

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE – JACKSONVILLE

Resident Manual

ABUSE: ELDERLY, ADULT, CHILD, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The clinical staff of Shands Jacksonville, University of Florida, University of Florida Jacksonville Healthcare, Inc. and University of Florida Jacksonville Physicians, Inc. will follow the guidelines for abuse reporting and document in the medical record and report all suspected abuse to the Florida Abuse Hotline 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). Any healthcare clinical professional in the State of Florida who knowingly or willingly neglects to report known or suspected abuse or who prevents another person from reporting known or suspected abuse shall be guilty of a second degree misdemeanor.

When abuse is suspected, the clinical staff should question the patient in private regarding suspected abuse and should examine the patient for new and old signs of abuse (e.g., bruises, scars, burns, deformed limbs). The clinical staff should suspect potential abuse if the patient is frequently admitted for traumatic injuries or if, during questioning, the primary caregiver or spouse constantly answers for the patient.

Child abuse or neglect is defined by the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration as, "... harm or threatened harm to a child's physical or mental health or welfare by the acts or omissions of the parents or other persons responsible for the child's welfare." (AHCA, Child Abuse and Neglect, 10D-ER-8-3-8)

Florida Statute 39 gives hospitals the right to take a child (persons under age 18 years) into custody without the consent of the parent, legal guardian or legal custodian, whether or not additional medical treatment is required or circumstances are such, or if the condition of the child is such, that continuing the child in the child's place of residence or in the care of the parents, legal guardian or legal custodian presents an imminent danger to the child's life or physical or mental health. The hospital shall immediately notify the Agency that they have taken a child into custody. Florida Statute 39.410 (b) permits an authorized agent of the Agency to take such child into custody, if the agent has reasonable grounds to believe that the child has been abandoned, abused, neglected, is suffering from illness or injury, or is in immediate danger from his/her surroundings and that his removal is necessary to protect the child.

Elder abuse or neglect is defined by AHCA as, "non-accidental infliction of physical or psychological injury by a relative, care giver, or adult household member, or failure of a care giver to take reasonable measures to prevent the occurrence of physical or psychological injury to an aged or disabled adult; exploitation is defined as, but not limited to, the improper or illegal use or management of an aged person or disabled adult's funds, assets or property or misuse of an aged person's or disabled adult's power of attorney or guardianship for another individual or one's own profit or advantage."

Procedure

1. If abuse or neglect is suspected, the following should be immediately notified: the Florida Abuse Hotline 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873), the attending physician, manager and director of the unit, and Case Management.
2. The clinical staff should document all suspected abuse in their appropriate section of the medical record (e.g., physician progress notes, nursing progress notes or flowsheets).
3. If any assistance is needed, The Division of Child Protection & Forensic Pediatrics can be reached at 633-0190.