

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**SUBJECT:** PATIENTS WHO SIGN OUT AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE**POLICY NO.** 315

PURPOSE:: To establish the Department's policy for hospitals regarding patients who may wish to leave the hospital against medical advice.**POLICY::** A patient of sound mind desiring to leave the hospital shall not be prevented from doing so even though the facility staff personnel and attending physician consider it medically unwise for a patient to leave. Any action to prevent a patient from leaving is prohibited.

When persons suffering from a communicable disease threaten to leave the hospital against medical advice, the physician aware of the situation shall report the matter to Public Health Investigators, so the Department has an opportunity to take appropriate action to isolate the patient from the rest of the community.

In certain instances patients seeking discharge may be deemed in the judgment of the physician to be of unsound mind, or otherwise helpless, or a danger to himself or others. In such cases Department staff members must follow the procedures identified in the Community Mental Health Services Act (Lanterman-Petris-Short Act) with regard to who may hold patients without their consent and what facilities may treat such patients.

Patients wishing to sign out against medical advice shall:

1. Not be precluded from readmission if medically indicated.
2. Be made aware of the medical consequences of leaving against medical advice.
3. Be fully informed in the patient's primary language of the implications of signing out against medical advice.

GUIDE:: If a patient signs out of a facility against medical advice, such action shall be fully documented on his or her chart.

Medical staff is to be made fully aware of the designations of Department employees and facilities, as well as the designation of private facilities in the Plan for Mental Health Services. Such designation shall be made by the Board of Supervisors upon recommendation of the Director of Health Services.

AUTHORITY:: California Welfare & Institutions Code
California Health & Safety Code

EFFECTIVE DATE: Nov 24, 1975**SUPERCEDES:****APPROVED:** Signature on File