ATTACHMENT: Performance Management Decision Guide

POLICY: RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) recognizes that at times, despite the efforts of every employee and physician to deliver the best work possible, errors or unsafe acts may occur in the workplace. When such events occur, RWJBH believes in a consistent, fair and systematic approach to understanding these events in a manner that balances a non-punitive learning environment with the equally important need to hold individuals accountable for their actions.

It is inevitable that people will make mistakes or experience an adverse event, defined as any variance not consistent with the desired, normal or usual operations of the organization. When events occur that cause harm or have the potential to cause harm to patients or staff members, or when those events place the organization at legal, financial, or ethical risk, RWJBH is committed to creating a work environment that learns from these events. To that end, we seek to understand these events in a manner that responds with a focus on process, prevention and process improvement measures, rather than in a manner that places blame.

A Fair and Just Culture recognizes that competent staff make mistakes, that many errors result from system or organizational errors, and that individuals should not be blamed for honest mistakes, or errors caused by system or organizational issues. We recognize the work we do is complex, rooted in systems of care and we all depend on each other and other departments to provide care to our patients. It promotes an atmosphere where staff report and discuss errors or “near misses” without the fear of reprisal, through a fair-minded assessment of events which in turn promotes system modifications and behavior changes to prevent future errors.

A Fair and Just Culture does not mean non-accountable nor does it mean an avoidance of critique or assessment of competence. A Fair and Just Culture does not tolerate reckless behavior, gross misconduct, or willful violations. Rather, when incompetence or sub-standard performance is revealed after careful collection of facts, and/or there is reckless or willful violation of policies or negligent behavior, corrective or disciplinary action may be appropriate. A Fair and Just Culture means living our values of Accountability and Integrity.

RWJBH wants employees to feel safe to speak-up and speak-out about reporting adverse events, near misses, existence of hazardous conditions, and related opportunities for improvement to identify systems changes and behavior changes which have the potential to avoid future adverse events. We know that healthcare is complicated and mistakes do happen as part of the day-to-day workflow, but we still want to try and avoid them. As a reminder RWJBH has a non-retaliation policy that protects individuals making reports in good faith. We want everyone, on every level, to feel comfortable raising issues that they think will impact, endanger or improve patient care and to do so in a respectful manner.

This policy applies to anyone working at any RWJBH business unit or facility including, but not limited to employees, agency staff, vendors, volunteers and contract workers.
Employees should strive to:

- Avoid causing unjustified risk or harm to patients, visitors or colleagues
- Achieve goals and outcomes
- Follow work rules, policies and procedures
- Report safety concerns, near misses and other events through RWJBH’s occurrence reporting system; look for risks and hazards in the work environment.
- Ask for help, seek a supervisor or check the policy when completing an assignment if they are unsure how to proceed.
- Complete all required learning obligations, attend department meetings, and remain knowledgeable about policies and organizational initiatives.

Leaders are obligated to:

- Promote a learning environment and educate all team members in the concept of Fair and Just Culture.
- Foster an environment that promotes full disclosure of adverse events
- Participate in cause analysis reviews, e.g. Root Cause Analysis
- Identify and report areas of potential harm, opportunities for improvement and adverse events
- Consistently and uniformly, utilize the Performance Management Decision Guide to evaluate events to identify system and process issues that may require change (See Attached A)
- Ensure that employees are free from reprisals if reports are made in good faith.

As part of the normal process for any event, the manager will conduct a thorough investigation to determine the type of behavior that led to the adverse event. Integrity and Accountability are critical RWJBH values and it is expected that individuals are cooperative and truthful throughout the process. As part of this investigation, the event will be assessed objectively and analyzed using a systematic approach as outlined in the attached Performance Management Decision Guide (PMDG). It is important to note that the outcome of the error is never used in determining a fair and just outcome.

Exceptions to this approach will occur if an individual knowingly or willingly:

- Conceals a safety event
- Interferes with an investigation
- Causes an adverse event or unsafe act that results from an illegal act
- Breaches confidentiality
- Has a persistent issue not resolved through performance improvement

This guide will help to determine the necessary course of action in consultation with Human Resources and other professionals within RWJBH.