Principles of Collaboration

Preamble
Traditionally, American medicine was built around the primacy of the doctor-patient relationship. This relationship remains at the core of modern medicine. The provision of health care continually becomes more complex, however, and requires the services of many other health care professionals to satisfy patient’s needs. The Physicians of the St. Mary’s Medical Center Medical Staff (Physicians) and the St. Mary’s Medical Center Hospital Staff (Staff) recognize their considerable interdependence in the rapidly changing health care environment. They acknowledge that their success in competing in the marketplace and their ability jointly to deliver high-quality health care depends in large part upon their ability to communicate well, collaborate effectively, and work as a team to optimize and monitor outcomes.

Physicians and Staff further acknowledge that there are many participants in the process of effective health care, including patients, their families, health system staff, allied health professionals, and others, and that working harmoniously with them is a necessary aspect of modern health care. Both parties affirm that everyone, both recipients and providers of care, must be treated in a dignified, respectful manner at all times in order for their mutual goal of high-quality health care to be accomplished.

Physicians and Staff further affirm that it is their mutual responsibility to work together in an ongoing, positive, dynamic process that requires frequent, continual communication and feedback. Both agree to devote the necessary time and resources toward achieving these goals and maintaining a positive, collaborative relationship between them and with other providers and recipients of care.

Principles
In order to accomplish these goals, Physicians and Staff agree to the following principles and guidelines and to work collaboratively to promote them in the organization and in the community.

1. Respectful Treatment- All members of the health care provider team (physicians, hospital staff, vendors, contract personnel, etc.) and all direct and indirect recipients of health care (patients, their families, visitors, etc.) shall be treated in a respectful, dignified manner at all times.

2. Language- Physicians and Staff agree not to use language that is profane, vulgar, sexually suggestive or explicit, intimidating, degrading, or racially/ethnically/religiously slurring in any professional setting related to the hospital and the care of its patients.

3. Behavior- The parties agree to refrain from any behavior that is deemed to be intimidating, or harassing, sexually or otherwise, including but not limited to unwanted touching, sexual touching, sexually oriented or degrading jokes or comments, requests for sexual favors, obscene gestures, physical throwing of objects, or making inappropriate comments regarding physicians, hospital staff, other providers, or patients.

4. Confidentiality- Physicians and Staff agree to maintain complete confidentiality of patient care information at all times, in a manner consistent with generally accepted principles of medical confidentiality. The parties further recognize that physicians and hospital staff have the right to have certain personal and performance problems and concerns about competence dealt within a confidential manner in a private setting. Physicians and Staff agree to maintain this confidentiality and to seek proper, professional, objective arenas in which to deal with these issues.

5. Feedback- Physicians and Staff agree to give all parties prompt, direct, constructive feedback when concerns or disagreements arise. The parties recognize the necessity of describing such behavior in objective, behavioral terms and that such feedback should be given directly to the peers(s) involved through appropriate channel, in a confidential, private setting.

6. Clarification of Roles- Physicians and Staff agree that the delivery of health care involves a complex, dynamic set of roles and responsibilities and that clarity and agreement on these roles and responsibilities is necessary. Both parties agree to work together to achieve and maintain clarity and agreement on these roles and to support each other in the carrying out of these responsibilities.

Enforcement
These principles describe the accepted and appropriate way for physicians and staff to interact at St. Mary’s Medical Center. They are best enforced by each individual self-administering his/her own behavior. When an individual displays a pattern of violating these principles, the institution and medical staff have an obligation to address the behavior. Generally this would be through the productive interaction policy for physicians or the employee disciplinary process for employees. If the individual’s behavior is of a serious nature, such as sexual harassment, more direct enforcement may be appropriate.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Principles of Collaboration as stated above:

Applicant ___________________________ Date _________________

**Confidential and Privileged Peer Review Data** Pursuant to WV Code 30-3C-1 et Seq