

MANDATORY REPORTING OF ABUSE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Federal and state mandatory abuse reporting laws went into effect in the US in the 1960s. Abuse may include but is not limited to child abuse, neglect, sexual battery, assault, exploitation and/or abandonment by a parent, caregiver, and/or legal guardian. Although mandated reporting varies from state to state, it generally includes an obligation to report known and suspected mistreatment of vulnerable patients and children.



PROFESSIONAL MANDATED REPORTERS

In most states, Professional Mandated Reporters refers to healthcare professionals such as physicians, medical and/or hospital personnel involved with patient care, mental health professionals, social workers and chaplains. Additionally, this typically includes anyone who is legally obligated to report abuse such as school teachers, nursing home, assisted living, adult day care and departments of regulatory affairs employees.

GENERAL MANDATED REPORTERS

In most states, General Mandated Reporters refers to individuals such as state, county, municipal criminal justice, and law enforcement employees. General Reporting usually requires said person who reasonably suspects abuse in minors, adults, or elders to report this suspicion.

REPORTING

Depending on the jurisdiction, reporting may be done through local, state and county officials, Department of Children and Families as well as local Law Enforcement. Failure to report abuse is considered a felony and/or first-degree misdemeanor in most states (Justice.gov). It is helpful to know that although reporting should be an individual(s) responsibility, it is recommended that the organization establish comprehensive policies and procedures for doing so. A reliable reporting process will help keep the individual safe by streamlining the process, and informing stakeholders alike.

TRAINING

It is important to complete your initial and annual training timely. The training serves as a reminder of how to report and who should be reporting as well as recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Stay aware and knowledgeable. Employees should follow the chain of command set in the company policy manual "COVER YOUR INTERNAL POLICY ON ABUSE REPORTING HERE." All employees of the healthcare organization are expected to complete this training.

ASSESSING

Keep in mind how important comprehensive head to toe assessments are. It paints a picture of the appearance of the patient as well as unusual markings that may be on their anatomy. Abuse injuries don't always present as a medical emergency, and do not often require medical care.

REFERENCES

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