

# Policy for Student Volunteer Engagement in Providing Health Care Services and Education

One of the fundamental components of the Washington University School of Medicine's (WUSM's) mission is to "advance and enhance health care in a way that ensures access, compassion, high value, equity, and evidence-based care for all people in our community, including those who are underserved and uninsured to support the broader St. Louis community." In furtherance of that mission, many of our WUSM students and recognized student organizations seek out opportunities to volunteer their services and support to community partners and persons in need. These opportunities have been largely beneficial to our community partners, persons in need, and our students, and the interest and demand for such opportunities continues to grow. It is important to recognize, however, that the participation of students in the provision of certain activities for which they lack adequate education, training, or supervision can lead to potential harm to a patient, to the student, to the community partner, and to the university, among others. To facilitate coordination with community partners and to ensure the appropriate involvement of students and student organizations across all WUSM programs in these opportunities, the following guidelines are expected to be followed.

## I. Required Requests and Proposals to Provide Volunteer Health Care Services and Education

Any WUSM student or WUSM-recognized student organization that wishes to volunteer their services by providing clinically oriented diagnostic or therapeutic care (e.g., screenings, physical exams, tests, distribution of medical supplies, interventions) or health-related education either directly to patients or in conjunction with a community partner must submit to the Office of Medical Student Affairs or their program's designee the following:

1. If the student or student organization plans to work with a new community partner, they must first submit a request to contact the community partner, prior to initiating any communication or outreach;
2. The WUSM student or recognized student organization must submit a proposal to the Office of Medical Student Affairs or their program's designee *and receive approval* from the School of Medicine no less than three weeks prior to any scheduled volunteer event or activity. Please note that, depending upon the

nature of the event, the WUSM approval process may take two weeks or longer to review, and if needed, seek input from various WUSM and university departments such as Insurance and Risk Management; the Privacy Office; the WUSM Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; WUSM Protective Services; the Office of General Counsel; and relevant clinical experts at WUSM.

In the proposal form, student organizations will be expected to provide the following details:

- Scope of volunteer activities
- Student/student organization contact information
- Faculty advisor contact information
- Community partner contact information
- On-site supervisor qualification(s) and contact information
- Consenting procedures and privacy notifications, if performed by the student/student organization. If the student/student organization is planning to use the community partner's procedures and notifications, they should note that in the proposal.
- If solely providing general health-related education, an outline of the information to be conveyed and a copy of materials to be provided to participants.
- Documentation practices for clinically oriented diagnostic or therapeutic care, if performed by student/student organization. If the student/student organization is planning to use the community partner's documentation procedures, they should note that in the proposal.

## II. Memorandum of Understanding or Volunteer Contract with Community Partner

If a WUSM-recognized student organization wishes to provide volunteer services with a community partner or organization that involves engagement with patients in a clinical setting or another setting in which students would be offering health-related education or clinically-oriented care, a standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be required to be signed by the University and the community partner organization outlining the responsibilities of the university, the student organization and its participating students, and the community partner, as well as insurance and indemnification provisions, confidentiality, and informed consenting procedures, among other provisions. In some situations that do not involve clinically-oriented diagnostic or therapeutic care but where the student/student organization may be providing screenings (e.g., at health fairs), a volunteer contract may be necessary. The student/student organization will be notified by the Office of Medical Student Affairs or their program's designee if there is a need to initiate the MOU process or have a volunteer contract signed before engaging in any volunteer activities.



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### III. Supervision of Students

All students must be appropriately supervised by WUSM clinical faculty or a qualified, licensed health care provider practicing within their scope of practice when participating in clinically-oriented care at any community partner site or at a student organization event.

1. The required level of supervision will be determined by the Office of Medical Student Affairs or their program's designee in consultation with a relevant clinical faculty member and the community partner organization and should take into consideration the level of training of the student, the clinical abilities of the student as observed and confirmed by the supervisor, the risk to the patient(s), acuity of the patient(s), and the nature and complexity of the clinical activity required. The supervisor is expected to actively oversee the student if the student is performing clinically-oriented care.
2. In addition, the supervisor is expected to review and independently verify key findings initially taken or made by the student. The supervisor should be interpreting any data, results or findings and conducting their own assessment and recommended treatment and care plan for the patient(s), as this would exceed the scope of the student's volunteer services.
3. Concerns regarding inappropriate supervision should be reported immediately to the Office of Medical Student Affairs or their program's designee.

### IV. Insurance and Risk Management

For community partners and organizations with which WUSM does not already have a MOU that addresses medical malpractice and general liability insurance coverage, students and student organizations are required to provide confirmation of medical malpractice and general liability coverage from WUSM prior to participating as a volunteer in any clinically-oriented care at a community partner site or student organization event.

### V. Violations of this Policy

Concerns regarding potential violations of this policy should be reported immediately to the Office of Medical Student Affairs or the program's designee. Violations may result in a professionalism behavior report and further disciplinary action depending upon the nature of the violation.

*Last approved on June 5, 2024*