital when requesting privileges.
- (d) Core privileges, special privileges, privilege delineations, and/or the criteria for the same may be developed by the relevant Department Chair and/or Section Chief and shall be forwarded to the MEC for review and recommendation and to the Board for final action. The clinical privileges recommended to the Board shall be based upon consideration of the following factors:
 - (1) education, relevant training, experience, and demonstrated current competence, including medical/clinical knowledge, technical and clinical skills, clinical judgment, interpersonal and communication skills, and professionalism with patients, families, and other members of the health care team and peer evaluations relating to these criteria;

- (2) appropriateness of utilization patterns;
- (3) ability to perform the privileges requested competently and safely;
- (4) information resulting from ongoing and focused professional practice evaluation and other performance improvement activities, as applicable;
- (5) availability of other qualified staff members with appropriate privileges (as determined by the Credentials Committee) to provide coverage in case of the applicant's illness or unavailability;
- (6) adequate professional liability insurance coverage for the clinical privileges requested;
- (7) the Hospital's available resources and personnel;
- (8) any previously successful or currently pending challenges to any licensure or registration, or the voluntary or involuntary relinquishment of such licensure or registration;
- (9) any information concerning professional review actions or voluntary or involuntary termination, limitation, reduction, or loss of appointment or clinical privileges at another hospital;
- (10) practitioner-specific data as compared to aggregate data, when available;
- (11) morbidity and mortality data related to the specific individual, and when statistically and qualitatively significant and meaningful, when available; and
- (12) professional liability actions, especially any such actions that reflect an unusual pattern or excessive number of actions.

4.A.2. Privilege Modifications, Waivers, and Resignations:

(a) Scope. This Section applies to all requests for modification of clinical privileges during the term of appointment (increases and relinquishments), waivers related to eligibility criteria for privileges or the scope of those privileges, and resignations of all clinical privileges and appointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff. Any such requests should be submitted in writing or via e-mail to Medical Staff Services.

(b) Increased Privileges.

(1) Requests for increased privileges must state the specific additional clinical privileges requested and provide information sufficient to establish eligibility, as specified in applicable criteria, and current clinical competence.

(2) If the individual is eligible and the application is complete, it will be processed in the same manner as an application for initial clinical privileges.

(3) All increases in clinical privileges will require the completion of FPPE related to those privileges.

(c) Increase in Practice Locations.

Requests for privileges at a new practice location by a member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff who is already clinically active at another Division will be reviewed by the relevant Department Chair, who will review the individual's most recent appointment/reappointment packet and quality data. The Department Chair may interview the individual for purposes of introducing campus-specific requirements.

(d) Relinquishment of Privileges.

A request to relinquish any individual clinical privilege, whether or not part of the core, will be processed in accordance with the following:

- (1) Formal Request: The individual must forward a written or electronic request to Medical Staff Services, which must indicate the specific patient care services that the member does not wish to provide, state a good cause basis for the request, and include evidence that the individual does not provide the patient care services at issue in any health care facility.

- (2) Review Process: A request for a relinquishment shall be submitted to the Department Chair, who shall consider the following factors:
 - (i) the Hospital's mission and ability to serve the health care needs of the community by providing timely, appropriate care within its facilities;
 - (ii) whether sufficient notice has been given to provide a smooth transition of patient care services;
 - (iii) fairness to the individual requesting the relinquishment, including past service and the other demands placed upon the individual;
 - (iv) fairness to other practitioners who serve on the call roster in the relevant specialty, including the effect that the relinquishment would have on them and any inequalities that may be created;
 - (v) the expectations of other practitioners who are in different specialties but who rely on the specialty in question in the care of patients who present to the Hospital;
 - (vi) any gaps in call coverage that might/would result from an individual's removal from the call roster for the relevant privilege and the feasibility and safety of transferring patients to other facilities in that situation; and
 - (vii) how the request may affect the Hospital's ability to comply with applicable regulatory requirements, including the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act.

Upon completion of its review, the Department Chair will forward his or her recommendation to the MEC, which shall review the recommendation of the Department Chair and make its own recommendation to the Board regarding whether to grant or deny the request. Any recommendation to grant a request should include the specific basis for the recommendation.

- (3) On-Call Obligations: By limiting the scope of privileges, the individual nevertheless agrees to participate in the general on-call schedule for the relevant specialty and to maintain sufficient competency to assist other practitioners in assessing and stabilizing patients who require services within that specialty, if this call responsibility is required by the Medical Staff leadership after review of the specific circumstances involved. If, upon assessment, a patient needs a service that is no longer provided by the individual due to this request, the individual shall work cooperatively with the other practitioners in arranging for another individual with appropriate clinical privileges to care for the patient or, if such an individual is not available, in arranging for the patient's transfer.
- (4) Effective Date: If the Board grants a relinquishment of privileges, it shall specify the date that the relinquishment will be effective. Failure of a member to request a relinquishment in accordance with this section shall, as applicable, result in the member retaining his or her clinical privileges and all associated responsibilities.

(e) Waivers.

Any individual who does not satisfy one or more eligibility criteria for clinical privileges may request that it be waived. The individual requesting the waiver bears the burden of demonstrating **exceptional** circumstances, and that his or her qualifications are equivalent to, or exceed, the criterion in question. All such requests will be processed in accordance with the process described in Section 2.A.2.

(f) Resignation of Appointment and Privileges.

- (1) Any individual who wishes to resign all of his or his clinical privileges and appointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff shall

provide notification of such decision to Medical Staff Services. This notification should indicate the individual's specific resignation date.

- (2) At the time of resignation, the individual will be responsible for the following:
 - (i) completion of all medical records;
 - (ii) appropriate management of any hospitalized patients who were under the individual's care at the time of resignation (i.e., patients were discharged or transferred to another member with appropriate clinical privileges); and
 - (iii) completion of any scheduled emergency service call (or arrangement for appropriate coverage) prior to resigning.

4.A.3. Clinical Privileges for New Procedures:

- (a) Requests for clinical privileges to perform either a procedure not currently being performed at the Hospital or a new technique to perform an existing procedure (hereafter, "new procedure") shall not be processed until (1) a determination has been made that the procedure shall be offered by the Hospital and (2) criteria to be eligible to request those clinical privileges have been established as set forth in this Section.
- (b) As an initial step in the process, the individual seeking to perform the new procedure will prepare and submit a report to the designated Administrative Physician Leader addressing the following:
 - (1) appropriate education, training, and experience necessary to perform the new procedure safely and competently;
 - (2) clinical indications for when the new procedure is appropriate;

- (3) whether there is empirical evidence of improved patient outcomes with the new procedure or other clinical benefits to patients;
- (4) whether proficiency for the new procedure is volume-sensitive and if the requisite volume would be available;
- (5) whether the new procedure is being performed at other similar hospitals and the experiences of those institutions; and
- (6) whether the Hospital currently has the resources, including space, equipment, personnel, and other support services, to safely and effectively perform the new procedure.

Hospital administration shall review this report and consult with the President of the Medical Staff, the Department Chair and/or Section Chief, and the Credentials Committee (any of which may conduct additional research as may be necessary) and shall make a preliminary determination as to whether the new procedure should be offered to the community.

- (c) If the preliminary determination of the Hospital is favorable, an ad hoc committee appointed by the President of the Medical Staff or the MEC will determine whether the request constitutes a “new procedure” as defined by this Section or if it is an extension of an existing privilege. If it is determined that it does constitute a “new procedure,” the relevant Department Chairs and/or Section Chiefs will then develop threshold credentialing criteria to determine those individuals who are eligible to request the clinical privileges at the Hospital. In developing the criteria, the Department Chairs and/or Section Chiefs may conduct additional research and consult with experts, as necessary, and develop recommendations regarding:
 - (1) the appropriate education, training, and experience necessary to perform the procedure or service;
 - (2) the clinical indications for when the procedure or service is appropriate;

- (3) the extent (time frame and mechanism) of focused monitoring and supervision that should occur if the privileges are granted in order to confirm competence; and
 - (4) the manner in which the procedure would be reviewed as part of the Hospital's ongoing and focused professional practice evaluation activities.
- (d) The Department Chairs and/or Section Chiefs will forward their recommendations to the MEC, which will review the matter and forward its recommendations to the Board for final action.
- (e) At any point in the process, the individual requesting the new procedure or technique may be asked to meet with the ad hoc committee, the Department Chairs (and/or Section Chiefs if involved), the MEC, and/or the Board before any determination is made. The individual may also be asked to provide written responses to specific questions related to his or her request and/or to provide additional information in support of his or her request.
- (f) Once the foregoing steps are completed, specific requests from eligible members who wish to perform the procedure or service may be processed.

4.A.4. Clinical Privileges That Cross Specialty Lines:

- (a) Requests for clinical privileges that previously at the Hospital have been exercised only by individuals from another specialty shall not be processed until the steps outlined in this Section have been completed and a determination has been made regarding the individual's eligibility to request the clinical privileges in question.
- (b) As an initial step in the process, the individual seeking the privilege will prepare and submit a report to the MEC, which will appoint an ad hoc committee to determine the minimum qualifications needed to perform the procedure safely and competently, whether the individual's specialty is performing the privilege at other similar hospitals, and the experiences of those other hospitals in terms of patient care outcomes and quality of care.

- (c) The ad hoc committee shall then conduct additional research and consult with experts, as necessary, including those on the Medical Staff (e.g., Department Chairs, Section Chiefs, individuals on the Medical Staff with special interest and/or expertise) and those outside the Hospital (e.g., other hospitals, residency training programs, specialty societies).

- (d) The ad hoc committee may or may not recommend that individuals from different specialties be permitted to request the privileges at issue. If it does, the Committee may develop recommendations regarding:
 - (1) the appropriate education, training, and experience necessary to perform the clinical privileges in question;

 - (2) the clinical indications for when the procedure is appropriate;

 - (3) the manner of addressing the most common complications that arise which may be outside of the scope of the clinical privileges that have been granted to the requesting individual;

 - (4) the extent (time frame and mechanism) of focused monitoring and supervision that should occur if the privileges are granted in order to confirm competence;

 - (5) the manner in which the procedure would be reviewed as part of the Hospital's ongoing and focused professional practice evaluation activities (which may include assessment of both long-term and short-term outcomes for all relevant specialties); and

 - (6) the impact, if any, on emergency call responsibilities.

- (e) The ad hoc committee shall forward its recommendations to the MEC, which shall review the matter and forward its recommendations to the Board for final action.

- (f) At any point in the process, the individual making the request for clinical privileges that cross specialty lines may be asked to meet with the ad hoc committee, the Department

Chairs (and/or Section Chiefs if involved), the MEC, and/or the Board before any determination is made. The individual may also be asked to provide written responses to specific questions related to his or her request and/or to provide additional information in support of his or her request.

- (g) Once the foregoing steps are completed, specific requests from members who wish to exercise the privileges in question may be processed.

4.A.5. Physicians in Training:

- (a) Physicians in residency training shall not hold appointments to the Medical Staff and shall not be granted clinical privileges. The program director, clinical faculty, and/or attending staff member shall be responsible for the direction and supervision of the on-site and/or day-to-day patient care activities of each trainee, who shall be permitted to perform only those clinical functions set out in curriculum requirements, affiliation agreements, and/or training protocols approved by the Hospital and the MEC or their designee(s). The applicable program director shall be responsible for verifying and evaluating the qualifications of each physician in training.
- (b) A physician in training at the fellowship level may request clinical privileges in an area for which he or she has already completed residency training if he or she can demonstrate that all necessary eligibility criteria as set forth in this Policy have been met. Requests for privileges shall be reviewed in accordance with the initial credentialing process outlined in this Policy and, if granted, shall be subject to all relevant oversight provisions, including ongoing and focused professional practice evaluation. Physicians in training at the fellowship level may only be granted clinical privileges in those areas for which they can demonstrate current clinical competence.

4.A.6. Telemedicine Privileges:

- (a) A qualified individual may be granted telemedicine privileges regardless of whether the individual is appointed to the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff.
- (b) Requests for initial or renewed telemedicine privileges shall be processed through one of the following options, as determined by the CEO (or designee) in consultation with the President of the Medical Staff:

- (1) A request for telemedicine privileges may be processed through the same process used for all other applications set forth in this Policy. In such case, the individual must satisfy all qualifications and requirements set forth in this Policy, except those relating to geographic location, coverage arrangements, and emergency call responsibilities.

- (2) If the individual requesting telemedicine privileges is practicing at a distant hospital that participates in Medicare or a telemedicine entity (as that term is defined by Medicare), a request for telemedicine privileges may be processed using an abbreviated process that relies on the credentialing and privileging decisions made by the distant hospital or telemedicine entity. In such cases, the Hospital must ensure, through a written agreement, that the distant hospital or telemedicine entity will comply with all applicable Medicare regulations and accreditation standards. The distant hospital or telemedicine entity must provide:
 - (i) confirmation that the practitioner is licensed in New Jersey;

 - (ii) a current list of privileges granted to the practitioner;

 - (iii) information indicating that the applicant has actively exercised the relevant privileges during the previous 12 months and has done so in a competent manner;

 - (iv) a signed attestation that the applicant satisfies all of the distant hospital or telemedicine entity's qualifications for the clinical privileges granted;

 - (v) a signed attestation that all information provided by the distant hospital or telemedicine entity is complete, accurate, and up-to-date; and

 - (vi) any other attestations or information required by the agreement or requested by the Hospital.

This information shall be provided to the MEC for review and recommendation to the Board for final action. Notwithstanding the process set forth in this subsection, the Hospital may determine that an applicant for telemedicine privileges is ineligible for appointment or clinical privileges if the applicant fails to satisfy the threshold eligibility criteria set forth in this Policy.

- (c) Telemedicine privileges, if granted, shall be for a period of not more than two years.
- (d) Individuals granted telemedicine privileges shall be subject to the Hospital's peer review activities. The results of the peer review activities, including any adverse events and complaints filed about the practitioner providing telemedicine services from patients, other practitioners or staff, will be shared with the hospital or entity providing telemedicine services.
- (e) Telemedicine privileges granted in conjunction with a contractual agreement shall be incident to and coterminous with the agreement.

4.B. TEMPORARY CLINICAL PRIVILEGES

4.B.1. Eligibility to Request Temporary Clinical Privileges:

- (a) Applicants. Temporary privileges for an applicant for initial appointment may be granted by the CEO (or designee) under the following conditions:
 - (1) the applicant has submitted a complete application, along with any application fee;
 - (2) the verification process is complete, including verification of current licensure, relevant training or experience, current competence, ability to exercise the privileges requested, and current professional liability coverage; compliance with privileges criteria; and consideration of information from the National Practitioner Data Bank, from a criminal background check, and from OIG queries;

- (3) the applicant demonstrates that (i) there are no current or previously successful challenges to his or her licensure or registration, and (ii) he or she has not been subject to involuntary termination of Medical Staff membership, permission to practice, or involuntary limitation, reduction, denial, or loss of clinical privileges, at another health care facility;
 - (4) the application is pending review by the MEC and the Board, following a favorable recommendation by the Chair of the Credentials Committee, President of the Medical Staff, Department Chair, and the Building Medical Director; and
 - (5) temporary privileges for an applicant will be granted for a maximum period of 120 consecutive days.
- (b) Locum Tenens. The CEO (or designee) may grant temporary privileges to an individual serving as a locum tenens for a member of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff who is on vacation, attending an educational seminar, or ill, and/or otherwise needs coverage assistance for a period of time, under the following conditions:
- (1) the applicant has submitted an appropriate application, along with any application fee;
 - (2) the verification process is complete, including verification of current licensure, current competence (verification of good standing in hospitals where the individual practiced for at least the previous year), ability to exercise the privileges requested, and current professional liability coverage; compliance with privileges criteria; and consideration of information from the National Practitioner Data Bank, and from OIG queries;
 - (3) the applicant demonstrates that (i) there are no current or previously successful challenges to his or her licensure or registration, and (ii) he or she has not been subject to involuntary termination of Medical Staff membership, permission to practice, or involuntary limitation, reduction, denial, or loss of clinical privileges, at another health care facility;

- (4) the applicant has received a favorable recommendation from the Chair of the Credentials Committee, President of the Medical Staff, Department Chair, and the Building Medical Director;
 - (5) the applicant will be subject to any focused professional practice requirements established by the Hospital; and
 - (6) the individual may exercise locum tenens privileges for a maximum of 360 days, consecutive or not, anytime during the five-year period following the date they are first granted.
- (c) Visiting. Temporary privileges may also be granted in other limited situations by the CEO (or designee) when there is an important patient care, treatment, or service need. Specifically, temporary privileges may be granted for situations such as the following:
- (1) the care of a specific patient;
 - (2) when a proctoring or consulting practitioner is needed, but is otherwise unavailable; or
 - (3) when necessary to prevent a lack or lapse of services in a needed specialty area.

The following factors will be considered and/or verified prior to the granting of temporary privileges in these situations:

- (1) the applicant has received a favorable recommendation of the Chair of the Credentials Committee, President of the Medical Staff, Department Chair, and the Building Medical Director; and
- (2) verification of current licensure, relevant training or experience, current competence (i.e., verification of good standing in the individual's most recent hospital affiliation), current professional liability coverage acceptable to the Hospital, and results of a query to the National Practitioner Data Bank, and from OIG queries.

The grant of clinical privileges in these situations will not exceed 90 days. The verifications for such grants of privileges shall generally be accomplished in advance; however, in an emergency situation, where life-threatening circumstances exist, the verifications listed above may be completed immediately after the grant of privileges. In exceptional situations, this period of time may be extended in the discretion of the CEO (or designee) and the President of the Medical Staff.

- (d) Automatic Expiration. All grants of temporary privileges shall automatically expire upon the date specified at the time of initial granting unless further affirmative action is taken by the relevant Department Chair and/or Section Chief, the Chair of the Credentials Committee, the President of the Medical Staff, and the CEO (or designee) with approval of the Board to renew such temporary privileges.
- (e) Compliance with Bylaws and Policies. Prior to any temporary privileges being granted, the individual must agree in writing to be bound by the bylaws, rules and regulations, policies, procedures, and protocols of the Medical Staff and the Hospital.
- (f) FPPE. Individuals who are granted temporary privileges will be subject to the Hospital policy regarding focused professional practice evaluation.

4.B.2. Supervision Requirements:

Special requirements of supervision and reporting may be imposed on any individual granted temporary clinical privileges.

4.B.3. Withdrawal of Temporary Clinical Privileges:

- (a) The CEO (or designee) may withdraw temporary admitting privileges at any time, after consulting with the President of the Medical Staff, the relevant Department Chair and/or Section Chief, or an Administrative Physician Leader. Clinical privileges shall then expire as soon as patients have been discharged or alternate care has been arranged.
- (b) If the care or safety of patients might be endangered by continued treatment by the individual granted temporary privileges, the CEO (or designee), the relevant Department

Chair and/or Section Chief, the President of the Medical Staff, or an Administrative Physician Leader may immediately withdraw all temporary privileges. The Department Chair and/or Section Chief or the President of the Medical Staff shall assign to another member of the Medical Staff responsibility for the care of such individual's patients until they are discharged or an appropriate transfer arranged. Whenever possible, consideration shall be given to the wishes of the patient in the selection of a substitute practitioner.

4.C. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- (1) For the purpose of this section, an "emergency" is defined as a condition which could result in serious or permanent harm to a patient(s) and in which any delay in administering treatment would add to that harm.
- (2) In an emergency situation, a member of the Medical Staff may administer treatment to the extent permitted by his or her license, regardless of department status or specific grant of clinical privileges.
- (3) When the emergency situation no longer exists, the patient shall be assigned by the Department Chair and/or Section Chief or the President of the Medical Staff to a member with appropriate clinical privileges, considering the wishes of the patient.

4.D. DISASTER PRIVILEGES

- (1) When the disaster plan has been implemented and the immediate needs of patients in the facility cannot be met, the CEO (or designee), an Administrative Physician Leader, or the President of the Medical Staff may use a modified credentialing process to grant disaster privileges to eligible volunteer licensed independent practitioners ("volunteers"). Safeguards must be in place to verify that volunteers are competent to provide safe and adequate care.
- (2) Disaster privileges are granted on a case-by-case basis after verification of identity and licensure.

- (a) A volunteer's identity may be verified through a valid government-issued photo identification (i.e., driver's license or passport).
 - (b) A volunteer's license may be verified in any of the following ways: (i) current Hospital picture ID card that clearly identifies the individual's professional designation; (ii) current license to practice; (iii) primary source verification of the license; (iv) identification indicating that the individual has been granted authority to render patient care in disaster circumstances or is a member of a Disaster Medical Assistance Team, the Medical Reserve Corps, the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals, or other recognized state or federal organizations or groups; or (v) identification by a current Hospital employee or Medical Staff member who possesses personal knowledge regarding the individual's ability to act as a volunteer during a disaster.
- (3) Primary source verification of a volunteer's license will begin as soon as the immediate situation is under control and must be completed within 72 hours from the time the volunteer begins to provide service at the Hospital.
 - (4) In extraordinary circumstances when primary source verification cannot be completed within 72 hours, it should be completed as soon as possible. In these situations, there must be documentation of the following: (a) the reason primary source verification could not be performed in the required time frame; (b) evidence of the volunteer's demonstrated ability to continue to provide adequate care; and (c) an attempt to obtain primary source verification as soon as possible. If a volunteer has not provided care, then primary source verification is not required.
 - (5) The Medical Staff will oversee the care provided by volunteer licensed independent practitioners. This oversight shall be conducted through direct observation, mentoring, clinical record review, or other appropriate mechanism developed by the Medical Staff and Hospital.

4.E. ONGOING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EVALUATION ("OPPE")

4.E.1. General:

- (a) The purpose of Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluation (“OPPE”) is to establish an ongoing evaluation to confirm the competence and professional performance of each practitioner using an efficient, evidence-based process.
- (b) OPPE will occur for each privileged practitioner. Each department shall define the appropriate evaluation method to determine what constitutes competency and professional performance.
- (c) Individuals requesting membership but who will not exercise clinical privileges are not required to undergo OPPE.

4.E.2. Oversight/Responsibilities:

- (a) The Department Chair functions to:
 - (1) define a practitioner’s OPPE;
 - (2) evaluate OPPE upon completion; and
 - (3) communicate his or her findings to the Credentials Committee.
- (b) The Credentials Committee is charged with the responsibility of monitoring OPPE completion. The Committee accomplishes this oversight by submitting regular reports related to the progress of each practitioner, who is required to undergo OPPE, to the MEC and the Board.

4.E.3. Method:

OPPE may be performed using a retrospective approach as determined by the Department Chair.

4.E.4. OPPE Data Cycle:

Individual practitioner data will be reviewed by the Department Chair twice annually. Upon review, the Department Chair will make one of the following recommendations prior to or at the time of reappointment:

- (a) to maintain existing privileges;
- (b) to revise existing privileges;
- (c) to revoke an existing privilege; or
- (d) to move the practitioner to FPPE.

4.E.5. OPPE for Remediation:

- (a) When a question arises, regarding a currently privileged practitioner's professional performance that may affect the provision of safe and high-quality patient care, the practitioner may be moved from OPPE to FPPE at the discretion of the Department Chair.
- (b) The following are examples that may require moving from OPPE to FPPE:
 - (1) Sentinel Events – as defined by the Joint Commission.
 - (2) Near Misses – any process variation which did not affect the outcome, but for which a recurrence carries a significant chance of a serious adverse outcome.
 - (3) Serious Events – an event, occurrence or situation involving the clinical care of a patient that results in death or compromises patient safety or results in an unanticipated injury requiring the delivery of additional health care services.
 - (4) Unusual pattern of behavior or pattern of care.

- (5) Professional practice that impacts on the quality of care and patient safety.

 - (6) Other complaints/issues that may arise that are referred by the President of the Medical Staff, Department Chair, or VPMA.
- (c) The decision to assign a period of performance monitoring to further assess current competence will be based on the evaluation of a practitioner's current clinical competence, practice behavior and ability to perform the requested privileges that are at issue. Other existing privileges in good standing should not be affected by this decision. The terms, methods and duration of the evaluation period shall be determined by the Department Chair.

ARTICLE 5

PROCEDURE FOR REAPPOINTMENT

5.A. GENERAL

All terms, conditions, requirements, and procedures relating to initial appointment shall apply to continued appointment and clinical privileges and to reappointment.

5.B. ELIGIBILITY FOR REAPPOINTMENT

To be eligible to apply for reappointment and renewal of clinical privileges, an individual must have, during the previous appointment term:

- (1) no delinquent medical records at time of reappointment;
- (2) completed all continuing medical education requirements;
- (3) satisfied all Medical Staff responsibilities, including payment of dues, fines, and assessments;
- (4) continued to meet all qualifications and criteria for appointment and the clinical privileges requested, including those set forth in Section 2.A.1 of this Policy;
- (5) if applying for clinical privileges, had sufficient patient contacts to enable the assessment of current clinical judgment and competence for the privileges requested. Any individual seeking reappointment who has minimal activity at the Hospital must submit such information as may be requested (such as a copy of his or her confidential quality profile from his or her primary hospital, clinical information from the individual's private office practice, and/or a quality profile from a managed care organization or insurer), before the application shall be considered complete and processed further; and

- (6) paid the reappointment processing fee, if any.

5.C. FACTORS FOR EVALUATION

In considering an individual's application for reappointment, the factors listed in Section 2.A.3 of this Policy will be considered. Additionally, the following factors may be evaluated as part of the reappointment process:

- (1) compliance with the Bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies of the Medical Staff and the Hospital;
- (2) participation in Medical Staff duties, including committee assignments, emergency call, consultation requests, quality of medical record documentation, cooperation with case management, participation in quality improvement, utilization activities, and professional practice evaluation activities, and such other reasonable duties and responsibilities as assigned;
- (3) the results of the Hospital's performance improvement and professional practice evaluation activities, taking into consideration practitioner-specific information compared to aggregate information concerning other individuals in the same or similar specialty (provided that, other practitioners will not be identified);
- (4) any focused professional practice evaluations;
- (5) verified complaints received from patients, families, and/or staff; and
- (6) other reasonable indicators of continuing qualifications.

5.D. REAPPOINTMENT APPLICATION

- (1) A completed application for reappointment must be returned to Medical Staff Services no later than four months prior to the expiration of the member's current term.

- (2) Failure to return a complete application within four months prior to the expiration of the member's current term shall result in the assessment of a reappointment late fee, which must be paid prior to the application being processed. In addition, failure to submit a complete application at least four months prior to the expiration of the member's current term will result in the automatic resignation from the Medical Staff.
- (3) Reappointment shall be for a period of not more than two years.
- (4) The application shall be reviewed by Medical Staff Services to determine that all questions have been answered and that the individual satisfies all threshold eligibility criteria for reappointment and for the clinical privileges requested.
- (5) Medical Staff Services shall oversee the process of gathering and verifying relevant information and shall also be responsible for confirming that all relevant information has been received.

5.E. PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR REAPPOINTMENT

- (1) Medical Staff Services shall forward the application to the relevant Department Chair and/or Section Chief and the application for reappointment shall be processed in a manner consistent with applications for initial appointment.
- (2) Additional information may be requested from the applicant if any questions or concerns are raised with the application or if new privileges are requested.

5.F. REAPPOINTMENT AFTER AGE 70

- (1) Any individual who desires to exercise clinical privileges after the age of 70 must provide a report from a physician or organization acceptable to the Medical Staff leadership stating that the individual is able to perform the clinical privileges requested. The physician or organization providing the report must be independent and impartial (i.e., cannot be a family member, partner, or other individual with a relationship that creates a conflict of interest or bias, as determined by the Medical Staff leadership).

- (2) Prior to submitting an application for reappointment, the individual must have completed a period of focused professional practice evaluation, as determined by the relevant department/section. The Department Chair and/or Section Chief will assign someone to evaluate the individual's care and prepare a report on the assigned evaluation. The report must address whether the individual is able to safely and competently care for patients.
- (3) The Department Chair and/or Section Chief will review the information in the report and make a recommendation in furtherance of quality health care. If the Department Chair and/or Section Chief have any concerns, they may meet with the individual and discuss the steps that can be taken to address the concerns, including, but not limited to, voluntary restructuring of privileges, further monitoring, or additional focused review.
- (4) The Department Chair and/or Section Chief may require the individual to obtain a physical and/or mental examination by a physician acceptable to them and require that the results of the examination be made available for their consideration.
- (5) The Department Chair and/or Section Chief may seek the assistance of the Health and Well Being Committee to review any information received and to make a recommendation about the individual's ability to safely and competently practice.

5.G. CONDITIONAL REAPPOINTMENTS

- (1) Recommendations for reappointment and renewed privileges may be contingent upon an individual's compliance with certain specific conditions that have been recommended. These conditions may relate to behavior (e.g., personal code of conduct) or to clinical issues (e.g., general consultation requirements, appropriate documentation requirements, including timely completion of medical records, proctoring, completion of CME requirements). Unless the conditions involve the matters set forth in Section 7.A.1(a) of this Policy, such conditions do not entitle an individual to request the procedural rights set forth in Article 7 of this Policy.
- (2) Reappointments may be recommended for periods of less than two years in order to permit closer monitoring of an individual's compliance with any conditions that have been recommended. A recommendation for reappointment for a period of less than

two years does not, in and of itself, entitle an individual to the procedural rights set forth in Article 7.

- (3) In addition, in the event the applicant for reappointment is the subject of an unresolved professional practice evaluation concern, a formal investigation, or a hearing at the time reappointment is being considered, a conditional reappointment for a period of less than two years may be granted pending the completion of that process.

5.H. POTENTIAL ADVERSE RECOMMENDATION

- (1) If the Credentials Committee or MEC is considering a recommendation to deny reappointment or to reduce clinical privileges, the committee chair will notify the member of the possible recommendation and invite the member to meet prior to any final recommendation being made.
- (2) Prior to this meeting, the member will be notified of the general nature of the information supporting the recommendation contemplated.
- (3) At the meeting, the member will be invited to discuss, explain, or refute this information. A summary of the interview will be made and included with the Credentials Committee's and/or MEC's recommendation.
- (4) This meeting is not a hearing, and none of the procedural rules for hearings will apply. The member will not have the right to be accompanied by legal counsel at this meeting and no recording (audio or video) of the meeting shall be permitted or made.

5.I. TIME PERIODS FOR PROCESSING

Once a reappointment application is deemed complete and verified, it is expected to be processed within 120 business days, unless it becomes incomplete. This time period is intended to be a guideline only and shall not create any right for the applicant to have the reappointment application processed within this precise time period.

ARTICLE 6

QUESTIONS INVOLVING PRACTITIONERS

6.A. COLLEGIAL EFFORTS AND PROGRESSIVE STEPS

- (1) This Policy encourages the use of collegial efforts and progressive steps by Medical Staff Leaders and Hospital administration to address questions relating to an individual's clinical practice and/or professional conduct. The goal of these efforts is to arrive at voluntary, responsive actions by the individual to resolve questions that have been raised.

- (2) Collegial efforts and progressive steps include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) informal mentoring, coaching, or counseling by a Medical Staff Leader (e.g., advising an individual of policies regarding appropriate behavior, communication issues, emergency call obligations, or the timely and adequate completion of medical records);

 - (b) sharing comparative data, including any variations from clinical practice or evidence-based protocols or guidelines, in order to assist the individual with conforming his or her practice to appropriate norms;

 - (c) addressing minor performance issues through an Informational Letter;

 - (d) sending an Educational Letter that describes opportunities for improvement and provides guidance and suggestions;

 - (e) facilitating a formal Collegial Intervention (i.e., a planned, face-to-face meeting between an individual and one or more Medical Staff Leaders) in order to directly discuss a matter and the steps needed to be taken to resolve it; and

- (f) developing a Performance Improvement Plan/FPPE, which may include a wide variety of tools and techniques that can result in a constructive and successful resolution of the concern.

- (3) All of these efforts are fundamental and integral components of the Hospital's professional practice evaluation activities, and are confidential and protected in accordance with state law.

- (4) Copies of any formal documentation that is prepared by a Medical Staff Leader regarding such collegial efforts, including letters that follow a formal Collegial Intervention, will be included in an individual's confidential file. The individual shall have an opportunity to review any such documentation and respond in writing. The response shall be maintained in that individual's file along with the original documentation.

- (5) Collegial efforts and progressive steps are encouraged, but are not mandatory, and shall be within the discretion of the appropriate Medical Staff Leaders and Hospital administration. When a question arises, the Medical Staff and/or Hospital Leaders may:
 - (a) address it pursuant to the collegial efforts and progressive steps provisions of this Section;
 - (b) refer the matter for review in accordance with another relevant Medical Staff Policy (e.g., the relevant Medical Staff policy on peer review, professionalism or health); or
 - (c) refer it to the MEC for its review and consideration in accordance with Section 6.D of this Article.

- (6) Should any recommendation be made or an action taken that entitles an individual to a hearing in accordance with this Policy, the individual is entitled to be accompanied by legal counsel at that hearing. However, individuals do not have the right to be accompanied by counsel when the Medical Staff Leaders and Hospital administration are engaged in collegial efforts or other progressive steps. These efforts are intended to resolve issues in a constructive manner and do not involve the formal hearing process.

In addition, there shall be no recording (audio or video) or transcript made of any meetings that involve collegial efforts or progressive steps activities.

6.B. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Professional practice evaluation activities shall be conducted in accordance with the relevant policy (e.g., the relevant Medical Staff policy on peer review, professionalism or health). Matters that are not satisfactorily resolved through collegial efforts or through one of these policies shall be referred to the MEC for its review in accordance with Section 6.D below. Such interventions and evaluations, however, are not mandatory prerequisites to MEC review.

6.C. PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSION OR RESTRICTION OF CLINICAL PRIVILEGES

6.C.1. Grounds for Precautionary Suspension or Restriction/Requests to Voluntarily Refrain:

- (a) Whenever, in their sole discretion, failure to take such action may result in imminent danger to the health and/or safety of any individual, the Department Chair, President of the Medical Staff, Chief Clinical Officer, the VPMA, or the MEC shall each have the authority to request that the individual agree to voluntarily refrain from exercising privileges pending further review of the circumstances. If the individual is unwilling to voluntarily refrain from practicing pending further review, any or all of the individual's clinical privileges may be suspended or restricted as a precaution, which shall be reviewed in accordance with Section 6.C.2 of this Policy. See **Appendix A** for a checklist supporting this process.
- (b) The above actions can be taken at any time, including, but not limited to, immediately after the occurrence of an event that causes concern, following a pattern of occurrences that raises concern, or following a recommendation of the MEC that would entitle the individual to request a hearing.
- (c) Precautionary suspension or restriction, or an agreement to refrain, is an interim step in the professional review activity, but it is not a complete professional review action in and of itself. It shall not imply any final finding of responsibility for the situation that caused the suspension, restriction, or agreement.

- (d) These actions shall become effective immediately, shall promptly be reported to the CEO (or designee), the Administrative Physician Leaders, and the President of the Medical Staff, and shall remain in effect unless the action is modified by the CEO (or designee) or MEC.
- (e) The individual in question shall be provided a letter via Special Notice that memorializes the individual's agreement to voluntarily refrain from practicing or the imposition of a precautionary suspension and terms related to the same. The correspondence shall also contain a brief written description of the reason(s) for the action, including the names and medical record numbers of the patient(s) involved (if any), within three business days of the action.

6.C.2. Review Process:

- (a) The MEC shall review the matter resulting in an individual's agreement to voluntarily refrain from exercising clinical privileges or a precautionary suspension or restriction within a reasonable time under the circumstances, not to exceed 14 days. Prior to, or as part of, this review, the individual shall be given an opportunity to meet with the MEC. The individual may propose ways other than precautionary suspension or restriction to protect patients and/or employees, depending on the circumstances. Neither the MEC nor the individual shall be accompanied by legal counsel at this meeting, and no recording (audio or video) or transcript of the meeting shall be permitted or made; however, minutes of the meeting shall be prepared.
- (b) After considering the matters resulting in an individual's agreement to voluntarily refrain or the suspension or restriction, and the individual's response, if any, the MEC shall determine the appropriate next steps, which may include, but not be limited to, commencing a focused review, referring the matter for review pursuant to another policy, initiate a formal investigation, or to take some other action that is deemed appropriate under the circumstances. The MEC shall also determine whether the agreement to voluntarily refrain from practicing or suspension/restriction should be continued throughout any further review process.
- (c) There is no right to a hearing based on an individual's agreement to voluntarily refrain from practicing in accordance with this Section or the imposition of a precautionary suspension or restriction.

6.C.3. Care of Patients:

- (a) Immediately upon an individual's agreement to voluntarily refrain from practicing or the imposition of a precautionary suspension or restriction, the Department Chair, Section Chief, and/or the President of the Medical Staff shall assign to another individual with appropriate clinical privileges responsibility for care of the individual's hospitalized patients, or to otherwise aid in implementing the precautionary suspension, restriction, or agreement to refrain from practicing, as appropriate. The assignment shall be effective until the patients are discharged. The wishes of the patient shall be considered in the selection of a covering practitioner.

- (b) All members of the Medical Staff have a duty to cooperate with the President of the Medical Staff, the Department Chair, the Section Chief, the MEC, the Administrative Physician Leaders, and the CEO (or designee) in enforcing precautionary suspensions or restrictions, or agreements to voluntarily refrain from practicing.

6.D. INVESTIGATIONS

6.D.1. Initial Review:

- (a) Where collegial efforts or actions under one or more of the policies referenced in this Article have not resolved an issue, and/or when there is a single instance of such severity that in the discretion of Medical Staff Leaders it requires further review, regarding:
 - (1) the clinical competence or clinical practice of any member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff, including the care, treatment or management of a patient or patients;

 - (2) the safety or proper care being provided to patients;

 - (3) the known or suspected violation by any member of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff of applicable ethical standards or the Bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies of the Hospital or the Medical Staff; and/or

- (4) conduct by any member of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff that is considered lower than the standards of the Hospital or disruptive to the orderly operation of the Hospital or its Medical Staff, including the inability of the member to work harmoniously with others,

the matter may be referred to the President of the Medical Staff, the relevant Department Chair and/or Section Chief, an Administrative Physician Leader, or the CEO (or designee).

- (b) In addition, if the Board becomes aware of information that raises concerns about any member of the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff, the matter shall be referred to the President of the Medical Staff, the chair of the department, the chair of a standing committee, the Administrative Physician Leaders, or the CEO (or designee) for review and appropriate action in accordance with this Policy.
- (c) The person to whom the matter is referred shall conduct or arrange for an inquiry to determine whether the question raised has sufficient credibility to warrant further review and, if so, shall forward it in writing to the MEC.
- (d) No action taken pursuant to this Section shall constitute an investigation.

6.D.2. Initiation of Investigation:

- (a) When a question involving clinical competence or professional conduct is referred to, or raised by, the MEC, the MEC shall review the matter and determine whether to conduct a formal investigation, to direct the matter to be handled pursuant to another policy (e.g., the relevant Medical Staff policy on peer review, professionalism or health), or to proceed in another manner that the MEC believes is appropriate. Prior to making its determination, the MEC may discuss the matter with the individual involved. An investigation shall begin only after a formal determination by the MEC to do so. The MEC's determination shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting where the determination is made. See **Appendix B** for a checklist supporting this process.
- (b) The MEC shall inform the individual that an investigation has begun. The notification shall include:

- (1) the date on which the investigation was commenced;
- (2) the committee that will be conducting the investigation, if already identified;
- (3) a statement that the individual will be given the opportunity to meet with the committee conducting the investigation before the investigation concludes; and
- (4) a copy of Section 6.D.3 of this Policy, which outlines the process for investigations.

This notification may be delayed if, in the MEC's judgment, informing the individual immediately would compromise the investigation or disrupt the operation of the Hospital or Medical Staff.

6.D.3. Investigative Procedure:

(a) Selection of Investigating Committee.

Once a determination has been made to begin an investigation, the MEC shall either investigate the matter itself or appoint an ad hoc committee to conduct the investigation, keeping in mind the conflict of interest guidelines outlined in Article 8. Any ad hoc committee may include individuals not on the Medical Staff. Whenever the questions raised concern the clinical competence of the individual under review, the ad hoc committee shall include a peer of the individual (e.g., physician, dentist, podiatrist, or advanced practice provider).

(b) Investigating Committee's Review Process.

- (1) The committee conducting the investigation ("investigating committee") shall have the authority to review relevant documents and interview individuals. A summary of each interview will be prepared and the interviewee will be asked to review, revise, and sign his or her summary, which will then be included as an attachment to the investigating committee's report.

- (2) The investigating committee shall also have available to it the full resources of the Medical Staff and the Hospital, including the authority to arrange for an external review, if needed. An external review may be used whenever the Hospital and investigating committee determine that:
- (i) there are ambiguous or conflicting findings by internal reviewers;
 - (ii) the clinical expertise needed to conduct the review is not available on the Medical Staff or the Advanced Practice Provider Staff;
 - (iii) an external review is advisable to prevent allegations of bias, even if unfounded; or
 - (iv) the thoroughness and objectivity of the investigation would be aided by such an external review.

If a decision is made to obtain an external review, the individual under investigation shall be notified of that decision and the nature of the external review. Upon completion of the external review, the individual shall be provided a copy of the reviewer's report.

- (3) The investigating committee may require a physical, mental, and/or behavioral examination of the individual by health care professional(s) acceptable to it. The individual being investigated shall execute a release (in a form approved or provided by the investigating committee) allowing (i) the investigating committee (or its representative) to discuss with the health care professional(s) conducting the examination the reasons for the examination; and (ii) the health care professional(s) conducting the examination to discuss and provide documentation of the results of such examination directly to the investigating committee. The cost of such health examination shall be borne by the individual.

(c) Meeting with the Investigating Committee.

- (1) The individual under investigation shall have an opportunity to meet with the investigating committee before it makes its report. Prior to this meeting, the individual shall be informed of the general questions being investigated. The investigating committee may also ask the individual to provide written responses to specific questions related to the investigation and/or a written explanation of his or her perspective on the events that led to the investigation for review by the investigating committee prior to the meeting.
- (2) This meeting is not a hearing, and none of the procedural rules for hearings shall apply. No recording (audio or video) or transcript of the meeting shall be permitted or made. Neither the individual being investigated nor the investigating committee will be accompanied by legal counsel at this meeting.
- (3) At the meeting, the individual shall be invited to discuss, explain, or refute the questions that gave rise to the investigation or that have been identified by the investigating committee during its review. A summary of the interview shall be prepared by the investigating committee and included with its report. The interview summary will be shared with the individual prior to the investigating committee finalizing its report, so that he or she may review it and recommend suggested changes. A suggested change should only be accepted if the investigating committee believes it more accurately reflects what occurred at the meeting.

(d) Time Frames for Investigation.

The investigating committee shall make a reasonable effort to complete the investigation and issue its report within 30 days of the commencement of the investigation, provided that an external review is not necessary. When an external review is necessary, the investigating committee shall make a reasonable effort to complete the investigation and issue its report within 30 days of receiving the results of the external review. These time frames are intended to serve as guidelines and, as such, shall not be deemed to create any right for an individual to have an investigation completed within such time periods.

(e) Investigating Committee's Report.

- (1) At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigating committee shall prepare a report of the investigation. The report should include a summary of the

review process (e.g., a list of documents that were reviewed, any individuals who were interviewed, etc.), specific findings and conclusions regarding each concern that was under review, and the investigating committee's recommendations.

(2) In making its recommendations, the investigating committee shall strive to achieve a consensus as to what is in the best interests of patient care and the smooth operation of the Hospital, while balancing fairness to the individual, recognizing that fairness does not require that the individual agree with the recommendation. Specifically, the committee may consider:

- (i) relevant literature and clinical practice guidelines, as appropriate;
- (ii) all of the opinions and views that were expressed throughout the review, including report(s) from any external review(s);
- (iii) any information or explanations provided by the individual under review; and
- (iv) other information as deemed relevant, reasonable, and necessary by the investigating committee.

6.D.4. Recommendation:

(a) The MEC may accept, modify, or reject any recommendation it receives from an ad hoc investigating committee if one was appointed by the MEC. In either case, at the conclusion of the investigation, the MEC may:

- (1) determine that no action is justified;
- (2) issue a letter of guidance, counsel, warning, or reprimand;
- (3) impose conditions for continued appointment;

- (4) impose a requirement for monitoring, proctoring, or consultation;
 - (5) impose a requirement for additional training or education;
 - (6) recommend reduction of clinical privileges;
 - (7) recommend suspension of clinical privileges for a term;
 - (8) recommend revocation of appointment and/or clinical privileges; or
 - (9) make any other recommendation that it deems necessary or appropriate.
- (b) A recommendation by the MEC that would entitle the individual to request a hearing shall be forwarded to the CEO (or designee), who shall promptly inform the individual by Special Notice. The CEO (or designee) shall hold the recommendation until after the individual has completed or waived a hearing and appeal.
- (c) If the determination of the MEC does not entitle the individual to request a hearing, it shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect unless modified by the Board.
- (d) In the event the Board considers a modification to the recommendation of the MEC that would entitle the individual to request a hearing, the CEO (or designee) shall inform the individual by Special Notice. No final action shall occur until the individual has completed or waived a hearing and appeal.
- (e) When applicable, any recommendations or actions that are the result of an investigation or hearing and appeal shall be monitored by Medical Staff Leaders on an ongoing basis through the Hospital's performance improvement activities or pursuant to the applicable policies regarding conduct, as appropriate.

6.E. AUTOMATIC RELINQUISHMENT

6.E.1. General:

- (a) Any of the occurrences described in this Section will constitute grounds for the automatic relinquishment of an individual's appointment and clinical privileges. An automatic relinquishment is considered an administrative action that happens by operation of this Policy and, as such, does not trigger an obligation on the part of the Hospital to file a report with the National Practitioner Data Bank and will take effect without hearing or appeal.

- (b) Except as otherwise provided below, an automatic relinquishment of appointment and clinical privileges will be effective immediately upon actual or Special Notice to the individual. Such notice will be provided after confirmation of the event(s) that led to the automatic relinquishment by the President of the Medical Staff and/or an Administrative Physician Leader. Notice will also be given to the applicable Department Chair and/or Section Chief.

6.E.2. Triggers for Automatic Relinquishment:

- (a) Failure to Complete Medical Records.
 - (1) Failure to complete medical records, after notification by the Medical Records Department of delinquency, may result in automatic relinquishment of all clinical privileges in accordance with the time frames as set forth in the regulations governing the same.

 - (2) In the event that an automatic relinquishment occurs, notification of the relinquishment will be provided to Medical Staff Services, the President of the Medical Staff, and the Emergency Department. The affected individual will be prohibited from admitting patients or scheduling any elective cases after the relinquishment takes effect. In addition, the individual will be responsible for rescheduling any scheduled cases and/or transferring the care of any inpatient to another practitioner who has appropriate clinical privileges.

 - (3) Relinquishment shall continue until all delinquent records are completed and reinstatement accomplished in accordance with applicable policies and rules

and regulations. Failure to complete the medical records that caused relinquishment within the time required by applicable policies and rules and regulations shall result in automatic resignation from the Medical Staff. Any individual who resigns his or her appointment and clinical privileges as a result of medical record delinquencies may subsequently apply to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff as an initial applicant, provided that all delinquent medical records have been completed. The individual may not be granted any temporary privileges while the application is being processed until all records are completed.

(4) Justified reasons for delay in completing medical records shall include:

(i) that the individual is on a leave of absence;

(ii) that an individual is waiting for the results of a late report, if the record is otherwise complete except for the discharge summary and the final diagnosis; or

(iii) the individual has dictated reports and is waiting for Hospital personnel to transcribe them.

(b) Action by Government Agency or Insurer and Failure to Satisfy Threshold Eligibility Criteria.

(1) Any action taken by any licensing board, professional liability insurance company, court or government agency regarding any of the matters set forth below, or any failure to satisfy any of the threshold eligibility criteria set forth in this Policy, must be promptly reported by the individual to Medical Staff Services.

(2) An individual's appointment and clinical privileges shall be automatically relinquished, without the right to the procedural rights outlined in this Policy, if an individual fails to satisfy any of the threshold eligibility criteria set forth in Section 2.A.1 of this Policy on a continuous basis (except for board certification requirements, which shall be assessed at time of reappointment). This includes, but is not limited to, the following occurrences:

- (i) Licensure: Revocation, expiration, suspension, the placement of restrictions on an individual's license, or an individual's license being placed on probationary status.
 - (ii) Controlled Substance Authorization: Revocation, expiration, suspension or the placement of restrictions on an individual's DEA or CDS registration.
 - (iii) Insurance Coverage: Termination or lapse of an individual's professional liability insurance coverage, or other action causing the coverage to fall below the minimum required by the Hospital or cease to be in effect, in whole or in part.
 - (iv) Medicare and Medicaid Participation: Debarment, proposed debarment, termination, exclusion, or preclusion by government action from participation in the Medicare/Medicaid or other federal or state health care programs.
 - (v) Criminal Activity: Arrest, charge, indictment, conviction, or a plea of guilty or no contest pertaining to any indictable offense or felony; or to any misdemeanor or disorderly persons offense involving (i) controlled substances; (ii) illegal drugs; (iii) Medicare, Medicaid, or insurance or health care fraud or abuse; (iv) child abuse; (v) elder abuse; or (vi) violence against another. (DUIs will be reviewed in accordance with the Medical Staff's health policy.)
- (3) Automatic relinquishment shall take effect immediately upon written notice to the individual provided via Special Notice, and shall continue until the matter is resolved and the individual is reinstated, if applicable.
- (4) If the underlying matter leading to automatic relinquishment is resolved within 90 days, the individual may request reinstatement. Failure to resolve the matter within 90 days of the date of relinquishment shall result in an automatic resignation from the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff.

(c) Failure to Provide Requested Information.

- (1) Failure to provide information pertaining to an individual's qualifications for continued appointment or clinical privileges, in response to a written request from any Medical Staff Leader, an Administrative Physician Leader, the Credentials Committee, the MEC, or any other committee authorized to request such information, shall result in the automatic relinquishment of the individual's appointment and clinical privileges until the information is provided to the satisfaction of the requesting party.
- (2) If the individual fails to provide the input requested within 30 days of the automatic relinquishment, the individual's Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff membership and clinical privileges will be deemed to have been automatically resigned.

(d) Failure to Complete or Comply with Training, Educational, or Orientation Requirements.

- (1) Failure to complete or comply with training, educational, or orientation requirements that are adopted by the MEC or required by the Board, including, but not limited to, those pertinent to electronic medical records, computerized physician order entry ("CPOE"), the privacy and security of protected health information, infection control, or patient safety, shall result in automatic relinquishment of the individual's appointment and clinical privileges until the individual completes or complies with the applicable training, educational, or orientation requirements.
- (2) If the individual fails to complete or comply with the applicable training, educational, or orientation requirements within 30 days of the automatic relinquishment, the individual's Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff membership and clinical privileges will be deemed to have been automatically resigned.

(e) Failure to Attend Special Meeting.

- (1) Whenever there is a concern regarding the clinical practice or professional conduct involving any individual, a Medical Staff Leader may require the

individual to attend a special meeting with one or more of the Medical Staff Leaders and/or with a standing or ad hoc committee of the Medical Staff.

- (2) No legal counsel shall be present at this meeting, and no recording (audio or video) or transcript shall be permitted or made.
- (3) The notice to the individual regarding this meeting shall be given by Special Notice at least three days prior to the meeting and shall inform the individual that attendance at the meeting is mandatory.
- (4) Failure of the individual to attend the meeting shall result in the automatic relinquishment of the individual's appointment and clinical privileges until such time as the individual does attend the special meeting. If the individual does not attend the special meeting within 30 days of the date of relinquishment, it shall result in automatic resignation from the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff.

6.E.3. Request for Reinstatement:

- (a) Requests for reinstatement following the expiration or lapse of a license, controlled substance authorization, and/or insurance coverage will be processed by Medical Staff Services. If any questions or concerns are noted, Medical Staff Services will refer the matter for further review in accordance with (b) below.
- (b) All other requests for reinstatement shall be reviewed by an Administrative Physician Leader and the President of the Medical Staff. If an Administrative Physician Leader and the President of the Medical Staff make a favorable recommendation on reinstatement, the individual may immediately resume clinical practice at the Hospital. This determination shall then be forwarded to the Credentials Committee, MEC, and the Board for ratification. If, however, the Administrative Physician Leader and the President of the Medical Staff have any questions or concerns, those questions shall be noted and the reinstatement request shall be forwarded to the full Credentials Committee, MEC, and Board for review and recommendation.

6.F. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

6.F.1. Initiation:

- (a) Individuals should submit a request for a leave of absence to Medical Staff Services whenever they will be away from their practice at the Hospital for more than 45 days. The request must state the beginning and ending dates of the leave, which shall not exceed one year, and the reasons for the leave. Except in extraordinary circumstances, this request will be submitted at least 30 days prior to the anticipated start of the leave in order to permit adjustment of the call roster and assure adequate coverage of clinical and/or administrative activities.
- (b) Requests related to service in the U.S. military will be automatically granted. All other requests will be reviewed by a designated Administrative Physician Leader. In determining whether to grant such a request, the Administrative Physician Leader shall consult with the President of the Medical Staff and the relevant Department Chair and/or Section Chief. The granting of a leave of absence, or reinstatement, as appropriate, may be conditioned upon the individual's completion of all medical records.
- (c) Except for maternity leaves, members of the Medical Staff and Advanced Practice Provider Staff must report to an Administrative Physician Leader any time they are away from patient care responsibilities at the Hospital for longer than 45 days and the reason for such absence is related to their physical or mental health or otherwise to their ability to care for patients safely and competently. Failure to report such circumstances may trigger an automatic medical leave of absence.

6.F.2. Duties of Member on Leave:

- (a) The obligation to pay dues shall continue during a leave of absence except that an individual granted a leave of absence for U.S. military service shall be exempt from this obligation.
- (b) An individual on an approved leave of absence must complete the medical records of his or her patients prior to commencing the leave. Individuals who take a leave of absence due to emergent circumstances must make arrangements for the completion of medical records as soon as they are able.

- (c) An individual on an approved leave of absence may not exercise any clinical privileges, vote, hold any office, or serve on any committee for the duration of the leave.

6.F.3. Reinstatement:

- (a) Individuals requesting reinstatement shall submit to the designated Administrative Physician Leader a written summary of their professional activities during the leave, evidence demonstrating that they continue to maintain current licensure, DEA or CDS registration, and adequate malpractice coverage, and any other information that may be requested by the Hospital. Requests for reinstatement shall then be reviewed by the Administrative Physician Leader and President of the Medical Staff. If the Administrative Physician Leader and President of the Medical Staff make a favorable recommendation on reinstatement, the individual may immediately resume clinical practice at the Hospital. This determination shall then be forwarded to the Board for ratification. If, however, the Administrative Physician Leader and President of the Medical Staff have any questions or concerns, those questions shall be noted and the reinstatement request shall be forwarded to the full Credentials Committee, MEC, and Board for review and recommendation. If a request for reinstatement is not granted, for reasons related to clinical competence or professional conduct, the individual shall be entitled to request a hearing and appeal.
- (b) If the leave of absence was for health reasons (except for maternity leave), the request for reinstatement must be accompanied by a report from the individual's physician indicating that the individual is physically and/or mentally capable of resuming a hospital practice and safely exercising the clinical privileges requested and the request for reinstatement shall be processed in accordance with the Medical Staff's health policy.
- (c) Absence for longer than 12 months shall result in automatic relinquishment of appointment and clinical privileges unless an extension is granted by the designated Administrative Physician Leader. Extensions shall be considered only in extraordinary cases where the extension of a leave is in the best interest of the Hospital.
- (d) If an individual's current appointment is due to expire during the leave, the individual must apply for reappointment, or appointment and clinical privileges shall lapse at the end of the appointment period.

- (e) Failure to request reinstatement from a leave of absence in a timely manner shall be deemed a voluntary resignation of appointment and clinical privileges.
- (f) Leaves of absence are matters of courtesy, not of right. In the event that it is determined that an individual has not demonstrated good cause for a leave, or where a request for extension is not granted, the determination shall be final, with no recourse to a hearing and appeal.

6.G. ACTION AT ANOTHER VIRTUA HEALTH HOSPITAL

- (1) Each Virtua Health Hospital will share information regarding the implementation or occurrence of any of the following actions with all other Virtua Health Hospitals at which an individual maintains appointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff, clinical privileges, or any other permission to care for patients:
 - (a) **automatic relinquishment or resignation** of appointment or clinical privileges for any reason set forth in this or other Medical Staff policies (except for those relinquishments or resignations that result from incomplete medical records or the failure to provide requested information in a timely manner);
 - (b) **voluntary agreement to modify clinical privileges or to refrain from exercising** some or all clinical privileges for a period of time for reasons related to the individual's clinical competence, conduct or health;
 - (c) participation in a **Performance Improvement Plan/FPPE**;
 - (d) a grant of **conditional membership or privileges** (either at initial appointment or reappointment), or conditional continued membership or clinical privileges; and/or
 - (e) any **denial, suspension, revocation, or termination** of appointment and/or clinical privileges.

(2) Upon receipt of notice that any of the actions set forth in Paragraph (1) have occurred at any Virtua Health Hospital, that action will either:

- (a) automatically and immediately take effect at the Virtua Health Hospital receiving the notice; or
- (b) be cause for the Virtua Health Hospital receiving the notice to determine that the individual no longer satisfies the eligibility criteria set forth in this Policy and has therefore automatically relinquished his or her appointment and privileges.

The automatic effectiveness of any such action, or an automatic relinquishment based on such action, will not entitle the individual to any additional procedural rights (including advance notice, additional peer review, formal investigation, hearing, or appeal) other than what occurred at the Virtua Health Hospital taking the original action.

(3) The Board may waive the automatic effectiveness of an action or an automatic relinquishment at the receiving Virtua Health Hospital based on a recommendation to do so from the MEC at that Hospital. However, the automatic effectiveness or relinquishment will continue until such time as a waiver has been granted and the individual has been notified in writing of such. Waivers are within the discretion of the Board and are final. They will be granted only as follows:

- (a) based on a finding that the granting of a waiver will not affect patient safety, quality of care, or Hospital operations; and
- (b) after a full review of the specific circumstances and any relevant documents (including peer review documents) from the Virtua Health Hospital where the action first occurred. The burden is on the affected individual to provide evidence showing that a waiver is appropriate.

The denial of a waiver pursuant to this Section will not entitle the individual to any procedural rights, including advance notice, additional peer review, formal investigation, hearing, or appeal.

ARTICLE 7

HEARING AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

7.A. INITIATION OF HEARING

7.A.1. Grounds for Hearing:

- (a) An individual is entitled to request a hearing whenever the MEC makes one of the following recommendations:
 - (1) denial of initial appointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff;
 - (2) denial of reappointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff;
 - (3) revocation of appointment to the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff;
 - (4) denial of requested clinical privileges;
 - (5) revocation of clinical privileges;
 - (6) suspension of clinical privileges for more than 30 days (other than precautionary suspension);
 - (7) mandatory concurring consultation requirement (i.e., the consultant must approve the course of treatment in advance); or

- (8) denial of reinstatement from a leave of absence if the reasons relate to clinical competence or professional conduct.
- (b) No other recommendations shall entitle the individual to a hearing.
- (c) If the Board makes any of these determinations without an adverse recommendation by the MEC, an individual would also be entitled to request a hearing. For ease of use, this Article refers to adverse recommendations of the MEC. When a hearing is triggered by an adverse recommendation of the Board, any reference in this Article to the "MEC" shall be interpreted as a reference to the "Board."

7.A.2. Actions Not Grounds for Hearing:

None of the following actions shall constitute grounds for a hearing, and they shall take effect without hearing or appeal, provided that the individual shall be entitled to submit a written explanation to be placed into his or her file:

- (a) determination that an applicant for membership fails to meet the threshold eligibility qualifications or criteria for membership;
- (b) ineligibility to request membership or privileges, or to continue privileges, because a relevant specialty is closed under a Medical Staff development plan or is covered under an exclusive provider agreement;
- (c) failure to process a request for a privilege when the individual does not meet the eligibility criteria to hold the privilege;
- (d) determination that an application is incomplete or untimely;
- (e) determination that an application shall not be processed due to a misstatement or omission;

- (f) change in assigned staff category or a determination that an individual is not eligible for a specific staff category;
- (g) expiration of membership and privileges as a result of failure to submit an application for reappointment within the allowable time period;
- (h) issuance of a letter of guidance, counsel, warning, or reprimand;
- (i) determination that conditions, monitoring, supervision, proctoring, or a general consultation requirement (i.e., the individual must obtain a consult but need not get prior approval for the treatment) is appropriate for an individual;
- (j) determination that a requirement for additional training or continuing education is appropriate for an individual;
- (k) the voluntary acceptance of a Performance Improvement Plan/FPPE;
- (l) any requirement to complete a health assessment, diagnostic testing, a complete physical, mental or behavioral evaluation, or a clinical competency evaluation pursuant to any Bylaws-related document;
- (m) conducting an investigation into any matter or the appointment of an ad hoc investigating committee;
- (n) grant of conditional appointment or reappointment or of an appointment or reappointment period that is less than two years;
- (o) refusal of the Hospital to consider a request for appointment, reappointment, or privileges within five years of a final adverse decision regarding such request;
- (p) precautionary suspension;

- (q) automatic relinquishment of appointment or privileges or automatic resignation;
- (r) denial of a request for leave of absence, for an extension of a leave or for reinstatement from a leave if the reasons do not relate to clinical competence or professional conduct;
- (s) removal from the on-call roster or any other rotational work assignment (e.g., reading panel);
- (t) withdrawal of temporary privileges;
- (u) requirement to appear for a special meeting; and
- (v) termination of any contract with or employment by a Virtua-affiliated group.

7.B. THE HEARING

7.B.1. Notice of Recommendation:

The CEO (or designee) shall promptly give Special Notice of a recommendation which entitles an individual to request a hearing. This notice shall contain:

- (a) a statement of the recommendation and the general reasons for it;
- (b) a statement that the individual has the right to request a hearing on the recommendation within 30 days of receipt of this notice; and
- (c) a copy of this Article.

See **Appendix C** for a checklist supporting this process.

7.B.2. Request for Hearing:

An individual has 30 days following receipt of the notice to request a hearing. The request shall be in writing to the CEO (or designee) designee and shall include the name, address, and telephone number of the individual's counsel, if any. Failure to request a hearing shall constitute waiver of the right to a hearing, and the recommendation shall be transmitted to the Board for final action.

7.B.3. Notice of Hearing and Statement of Reasons:

- (a) The CEO (or designee) shall schedule the hearing and provide, by Special Notice to the individual requesting the hearing, the following:
 - (1) the time, place, and date of the hearing;
 - (2) a proposed list of witnesses who shall give testimony at the hearing and a brief summary of the anticipated testimony;
 - (3) the names of the Hearing Panel members (or Hearing Officer) and Presiding Officer, if known; and
 - (4) a statement of the specific reasons for the recommendation, including a list of patient records (if applicable), and a general description of the information supporting the recommendation. This statement does not bar presentation of additional evidence or information at the hearing, so long as the additional material is relevant to the recommendation or the individual's qualifications and the individual has a sufficient opportunity to review and rebut the additional information.
- (b) The hearing shall begin no sooner than 30 days after the notice of the hearing, unless an earlier hearing date has been specifically agreed to in writing by the parties.

7.B.4. Hearing Panel, Presiding Officer, and Hearing Officer:

(a) Hearing Panel:

The CEO (or designee), after consulting with the President of the Medical Staff, shall appoint a Hearing Panel in accordance with the following guidelines:

- (1) The Hearing Panel shall consist of at least three members, at least one of which must be a physician, and may include any combination of:
 - (i) any member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff, provided the member has not actively participated in the matter at any previous level; and/or
 - (ii) physicians, advanced practice providers, or laypersons not connected with the Hospital (i.e., practitioners not on the Medical Staff, Advanced Practice Provider Staff, or laypersons not affiliated with the Hospital).
- (2) Knowledge of the underlying peer review matter, in and of itself, shall not preclude the individual from serving on the Panel.
- (3) Employment by, or other contractual arrangement with, the Hospital or an affiliate shall not preclude an individual from serving on the Panel.
- (4) The Panel shall not include any individual who is in direct economic competition with the individual requesting the hearing.
- (5) The Panel shall not include any individual who is demonstrated to have an actual bias, prejudice, or conflict of interest that would prevent the individual from fairly and impartially considering the matter.
- (6) In addition, the appointment of the Hearing Panel shall comply with the guidelines set forth in the conflict of interest provisions found in Article 8 of this Policy.

(b) Presiding Officer:

- (1) The CEO (or designee), after consulting with the President of the Medical Staff, shall appoint a Presiding Officer who shall be an attorney. The Presiding Officer may not be, or represent clients who are, in direct competition with the individual who requested the hearing and may not currently represent the Hospital in any legal matters. The Presiding Officer shall not act as an advocate for either side at the hearing.

- (2) The Presiding Officer shall:
 - (i) allow the participants in the hearing to have a reasonable opportunity to be heard and to present evidence, subject to reasonable limits on the number of witnesses and duration of direct and cross-examination;

 - (ii) prohibit conduct or presentation of evidence that is cumulative, excessive, irrelevant or abusive or that causes undue delay;

 - (iii) maintain decorum throughout the hearing;

 - (iv) determine the order of procedure;

 - (v) rule on all matters of procedure and the admissibility of evidence; and

 - (vi) conduct argument by counsel on procedural points within or outside the presence of the Hearing Panel at the Presiding Officer's discretion.

- (3) The Presiding Officer may be advised by legal counsel to the Hospital with regard to the hearing procedure.

- (4) The Presiding Officer may participate in the private deliberations of the Hearing Panel and be a legal advisor to it, but shall not be entitled to vote on its recommendations.

(c) Hearing Officer:

- (1) As an alternative to a Hearing Panel, for matters limited to issues involving professional conduct, the CEO (or designee), after consulting with the President of the Medical Staff, may appoint a Hearing Officer, preferably an attorney, to perform the functions of a Hearing Panel. The Hearing Officer may not be, or represent clients who are, in direct economic competition with the individual requesting the hearing.
- (2) If a Hearing Officer is appointed instead of a Hearing Panel, all references in this Article to the "Hearing Panel" or "Presiding Officer" shall be deemed to refer to the Hearing Officer.

(d) Objections:

Any objection to any member of the Hearing Panel, to the Presiding Officer, or to the Hearing Officer, shall be made in writing, within 10 days of receipt of notice, to the CEO (or designee). A copy of such written objection must be provided to the President of the Medical Staff and must include the basis for the objection. The President of the Medical Staff shall be given a reasonable opportunity to comment. The CEO (or designee) shall rule on the objection and give notice to the parties. The CEO (or designee) may request that the Presiding Officer make a recommendation as to the validity of the objection.

7.B.5. Counsel:

The Presiding Officer, Hearing Officer, and counsel for either party may be an attorney at law who is licensed to practice, in good standing, in any state.

7.C. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES

7.C.1. General Procedures:

- (a) The pre-hearing and hearing processes shall be conducted in an informal manner. Formal rules of evidence or procedure shall not apply.
- (b) Neither party has the right to issue subpoenas or interrogatories or to depose witnesses or other individuals prior to the hearing or to otherwise compel any individual to participate in the hearing or pre-hearing process.
- (c) Neither the individual who has requested the hearing, nor any other person acting on behalf of the individual, may contact Hospital employees, Medical Staff members, or Advanced Practice Providers whose names appear on the MEC's witness list or in documents provided pursuant to this Article concerning the subject matter of the hearing, until the Hospital has been notified and has contacted the individuals about their willingness to be interviewed. The Hospital will advise the individual who has requested the hearing once it has contacted such witnesses and confirmed their willingness to meet. Any such witness may agree or decline to be interviewed by or on behalf of the individual who requested a hearing. If an individual who is on the MEC's witness list agrees to be interviewed pursuant to this provision, counsel for the MEC may be present during the interview.

7.C.2. Time Frames:

The following time frames, unless modified by mutual written agreement of the parties, shall govern the timing of pre-hearing procedures:

- (a) the pre-hearing conference shall be scheduled at least 14 days prior to the hearing;
- (b) the parties shall exchange witness lists and proposed documentary exhibits at least 10 days prior to the pre-hearing conference; and
- (c) any objections to witnesses and/or proposed documentary exhibits must be provided at least five days prior to the pre-hearing conference.

7.C.3. Witness List:

- (a) At least 10 days before the pre-hearing conference, the individual requesting the hearing shall provide a written list of the names of witnesses expected to offer testimony on his or her behalf.
- (b) The witness list shall include a brief summary of the anticipated testimony.
- (c) The witness list of either party may, in the discretion of the Presiding Officer, be amended at any time during the course of the hearing, provided that notice of the change is given to the other party.

7.C.4. Provision of Relevant Information:

- (a) Prior to receiving any confidential documents, the individual requesting the hearing must agree that all documents and information shall be maintained as confidential and shall not be disclosed or used for any purpose outside of the hearing. The individual must also provide a written representation that his or her counsel and any expert(s) have executed Business Associate agreements in connection with any patient Protected Health Information contained in any documents provided.
- (b) Upon receipt of the above agreement and representation, the individual requesting the hearing shall be provided with a copy of the following:
 - (1) copies of, or reasonable access to, all patient medical records referred to in the statement of reasons, at the individual's expense;
 - (2) reports of experts relied upon by the MEC;
 - (3) copies of relevant minutes (with portions regarding other practitioners and unrelated matters deleted); and
 - (4) copies of any other documents relied upon by the MEC.

The provision of this information is not intended to waive any privilege under the state peer review protection statutes.

- (c) The individual shall have no right to discovery beyond the above information. No information shall be provided regarding other practitioners on the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff, as applicable.
- (d) At least 10 days prior to the pre-hearing conference (or as otherwise agreed upon by both sides), each party shall provide the other party with its proposed exhibits. All objections to documents or witnesses shall be submitted in writing at least five days in advance of the pre-hearing conference. The Presiding Officer shall not entertain subsequent objections unless the party offering the objection demonstrates good cause.
- (e) Evidence unrelated to the reasons for the recommendation or to the individual's qualifications for appointment or the relevant clinical privileges shall be excluded.

7.C.5. Pre-Hearing Conference:

The Presiding Officer shall require the individual and the MEC or their representatives (who may be counsel) to participate in a pre-hearing conference, which shall be held no later than 14 days prior to the hearing. At the pre-hearing conference, the Presiding Officer shall resolve all procedural questions, including any objections to exhibits or witnesses. The Presiding Officer shall establish the time to be allotted to each witness's testimony and cross-examination. It is expected that the hearing shall last no more than 15 hours, with each side being afforded approximately seven and a half hours to present its case, in terms of both direct and cross-examination of witnesses. Both parties are required to prepare their case so that a hearing shall be concluded after a maximum of 15 hours. The Presiding Officer may, after considering any objections, grant limited extensions upon a demonstration of good cause and to the extent compelled by fundamental fairness.

7.C.6. Stipulations:

The parties and their counsel, if applicable, shall use their best efforts to develop and agree upon stipulations, so as to provide for a more orderly and efficient hearing by narrowing the issues on which live testimony is reasonably required.

7.C.7. Provision of Information to the Hearing Panel:

The following documents shall be provided to the Hearing Panel in advance of the hearing: (a) a pre-hearing statement that either party may choose to submit; (b) exhibits offered by the parties following the pre-hearing conference, (without the need for authentication); and (c) any stipulations agreed to by the parties.

7.D. HEARING PROCEDURES

7.D.1. Rights of Both Sides and the Hearing Panel at the Hearing:

- (a) At a hearing, both sides shall have the following rights, subject to reasonable limits determined by the Presiding Officer:
 - (1) to call and examine witnesses, to the extent they are available and willing to testify;
 - (2) to introduce exhibits;
 - (3) to cross-examine any witness on any matter relevant to the issues;
 - (4) to have representation by counsel who may call, examine, and cross-examine witnesses and present the case; and
 - (5) to submit proposed findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Hearing Panel as part of the Post-Hearing statement referenced in this Article, following the close of the hearing session(s).
- (b) If the individual who requested the hearing does not testify, he or she may be called and questioned.

- (c) The Hearing Panel may question witnesses, request the presence of additional witnesses, and/or request documentary evidence.

7.D.2. Record of Hearing:

A stenographic reporter shall be present to make a record of the hearing. The cost of the reporter shall be borne by the Hospital. Copies of the transcript shall be available at the individual's expense. Oral evidence shall be taken only on oath or affirmation administered by any person entitled to notarize documents in this state.

7.D.3. Failure to Appear:

Failure, without good cause, to appear and proceed at the hearing shall constitute a waiver of the right to a hearing and the matter shall be transmitted to the Board for final action.

7.D.4. Presence of Hearing Panel Members:

A majority of the Hearing Panel shall be present throughout the hearing. In unusual circumstances when a Hearing Panel member must be absent from any part of the hearing, he or she shall read the entire transcript of the portion of the hearing from which he or she was absent.

7.D.5. Persons to Be Present:

The hearing shall be restricted to those individuals involved in the proceeding, the President of the Medical Staff, and the CEO (or designee). In addition, administrative personnel may be present as requested by the CEO (or designee), or the President of the Medical Staff.

7.D.6. Order of Presentation:

The MEC shall first present evidence in support of its recommendation. Thereafter, the burden shall shift to the individual who requested the hearing to present evidence.

7.D.7. Admissibility of Evidence:

The hearing shall not be conducted according to rules of evidence. Evidence shall not be excluded merely because it is hearsay. Any relevant evidence shall be admitted if it is the sort of evidence on which responsible persons are accustomed to rely in the conduct of serious affairs, regardless of the admissibility of such evidence in a court of law. The guiding principle shall be that the record contains information sufficient to allow the Board to decide whether the individual is qualified for appointment and clinical privileges.

7.D.8. Post-Hearing Statement:

Each party shall have the right to submit a written statement, and the Hearing Panel may request that statements be filed, following the close of the hearing.

7.D.9. Postponements and Extensions:

Postponements and extensions of time may be requested by anyone, but shall be permitted only by the Presiding Officer or the CEO (or designee) on a showing of good cause.

7.E. HEARING CONCLUSION, DELIBERATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.E.1. Basis of Hearing Panel Recommendation:

Consistent with the burden on the individual to demonstrate that he or she satisfies, on a continuing basis, all criteria for initial appointment, reappointment and clinical privileges, the Hearing Panel shall recommend in favor of the MEC unless it finds that the individual who requested the hearing has proved, by the preponderance of the evidence, that the recommendation that prompted the hearing was arbitrary, capricious, or not supported by credible evidence.

7.E.2. Deliberations and Recommendation of the Hearing Panel:

Within 20 days after final adjournment of the hearing (which may be designated as the time the Hearing Panel receives the hearing transcript or any post-hearing statements, whichever is later), the Hearing Panel shall conduct its deliberations outside the presence of any other person except the Presiding Officer. Thereafter, the Hearing Panel shall render a recommendation, accompanied by a report, which shall contain a concise statement of the basis for its recommendation.

7.E.3. Disposition of Hearing Panel Report:

The Hearing Panel shall deliver its report to the CEO (or designee). The CEO (or designee) shall send by Special Notice a copy of the report to the individual who requested the hearing. The CEO (or designee) shall also provide a copy of the report to the MEC.

7.F. APPEAL PROCEDURE

7.F.1. Time for Appeal:

- (a) Within 10 days after notice of the Hearing Panel's recommendation, either party may request an appeal. The request shall be in writing, delivered to the CEO (or designee) either in person or by certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall include a statement of the reasons for appeal and the specific facts or circumstances which justify further review.
- (b) If an appeal is not requested within 10 days, an appeal is deemed to be waived and the Hearing Panel's report and recommendation shall be forwarded to the Board for final action.

7.F.2. Grounds for Appeal:

The grounds for appeal shall be limited to the following:

- (a) there was substantial failure by the Hearing Panel to comply with this Policy and/or the Medical Staff Bylaws during the hearing, so as to deny a fair hearing; and/or

- (b) the recommendations of the Hearing Panel were made arbitrarily or capriciously and/or were not supported by credible evidence.

7.F.3. Time, Place and Notice:

Whenever an appeal is requested as set forth in the preceding Sections, the Chair of the Board (or the CEO (or designee) on behalf of the Chair) shall schedule and arrange for an appeal. The individual shall be given Special Notice of the time, place, and date of the appeal. The appeal shall be held as soon as arrangements can reasonably be made, taking into account the schedules of all the individuals involved.

7.F.4. Nature of Appellate Review:

- (a) The Board may serve as the Review Panel or the Chair of the Board may appoint a Review Panel composed of not less than three persons, either members of the Board or others, including but not limited to reputable persons outside the Hospital, to consider the record upon which the recommendation before it was made and recommend final action to the Board.
- (b) Each party shall have the right to present a written statement in support of its position on appeal. The party requesting the appeal shall submit a statement first and the other party shall then have ten days to respond. In its sole discretion, the Review Panel may allow each party or its representative to appear personally and make oral argument not to exceed 30 minutes.
- (c) When requested by either party, the Review Panel may, in its discretion, accept additional oral or written evidence subject to the same rights of cross-examination provided at the Hearing Panel proceedings. Such additional evidence shall be accepted only if the Review Panel determines that the party seeking to admit it has demonstrated that it is relevant, new evidence that could not have been presented at the hearing, or that any opportunity to admit it at the hearing was improperly denied.

7.G. BOARD ACTION

7.G.1. Final Decision of the Board:

- (a) Within 30 days after the Board (i) considers the appeal as a Review Panel, (ii) receives a recommendation from a separate Review Panel, or (iii) receives the Hearing Panel's report and recommendation when no appeal has been requested, the Board shall consider the matter and take final action.
- (b) The Board may review any information that it deems relevant, including, but not limited to, the findings and recommendations of the MEC, Hearing Panel, and Review Panel (if applicable). The Board may adopt, modify, or reverse any recommendation that it receives or, in its discretion, refer the matter to any individual or committee for further review and recommendation, or make its own decision based upon the Board's ultimate legal authority for the operation of the Hospital and the quality of care provided.
- (c) The Board shall render its final decision in writing, including specific reasons, and shall send Special Notice to the individual. A copy shall also be provided to the MEC for its information.

7.G.2. Further Review:

Except where the matter is referred by the Board for further action and recommendation by any individual or committee, the final decision of the Board shall be effective immediately and shall not be subject to further review. If the matter is referred for further action and recommendation, such recommendation shall be promptly made to the Board in accordance with the instructions given by the Board.

7.G.3. Right to One Hearing and One Appeal Only:

No member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff shall be entitled to more than one hearing and one appellate review on any matter. If the Board denies initial appointment or reappointment or revokes the appointment and/or clinical privileges of a current member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff, that individual may

not apply for staff appointment or for those clinical privileges for a period of five years unless the Board provides otherwise.

ARTICLE 8

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES FOR CREDENTIALING, PRIVILEGING, AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

8.A.1. General Principles:

- (a) All those involved in credentialing, privileging, and professional practice evaluation activities (referred to collectively as “Medical Staff Functions” in this Article) must be sensitive to potential conflicts of interest (“COI”) in order to be fair to the individual whose qualifications are under review, to protect the individual with the potential conflict, and to protect the integrity of the review processes.
- (b) It is also essential that peers participate in Medical Staff Functions in order for these activities to be meaningful and effective. Therefore, whether and how an individual can participate must be evaluated reasonably, taking into consideration common sense and objective principles of fairness.
- (c) A potential conflict of interest depends on the situation and not on the character of the individual. To promote this understanding, any individual with a potential conflict of interest shall be referred to as an “Interested Member.”
- (d) No member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff has a right to compel the disqualification of another member based on an allegation of conflict of interest. Rather, that determination is within the discretion of the Medical Staff Leaders or Board chair, guided by this Article.

- (e) The fact that any individual chooses to refrain from participation, or is excused from participation, in any Medical Staff Function shall not be interpreted as a finding of an actual conflict that inappropriately influenced the review process.
- (f) **Appendix D** to this Policy is a chart that outlines the conflict of interest guidelines that are applicable to Medical Staff Functions at the Hospital. The remainder of this Article is intended to supplement **Appendix D** and expand upon the guidelines that are summarized in the chart.

8.A.2. Process for Identifying Conflicts of Interest:

- (a) Self-Disclosure. Any individual involved in Medical Staff Functions must disclose all personal conflicts of interest relevant to those activities to the committee chair or an Administrative Physician Leader.
- (b) Identification by Others. Any individual who is concerned about a potential conflict of interest on the part of any other individual who is involved in Medical Staff Functions should inform the committee chair or an Administrative Physician Leader.
- (c) Identification by Individual under Review. An individual who is the subject of review during any Medical Staff Functions is obligated to notify the committee chair or an Administrative Physician Leader of any known or suspected conflicts of interest by others who are involved in such activities. Any potential conflict of interest that is not raised timely by the individual under review shall be deemed waived.

8.A.3. Implementation of Conflict of Interest Guidelines in **Appendix D**:

This section describes how to implement the Conflict of Interest Guidelines found in **Appendix D** of this Policy:

- Paragraph (a) identifies the three COI situations that require special treatment and rules during the performance of Medical Staff Functions, irrespective of the Interested Member's level of participation in the process (e.g., individual reviewer, MEC member);

- Paragraph (b) describes the other common situations that raise COI issues during the performance of Medical Staff Functions; and
- Paragraph (c) describes how to apply the guidelines in **Appendix D** to the common COI situations outlined in (b) at each level of the review processes.

(a) Three COI Situations That Require Special Treatment and Rules, Irrespective of an Interested Member’s Level of Participation:

- (1) Employment or Contractual Arrangement with the Hospital. Because Medical Staff Functions are performed on behalf of the Hospital, the interests of those who are employed by, or under contract with, the Hospital are aligned with the Hospital’s interest in seeing that those activities are performed effectively, efficiently, and lawfully. As such, employment by, or other contractual arrangement with, the Hospital or any of its affiliated entities does not, in and of itself, preclude an Interested Member from participating in Medical Staff Functions.
- (2) Self or Family Member. While Interested Members may provide information to other individuals involved in the review process, an Interested Member should not otherwise participate in the review of his or her own application or the professional practice evaluation of the care he or she provided or in any such activities involving an immediate family member (spouse or domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, or in-law).
- (3) Relevant Treatment Relationship. As a general rule, an Interested Member who has provided professional health services to a practitioner whose application or provision of care is under review should not participate in the review process regarding the practitioner. However, if the patient-physician relationship has terminated and the review process does not involve the health condition for which the practitioner sought professional health services, the Interested Member may participate fully in all Medical Staff Functions.

Furthermore, even if a current patient-physician relationship exists, the Interested Member may provide information to others involved in the review process if:

- (i) the information was not obtained through the treatment relationship, or
- (ii) the information was obtained through the treatment relationship, but the disclosure was authorized by the practitioner under review through the execution of a HIPAA-compliant authorization form.

(b) Other Common Situations That Raise COI Issues During the Performance of Medical Staff Functions:

Participation by any Interested Member who is in one of the following situations – as it relates to the practitioner under review – will be evaluated under the guidelines outlined in Paragraph (c) and **Appendix D:**

- (1) Significant Financial Relationship (e.g., when the Interested Member and other practitioners: are members of a small, single specialty group or maintain a significant referral relationship; are partners in a business venture);
- (2) Direct Competitor (e.g., practitioners in the same specialty, but in different groups);
- (3) Close Friendships;
- (4) History of Personal Conflict (e.g., former partner, ex-spouse, or where there has been demonstrated animosity);
- (5) Personal Involvement in the Care That Is Subject to Review (e.g., where the Interested Member provided care in the case under review, but is not the subject of the review);

- (6) Active Involvement in Certain Prior Interventions with the Individual under Review (e.g., where the Interested Member was involved in the development of a prior Performance Improvement Plan/FPPE or in a disciplinary action involving the individual under review. This situation does not include participation in initial education or collegial intervention efforts (e.g., sending an Educational Letter; meeting collegially with a colleague and sending a follow-up letter)); and/or

- (7) Formally Raised the Concern about Another Individual (e.g., where the Interested Member's concern triggered the review of another practitioner, as evidenced by the Interested Member's written report regarding the concern (i.e., sent a written concern to a Medical Staff Officer or an Administrative Physician Leader, or filed a report through the Hospital's electronic reporting system)).

(c) Application of the Guidelines in **Appendix D** to the Performance of Medical Staff Functions:

(1) Individual Reviewers in Credentialing and Professional Practice Evaluation Activities

An Interested Member may participate as an individual reviewer so long as a check and balance is provided by subsequent review by a Medical Staff committee. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (i) participation in the review of applications for initial and renewed membership and clinical privileges (which is subsequently reviewed by the Credentials Committee and/or MEC); and

- (ii) participation as a case reviewer in professional practice evaluation activities (which is subsequently reviewed by the Investigating Committee and/or MEC).

(2) Credentials Committee Members

As a general rule, an Interested Member may fully participate as a member of the Credentials Committee because this committee does not possess any disciplinary authority and does not make any final recommendation that could adversely affect the membership or clinical privileges of a practitioner, which is only within the authority of the MEC and Board.

However, the chair of the Credentials Committee always has the discretion to recuse an Interested Member if he or she determines that the Interested Member's presence or participation would inhibit full and fair discussion of the issue, would skew the recommendation or determination of the committee, or would otherwise be unfair to the practitioner under review.

(3) Medical Executive Committee

As a general rule, an Interested Member may fully participate as a member of the MEC when it is approving routine and favorable recommendations regarding the granting of initial appointment, reappointments, and clinical privileges.

However, an Interested Member should be recused from the MEC when that committee is considering a matter that could result in an adverse professional review action affecting the membership or clinical privileges of a practitioner. The Interested Member's participation in MEC meetings will be governed by the guidelines regarding recusal that are set forth in **Appendix D**.

(4) Investigating Committees

Once a formal investigation has been initiated by the MEC, additional steps to manage conflicts of interest should be taken as a precaution. Therefore, an Interested Member should not be appointed as a member of an investigating committee and should not participate in the committee's deliberations or decision-making, but may be interviewed and provide information if necessary for the committee to conduct a full and thorough investigation.

(5) Hearing Panel

An Interested Member should not be appointed as a member of a Hearing Panel and should not participate in the Panel's deliberations or decision-making.

(6) Board

As a general rule, an Interested Member may fully participate as a member of the Board when it is approving routine and favorable recommendations regarding the granting of initial appointment, reappointments, and clinical privileges.

However, an Interested Member should be recused from the Board when the Board is considering action that will adversely affect membership or clinical privileges of a practitioner. The Interested Member's participation in Board meetings will be governed by the guidelines regarding recusal that are set forth in **Appendix D**.

ARTICLE 9

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PEER REVIEW PROTECTION

9.A. CONFIDENTIALITY

Actions taken and recommendations made pursuant to this Policy shall be strictly confidential. Individuals participating in, or subject to, credentialing and professional practice evaluation activities shall make no disclosures of any such information (discussions or documentation) outside of committee meetings, except:

- (1) when the disclosures are to another authorized member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff or authorized Hospital employee and are for the purpose of researching, investigating, or otherwise conducting legitimate credentialing and professional practice evaluation activities;
- (2) when the disclosures are authorized by a Medical Staff or Hospital policy; or
- (3) when the disclosures are authorized, in writing, by the CEO (or designee), an Administrative Physician Leader, or by legal counsel to the Hospital.

Any breach of confidentiality may result in a professional review action and/or appropriate legal action. Such breaches are unauthorized and do not waive the peer review privilege. Any member of the Medical Staff or Advanced Practice Provider Staff who becomes aware of a breach of confidentiality must immediately inform the CEO (or designee), an Administrative Physician Leader, or the President of the Medical Staff (or the Vice President if the President of the Medical Staff is the person committing the claimed breach).

9.B. PEER REVIEW PROTECTION

- (1) All credentialing and professional practice evaluation activities pursuant to this Policy and related Medical Staff documents shall be performed by “peer review committees”

in accordance with the relevant state law. These committees include, but are not limited to:

- (a) all standing and ad hoc Medical Staff and Hospital committees;
- (b) all departments and sections;
- (c) hearing panels;
- (d) the Board and its committees; and
- (e) any individual acting for or on behalf of any such entity, including but not limited to Department Chairs, Section Chiefs, committee chairs and members, officers of the Medical Staff, the Administrative Physician Leaders, all Hospital personnel, and experts or consultants retained to assist in peer review activities.

All oral or written communications, reports, recommendations, actions, and minutes made or taken by peer review committees are confidential and covered by the applicable provisions of the relevant state law.

- (2) All peer review committees shall also be deemed to be “professional review bodies” as that term is defined in the Health Care Quality Improvement Act of 1986, 42 U.S.C. §11101 *et seq.*

ARTICLE 10

AMENDMENTS AND ADOPTION

- (a) The amendment process for this Policy is set forth in the Bylaws.

- (b) This Policy is adopted and made effective upon approval of the Board, superseding and replacing any and all other bylaws, rules and regulations of the Medical Staff or Hospital policies pertaining to the subject matter thereof.

Adopted by the Medical Staff at Virtua North: **January 28, 2020**

Adopted by the Medical Staff at Virtua South: **January 28, 2020**

Approved by the Board: **March 10, 2020**

APPENDIX A

CHECKLIST IN SUPPORT OF
PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSION PROCESS

ACTION	CHECKLIST ITEMS
<p>PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSION</p>	<p><i>Describe event or pattern of occurrences that causes concern of imminent danger to the health and/or safety of any individual.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><i>Indicate if one of the following requested the practitioner voluntarily refrain from exercising privileges pending further review.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Department Chair<input type="checkbox"/> President of the Medical Staff<input type="checkbox"/> Chief Clinical Officer<input type="checkbox"/> VPMA<input type="checkbox"/> MEC <p><i>Date voluntary refrainment takes effect (if applicable):</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>If practitioner is unwilling to voluntarily refrain, will all or a portion of the practitioner's clinical privileges be restricted or suspended as a precaution?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Explain action decided upon below. <hr/> <hr/>

	<hr/> <hr/> <p>Date precautionary suspension or restriction takes effect:</p> <hr/> <p>Date MEC is to review the matter (within a reasonable time under the circumstances, not to exceed 14 days):</p> <hr/> <p>Date of practitioner's meeting with the MEC:</p> <hr/> <p>Were minutes of the meeting prepared?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, identify who prepared:</p> <hr/> <p>Outcome of Meeting (e.g., practitioner proposes ways other than precautionary suspension or restriction):</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
ACTION	CHECKLIST ITEMS
PRECAUTIONARY	<p>Next steps.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Commence Focused Review</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Refer matter for review under another appropriate Policy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Initiate a Formal Investigation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other action deemed appropriate under the circumstances. Explain below.</p>

SUSPENSION

(cont'd.)

If focused review or formal investigation chosen, MEC determines the precautionary suspension should be:

- Continued
 - Modified
 - Terminated
-
-

APPENDIX B

CHECKLIST IN SUPPORT OF
INVESTIGATION PROCESS

ACTION	CHECKLIST ITEMS
INVESTIGATIONS	<p><i>Indicate the date the MEC reviewed the matter and voted to conduct an investigation.</i></p> <hr/>
	<p><i>MEC sends letter informing the practitioner that the investigation has commenced.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please note the date of the letter.</p> <hr/>
	<p><i>Will the MEC conduct the investigation itself or appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to conduct the investigation?</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MEC to conduct investigation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Appoint Ad Hoc Committee (preferred).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Review the Conflict of Interest Guidelines in Article 8.<input type="radio"/> Send a letter to each member of the Ad Hoc Committee (where applicable) outlining its responsibilities. <p><i>Initial meeting of the MEC/Ad Hoc Committee (hereinafter, the "Investigating Committee")</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set target dates for meetings, gathering information, and conclusion of investigation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Decide whether to use any external reviewers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Identify documents to be reviewed during the investigation.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Decide which individuals should be interviewed. (Relevant individuals may include any hospital employee, Medical Staff member, or other privileged practitioners.) <input type="checkbox"/> Decide if any physical, mental, and/or behavioral examination of the practitioner is required. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare minutes of this, and all other meetings, of the Investigating Committee. <p><i>For witness interviews by the Investigating Committee:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare opening remarks and questions for each witness. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare witness summaries. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask witnesses to review, revise, and sign summaries. <input type="checkbox"/> Include summaries as a part of Ad Hoc Committee’s Report. <p><i>Meeting with Practitioner</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send letter to practitioner with date, time, and place of interview. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify nature of the concerns and advise practitioner that, in accordance with Credentials Policy, attorneys are not permitted to be present for the interview and that no audio or video recording of meeting is permitted. <input type="checkbox"/> Invite practitioner to discuss, explain, or refute the issues that led to the investigation.
ACTION	CHECKLIST ITEMS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare summary of interview. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask practitioner to review, revise, and sign summaries (changes should be adopted unless committee believes changes incorrectly reflect what occurred at meeting). <p><i>Investigating Committee Report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review should be completed within 30 days, if reasonable. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare preliminary report, including findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

INVESTIGATIONS

(cont'd.)

- Finalize report and transmit to the MEC.

Determination of MEC regarding the recommendations of the Investigating Committee (Describe):

- Accept
 - Modify
 - Reject
-
-

- If recommendation does not entitle the practitioner to a hearing, the recommendation takes effect immediately and remains in effect unless modified by the Board.
- If the recommendation would entitle the practitioner to a hearing, the recommendation is forwarded to the CEO (or designee) and Special Notice is provided to the practitioner.

APPENDIX C

**CHECKLIST IN SUPPORT OF
HEARING PROCESS**

<i>ACTION</i>	<i>CHECKLIST ITEMS</i>
HEARINGS	<p><i>CEO (or designee) Provides Notice of Recommendation, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of recommendations and general reasons for it <input type="checkbox"/> Statement that practitioner had 30 days to request a hearing <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of Article 7 of the Credentials Policy <p><i>Practitioner requested a hearing, in writing, to the CEO (or designee) within 30 days following receipt of Special Notice.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <p><i>If yes, CEO (or designee) schedules the hearing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduled no sooner than 30 days after notice of the hearing is provided. <input type="checkbox"/> CEO (or designee) provides, by Special Notice, the time, place, and date of the hearing, list of witnesses, names of hearing panel members (or hearing officer), and presiding officer, and statement of reasons for the recommendation. <p><i>In consultation with the President of the Medical Staff, the CEO (or designee) appoints the following in compliance with conflict of interest provisions in Article 8.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Panel <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Officer (as alternative to Hearing Panel) <input type="checkbox"/> Presiding Officer

	<p>Practitioner has 10 days to raise an objection to the above.</p> <p><i>Pre-Hearing Procedures</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule pre-hearing conference at least 14 days prior to the Hearing. <input type="checkbox"/> Exchange witness lists and proposed documentary exhibits at least 10 days prior to pre-hearing conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide objections to witnesses and/or proposed documentary exhibits at least five days prior to pre-hearing conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain agreement from practitioner that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o all documents and information will be maintained as confidential and not disclosed or used for any purpose outside the hearing; and o his or her counsel and any expert(s) executed Business Associate Agreements in connection with any patient Protected Health Information contained in the documents provided. <p><i>Hearing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Occurs no sooner than 30 days after notice of the hearing provided. <input type="checkbox"/> MEC first presents evidence in support of its recommendation. <input type="checkbox"/> Burden shifts to the practitioner to present evidence.
<i>ACTION</i>	<i>CHECKLIST ITEMS</i>
	<p><i>Post Hearing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Each party may submit a written post-hearing statement. <input type="checkbox"/> Within 20 days of adjourning the hearing, the hearing panel meets to deliberate and prepares a report, which contains a concise statement of the basis for its recommendation.

HEARINGS
(cont'd.)

- Report delivered to the (CEO or designee) who distributes copies of the report.
- Either party has 10 days to request an appeal:
 - If no appeal is requested, appellate rights are deemed to have been waived and Hearing Panel's report and recommendation forwarded to the Board for final action.
 - If appeal is requested, Chair of the Board (or CEO or designee) on behalf of the Chair) schedules and arranges an appeal.

Appeals Process

- Practitioner given special notice of the time, place, and date of appeal.
- Either Board serves as Review Panel or Chair of the Board appoints a Review Panel.
- Each party given the right to present written statement in support of its position on appeal.
- Review panel, in its discretion, may accept additional oral or written evidence subject to the same rights of cross-examination provided at the Hearing Panel proceedings.
- Board considers the matter and takes final action within 30 days after Board by doing one of the following:
 - Considers the appeal as a Review Panel;
 - Receives a recommendation from a separate Review Panel; or
 - Receives the Hearing Panel's report and recommendation when no appeal is requested.
- The Board renders its final decision:
 - Adopts the recommendation;
 - Modifies the recommendation;
 - Reverses the recommendation; or
 - Makes its own decision.
- The Board renders its decision in writing, including specific reasons
 - Sends, by Special Notice, to the practitioner,
 - Sends copy to the MEC.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Except where the matter is referred by the Board for further action and recommendation, the final decision of the Board is effective immediately and not subject to further review.
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APPENDIX D

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Potential Conflicts	Levels of Participation						
	Provide Information	Individual Reviewer Application/ Case	Committee Member			Hearing Panel	Board
			Credentials	MEC	Investigating		
Employment/contract relationship with Hospital	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Self or family member	Y	N	R	R	N	N	R
Relevant treatment relationship*	Y	N	R	R	N	N	R
Significant financial relationship	Y	Y	Y	R	N	N	R
Direct competitor	Y	Y	Y	R	N	N	R
Close friends	Y	Y	Y	R	N	N	R
History of conflict	Y	Y	Y	R	N	N	R
Provided care in case under review (but not subject of review)	Y	Y	Y	R	N	N	R
Involvement in prior PIP or disciplinary action	Y	Y	Y	R	N	N	R
Formally raised the concern	Y	Y	Y	R	N	N	R

Y – (Green “Y”) means the Interested Member may serve in the indicated role; no extra precautions are necessary.

Y – (Yellow “Y”) means the Interested Member may generally serve in the indicated role. It is legally permissible for Interested Members to serve in these roles because of the check and balance

provided by the multiple levels of review and the fact that the Credentials Committee has no disciplinary authority.

In addition, the Chair of the Credentials Committee always has the authority and discretion to recuse a member in a particular situation if the Chair determines that the Interested Member’s presence would (i) inhibit the full and fair discussion of the issue before the committee, (ii) skew the recommendation or determination of the committee, or (iii) otherwise be unfair to the practitioner under review.

N – (Red “N”) means the Interested Member should not serve in the indicated role.

R – (Red “R”) means the Interested Member should be recused, in accordance with the guidelines on the next page.

* Special rules apply both to the provision of information and participation in the review process in this situation. See Section 8.A.3 of the Credentials Policy.

RULES FOR RECUSAL	
STEP 1 Confirm the conflict of interest	The Committee Chair or Board Chair should confirm the existence of a conflict of interest relevant to the matter under consideration.
STEP 2 Participation by the Interested Member at the meeting	<p>The Interested Member may participate in any part of the meeting that does not involve the conflict of interest situation.</p> <p>When the matter implicating the conflict of interest is ready for consideration, the Committee Chair or Board Chair will note that the Interested Member will be excused from the meeting prior to the group’s deliberation and decision-making.</p> <p>Prior to being excused, the Interested Member may provide information and answer any questions regarding the following:</p> <p>(i) any factual information for which the Interested Member is the original source;</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) clinical expertise that is relevant to the matter under consideration; (iii) any policies or procedures that are applicable to the committee or Board or are relevant to the matter under consideration; (iv) the Interested Member’s prior involvement in the review of the matter at hand (for example, an Investigating Committee member may describe the Investigating Committee’s activities and present the Investigating Committee’s written report and recommendations to the MEC prior to being excused from the meeting); and (v) how the committee or Board has, in the past, managed issues similar or identical to the matter under consideration.
<p>STEP 3</p> <p>The Interested Member is excused from the meeting</p>	<p>The Interested Member will then be excused from the meeting (i.e., physically leave the meeting room and/or disconnect from any telephone or other electronic connection) prior to the committee’s or Board’s deliberation and decision-making.</p>
<p>STEP 4</p> <p>Record the recusal in the minutes</p>	<p>The recusal should be documented in the minutes of the committee or Board. The minutes should reflect the fact that the Interested Member was excused from the meeting prior to deliberation and decision-making.</p>