

# USA GYMNASTICS

## The Traveling Healthcare Provider Code of Conduct

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Every member of the USA Gymnastics (USAG) medical staff has the power and the responsibility to shape the culture within our sport. By practicing our shared values and staying focused on our highest priority – the safety and well-being of our athletes – we can promote an environment that empowers and supports athletes and makes participation in the sport a positive and rewarding experience for all members.

The USAG *Traveling Healthcare Provider Code of Conduct* (“Code”) is a collective commitment to working ethically and professionally while traveling with athletes. It offers a tangible way to put our values into practice and provides guidance in situations that have potential or actual ethical implications. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Code depends on a personal commitment from every member of the medical staff. All contracted and volunteer medical staff members (“members”) are required to implement and adhere to this code.

All members are also required to accept the requirements of and comport themselves in accordance with (a) the rules, policies, and procedures of USA Gymnastics and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”); (b) the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions; and (c) all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

[Link to USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct](#)

[Link to USA Gymnastics Athlete Bill of Rights](#)

[Link to Olympic Movement Code on Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions](#)

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES

While traveling with athletes, members have an obligation to meet the following standards:

- Attend all assigned training and competition sessions, per event staffing plan.
- Attend all assigned treatment sessions, per event staffing plan.
- Be available for off-hour or overnight medical needs. When more than one medical provider is part of a delegation, an on-call rotation may be created to share overnight duties.
- Provide assessment and treatment in a timely manner.
- Medical staff members are expected to promote an environment of health and wellness within the gymnastics community and adhere to policies and procedures put forward by USA Gymnastics, USOPC (when applicable), and the USA Gymnastics Athlete Health and Wellness Council (AHWC).
- Medical staff members shall prioritize the confidentiality of an athlete's protected health information. Although USAG is not a covered entity under HIPAA, medical staff members should prioritize all HIPAA safeguards, and work within the guidelines of the National Team Agreement.
- Medical staff members have a duty of care, which includes acting in a professional manner to safeguard the privacy, dignity, and well-being of individuals under their care.

While traveling with athletes, members have an ongoing responsibility to facilitate a safe and healthy environment for all athletes. Consistent with this commitment, members must:

- Make decisions in the best interest of athletes.
- Promote a culture of trust and empowerment.
- Respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all athletes.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle and support nutritional well-being.
- Promote and respect all Safe Sport principles.

While traveling with athletes, members shall seek to contribute to the welfare of athletes and must:

- Promote a culture of empowerment with a focus on athlete health and safety.
- Proactively address potentially harmful behavior or an unsafe environment.
- Be sensitive to any imbalance of power.

While traveling with athletes, members have the responsibility to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct and must:

- Faithfully complete and comply, prior to travel, with USA Gymnastics membership requirements.
- Strive to maintain high standards and excellence.
- Accept appropriate responsibility for one's own behavior and report any unlawful or other inappropriate conduct of others.
- Understand your role within the delegation, as a medical practitioner, and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

[Link to USA Gymnastics Medical Staff Guidelines](#)

### III. SAFE SPORT

*USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy* is the foundation for athlete safety and the prevention of abuse. Within the policy is guidance and mandates for members. The policy requires mandatory reporting, open and interruptible interactions with all athletes, consent, and an athlete's right to refuse treatment.

While traveling with athletes, it is the responsibility of all members to read, understand, and follow the *USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy*.

#### Duty to Report

All members must report (a) any allegations of sexual misconduct involving a minor and (b) child abuse that they become aware of to the local law enforcement authorities **and** the U. S. Center for SafeSport immediately.

To report sexual misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport please visit:

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/> or 720.531.0340.

#### One-on-One

All interactions between an unrelated adult and a minor athlete must be observable and at a distance allowing interruption by another adult. This policy applies to all situations, including training, medical and athletic modality treatments, office meetings, locker rooms, restrooms, social media, and travel.

#### Open and Interruptible

All medical treatments offered must comply with the one-on-one policy and always be open and interruptible, with another adult physically present and in full site of all treatments.

All treatments must be performed with the athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered.

Contact with buttocks or the chest area should be limited to the area of the chest above the breast (approximately one hands' breadth underneath the clavicle) in females and to the anterior, lateral, or posterior hip area.

#### Consent

A detailed treatment plan including specific areas and method of each treatment must be presented verbally to the athlete before each treatment is offered. Verbal consent by the athlete is required for all medical treatments.

#### Right to Withdraw Consent

Athletes and/or parent/guardian may withdraw consent at any time and without explanation, as well as to request a different medical provider if one is available.

[Link to USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy](#)

#### IV. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AWARENESS AND REPORTING

Sexual misconduct can occur in various forms – neglect, psychological, physical, noncontact/verbal, bullying, discrimination, cyberbullying, and hazing. Sexual misconduct can have severe impact on athlete physical, psychological, and social well-being, as well as breach practitioner-athlete trust.

When traveling with athletes, members have a responsibility to:

- Recognize clinical signs and symptoms of sexual violence.
- Effectively address and report athlete disclosures.
- Recognize grooming behavior.
- Identify situations that limit safeguards.
- Adhere to all applicable codes of conduct.
- Emphasize peer accountability.

[Link to AMSSM SV Consensus Statement](#)

#### V. SOCIAL MEDIA & PHOTOGRAPHY

Social media can be a powerful tool to create positive conversation, but it can be, and frequently is, easily misappropriated to create negative conversation. While traveling with athletes, all members must adhere to the *USA Gymnastics Social Media Policy*. This social media policy, as well as the *USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy*, provides direction regarding the appropriate use of social media and the pursuit of personal photography.

#### VI. TRAVELING PROFESSIONALISM

While traveling with athletes, members are a part of the overall delegation and therefore participate in the daily rhythm of meals, lodging, and transportation. Many of these situations place the medical staff in scenarios that are outside of normal clinical encounters. These situations provide a unique and privileged opportunity to build relationships with athletes and other non-medical delegation members, but interactions in these situations should always be grounded in professionalism. These interactions include, but are not limited to, shared meals, riding on buses, traveling on an airplane, hanging out in the lobby of a hotel, or touring a foreign city. During these times, members should always remember that their role in the delegation, and how they are viewed by other non-medical members of the delegation, is first and foremost as a medical professional. To honor the trust that members earn and are given, as medical professionals, members should maintain a level of professional behavior and boundaries during these interactions, that replicates clinical standards. When interacting with a delegation athlete, a power imbalance exists, and a higher standard is required. In these

circumstances, the member should be extra diligent in establishing those boundaries (i.e., avoidance of involving athletes in personal conversations, or taking “selfies” with athletes).

## VII. INTERACTIONS WITH LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE & FOREIGN PRACTITIONERS

When traveling with athletes, members work with and rely on other medical professionals associated with the event’s local organizing committee. For international competitions, this involves working closely with foreign medical practitioners who are a part of the organizing committee, as well as practitioners traveling with athletes from other countries. While working with these local practitioners, members must maintain respectful professionalism and uphold the following standards:

- Make all efforts to work within local protocols while ensuring a high standard of care for the athletes.
- Make all efforts to be respectful of local traditions and culturally accepted behaviors while ensuring a high standard of care for the athletes.
- Always strive for collaborative approaches to care.
- Always strive for educational exchange with local and foreign practitioners.
- Resolve all conflicts in a professional manner.

While traveling internationally, a member may be asked to assist in the care of an athlete from another delegation. In an emergency scenario, it is appropriate for a member to assist in the emergency response in collaboration with other medical providers. For routine assessment and treatment, the member may, at their discretion, provide care for non-USA delegation members if requested by staff of another country. A member may elect not to provide assistance if they feel their actions may pose a liability risk, a conflict of interest, or would distract from prioritizing care to the US-delegation.

## VIII. INTERACTIONS WITH NON-ATHLETE STAFF

While traveling with athletes, a member will be a part of a larger traveling delegation. During this travel, members will have an opportunity to build relationships with non-athlete staff (i.e., coaches, judges, program leadership). It is important for a member to prioritize, first and foremost, their role as a medical professional and a corresponding level of professional behavior. A member is expected to demonstrate a level of professional respect and collaboration with non-athlete delegation members, while maintaining a role of athlete advocate and prioritizing the health & wellness of the athletes.

## IX. HIPAA COMPLIANCE

While traveling with athletes, members have a duty of care, which includes acting in a professional manner to safeguard the privacy, dignity, and well-being of individuals under their care. Although USA Gymnastics is not a covered entity under HIPAA, members are to comply with all HIPAA laws and safeguards. Extra efforts should be undertaken to maintain compliance through the recognition that during travel, members will encounter many interactions, outside of a normal healthcare setting (see Section VI), that can pose unique challenges to HIPAA compliance. While traveling, members should always be aware of their surroundings and be sure to create a setting of confidentiality, when discussing the care of athletes, with other medical practitioners and/or applicable non-medical individuals.

## X. ALCOHOL, DRUGS, & SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

While traveling with athletes, members will encounter many social interactions during meals, times of transit, downtime between training and competition sessions, and commonly will be invited to other social engagements as part of the traveling delegation. During these social interactions, members must maintain professional behavior and contribute to an environment free of drug or alcohol abuse. Members must also maintain the following standards:

- Members must not use or provide to a third party any illegal drug pursuant to applicable federal, state, municipal, or international law.
- Members must not assist or condone any athlete's use of a drug banned by any applicable governing body, or, in the case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by any governing body.
- Members must not provide alcohol to any athletes.
- Members must not consume alcohol, while providing contracted services or when they are the designated on-call provider.
- The on-call provider for overnight care (10 pm to 8 am in the local time zone) must not consume alcohol at any time within 8 hours prior to the start of the on-call shift.
- When not providing contracted services, members may consume alcohol in a professional manner and not in excessive amounts.
- Members are prohibited from using, carrying, or procuring illegal drugs.