

HARBOR-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: HAND-OFF COMMUNICATION

POLICY NO. 323A

**PURPOSE:**

To ensure complete and accurate communication of patient information to the members of the treatment team.

**DEFINITION:**

**Hand-off Communication:** Refers to the process of passing patient specific information from one caregiver to another, or from one team of caregivers to another for the purpose of ensuring continuity and safety of the patient's care.

**POLICY:**

1. A verbal exchange of information must occur between accountable caregivers, whenever responsibility for patient care is transferred completely or temporarily.
2. Hand-off communication must be interactive with opportunities for a face-to-face discussion to ask and answer questions.
3. Hand-off communications occur at all times during the patient's visit or hospital stay, but the following are critical hand-off points:
  - Inter-unit transfer
  - Admission
  - Transport
  - Change of shift
  - Breaks and lunches
  - Communicating emergent patient care information
  - Physician transfer of on-call responsibilities
  - Change in managing anesthesiology provider or surgical team leadership during operating room cases.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 2/07

**SUPERSEDES:**

**REVISED:** 8/10, 9/11, 3/16, 11/19


**REVIEWED:** 3/16, 11/19

**REVIEWED COMMITTEE:** Patient Safety Council

**APPROVED BY:**

  
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 Kim McKenzie, RN, MSN, CPHQ  
 Chief Executive Officer

  
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 Anish Mahajan, MD  
 Chief Medical Officer

  
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 Nancy Blake, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN  
 Chief Nursing Officer

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**PROCEDURE:**

1. Provide accurate information about a patient's current condition, ongoing treatment and services, recent or anticipated changes in condition, and actual or potential complications.
2. Whenever responsibility for patient care is transferred completely or temporarily, a verbal exchange of information using Situation, Background, Assessment, and Recommendation (SBAR) is recommended to be used between caregivers.
3. For Nursing, follow Nursing Policy 200: Hand-off Communication (<http://myladhs.lacounty.gov/polproc/Harbor%20Policies%20and%20Procedures/Nursing%20Policy%20Manual/200%20Hand-Off%20Communication.pdf> )

Revised and approved by:  
Medical Executive Committee on 11/2019



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Janine R. E. Vintch, M.D.  
President, Professional Staff Association