Weapons Policy

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a policy for the control of Weapons within Physician Partners of America, LLC (PPOA) facilities. This policy is also intended to help provide a safe and secure environment and protect patients, visitors, and Workforce Members from acts of violence.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all PPOA Workforce Members, their affiliates, and business associates. This policy also applies to all PPOA patients and visitors while they are on PPOA premises.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. De-escalation – A method to prevent potential violence using purposeful actions, verbal communications, and body language to calm a potentially dangerous situation.

B. Possession – Having a weapon on one's person or in an area subject to one's control within any PPOA facility location.

C. Weapon – Any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; air guns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; num-chuks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.

D. Workforce Members – Employees, volunteers, trainees, and other persons whose conduct, in the performance of work for a covered entity or business associate, is under the direct control of such covered entity or business associate, whether they are paid by the covered entity or business associate.

IV. POLICY

PPOA takes the safety of their Workforce Members, patients, and visitors seriously and maintains a Weapons free facility. Persons covered by this policy are prohibited from Possessing a Weapon while on PPOA property or while engaged in PPOA-related business or activities, even with a valid permit and/or license.

Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening behavior will not be tolerated at any PPOA facility or by any Workforce Member, patient, or visitor. It is the responsibility of all PPOA Workforce Members to report threats of violence or violations of this policy to management and the Compliance Department. Refer to PPOA's "Violence in a Healthcare Setting Policy" for more information.

V. PROCEDURE

A. Imminent Threats

Whenever a person with a Weapon is posing an immediate threat:

i) Take every possible action to De-Escalate the situation and cooperate with the demands of the threatening person.

ii) When it appears safe and reasonable to do so, notify management or call 911.

B. Voluntary Disclosure

If a person arrives and voluntarily discloses that they are in Possession of a Weapon:

i) Calmly remind the individual of PPOA's "Weapons Policy", and

ii) Ask the person to immediately leave the premises until they no longer Possess the Weapon. They may choose to:
   a) Secure the Weapon in their vehicle, or
   b) Have Weapon sent home with a family member

C. Suspicious Activity:

Whenever a person is observed carrying, or where there is suspicion that a person has a Weapon report the individual to management. A member of management will:

i) Approach the individual and ask him or her if they have a Weapon with them.
ii) If person displays or admits to carrying a weapon:
   a) Calmly remind the individual of PPOA's "Weapons Policy", and
   b) Refer to Section B., "Voluntary Disclosure".
iii) If person says no, but is in obvious Possession of a weapon or displaying threatening behavior:
   a) Ask them to immediately leave the premises.
   b) If they fail to cooperate, immediately call 911.

D. Signage

PPOA Workforce Members are responsible for ensuring the "No Weapons Poster" is maintained in an area viewable by all patients, visitors, and Workforce Members before entering the premises. The proper placement is on the main entrance door and all other access areas. Workforce Members will contact the Compliance Department if the poster needs to be replaced.

E. Enforcement

Workforce Members that do not adhere to this policy or engage in activities prohibited by this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including, but not limited to, immediate termination of employment or contractual agreement.

Any patient or visitor in a PPOA facility found to have carried a Weapon in, on, or about the property, or found to be carrying a Weapon under circumstances in which the individual should have known that he or she was in Possession of a Weapon, may be removed from and/or banned from the PPOA facility for such time and extent as PPOA determines appropriate.

In addition to these enforcement actions, violations of this policy may result in referrals to external law enforcement agencies and/or arrest where a criminal violation has occurred.

F. Exceptions

The following exceptions apply:

i) The only individuals allowed to carry a Weapon are on-duty law enforcement officers.
ii) An individual who realizes that they accidentally have a Weapon in his or her Possession, and immediately notifies management, shall not be in violation of this policy. The individual will be required to leave the premises immediately with the ability to return once the Weapon has been removed.
iii) An individual who finds a Weapon on the premises and immediately notifies management, shall not be in violation of this policy. Management will securely store the Weapon in a locked cabinet until it is decided what is to be done with the Weapon.