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GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE USE OF CHAPERONES DURING PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

On or about May 5, 2016, the Georgia Composite Medical Board considered the issue involving the use of chaperones during physical examinations. For an examination of the breast and/or genitalia of a patient of the opposite sex, a physician must comply with Rule 360-3-.02(12). For all other examinations the Board recommends that physicians aim to respect the patient's dignity and to make a positive effort to secure a comfortable and considerate atmosphere for the patient; such actions include the provision of appropriate gowns, private facilities for undressing, sensitive use of draping, and clear explanations on various components of the physical examination. The physician should have a policy that patients are free to make a request for a chaperone. This policy should be communicated to patients, either by means of a well-displayed notice or preferably through a conversation initiated by the intake nurse or the physician. The request by a patient to have a chaperone should be honored. It is recommended that an authorized health professional should serve as a chaperone whenever possible. In their practices, physicians should establish clear expectations about respecting patient privacy and confidentiality to which chaperones must adhere. If a chaperone is to be provided, a separate opportunity for private conversation between the patient and the physician should be allowed.