

HACKETTSTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
Administrative Policy & Procedure

Elopement / Leaving without Notification or Permission

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Effective Date: 6/2013	Policy No: AD049A
Cross Referenced: AMA, AD012A	Origin: Administration
Reviewed Date: 6/2013	Authority: Chief Nursing Officer
Revised Date: 6/2013	Page: 1 of 1

SCOPE:

All in-patients and individuals seeking outpatient care at Hackettstown Regional Medical Center

PURPOSE:

To delineate the procedures to be followed when an inpatient leaves a nursing unit, for reasons other than medical purposes, and does not return for an extended period of time and does not notify the nursing personnel.

POLICY:

Minors and patients lacking capacity are not allowed to leave the nursing unit.

PROCEDURE:

- I. Adult Patients with Decision-Making Capacity
 - A. When a patient is gone from his/her inpatient room for more than 30 minutes and the staff does not know their whereabouts, hospital personnel shall make an effort to locate the patient and instruct them to return to their room.
 - B. Measures to locate the patient should include checking public areas such as the cafeteria and the front of the hospital. Staff may request the assistance of Security in looking for the patient if they are unable to leave the patient care unit.
 - C. For patients who leave the inpatient unit for longer than one (1) hour for reasons other than scheduled treatments, tests, procedures or surgery, the nursing staff will notify the Administrative Supervisor and the patient's attending physician, indicating the measures taken to locate the patient.
 - D. If a search by the staff fails to locate the patient, the Administrative Supervisor shall advise staff to discharge the patient from the computer. Nursing staff shall document in the medical record that the patient was not in the room, estimated time the patient has been gone and what efforts were made to locate them.
 - E. Should the patient return to the inpatient unit once discharged from the computer system, the unit will contact the patient's physician for formal discharge instructions or readmission orders. If readmission is determined to be appropriate, medical and nursing staff will follow all normal admission procedures.
- II. Adult Patients Lacking Decision-Making Capacity, Minor Patients, Patients on 1:1 Observation
 - A. Adult patients lacking capacity, minor patients, and patients on 1:1 observation are not permitted to leave the Hospital unless formally discharged by a physician.
 - B. Every effort must be made to remove all personal items including clothes, phones, jewelry and currency from patient when they are admitted.

Approved President's Council: 6/11/2013

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- C. If a patient attempts to leave his/her room, the Patient Safety Attendant will make every reasonable attempt to stop them, while considering the patient's and their own safety.
- D. If the Patient Safety Attendant is unable to stop the patient from leaving they will notify the patient's nurse and security at once giving a description and direction that patient was going.
- E. The nurse staff will notify the Administrative Supervisor
- F. Security will make a reasonable attempt to stop or hold patient till additional staff are summoned to escort the patient back to their room
- G. Security will make every effort to locate the patient.
- H. If the patient makes their way off hospital property and security is able to find or follow them, Security will notify the switchboard to call local police.
- I. Security will keep in contact with the switchboard as long as possible. Giving switchboard the direction and location of patient. Switchboard will pass all information along to the police
- J. If the patient is not located the police will be notified and given all information needed
- K. Once or if the patient is returned to the hospital then security will be sure to search patient for any contraband the patient may have acquired while off the nursing unit