



Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**SUBJECT: PATIENT LEAVING ASSIGNED UNIT OR
MEDICAL CENTER GROUNDS WITHOUT
AUTHORIZATION**

**Policy No.: B513
Supersedes: July 3, 2017
Revision Date: June 30, 2022
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PURPOSE:

1. To ensure that all patients and their next of kin (for cognitively impaired or minor patients) are informed at the time of admission of the policy on leaving the unit or medical center.
2. To direct staff on proper response to patients who fail to comply with guidelines on leaving the unit or medical center grounds.

POLICY:

1. All patients or their next of kin will be provided the policy on leaving the patient unit or medical center at the time of admission. The policy will be included in the Patient Handbook.
2. As part of the admission process, "Guiding Principles of Patient Care" are explained to patient or legal surrogate and signed acknowledgement by patient or surrogate decision maker is placed in the medical record. This document serves as notice to patient that leaving the unit is at his/her own risk and failure to return to the unit within expected return time may result in the patient being discharged from the hospital.
3. For patients' safety, all patients are expected to remain in their assigned unit at all times. The healthcare team will communicate the activity level permitted for each patient. The provider and nursing staff shall document patient discussion in the medical record. A medically stable adult patient with mental capacity who wishes to leave the unit briefly must adhere to the unit absence guidelines:

Unit Absence Guidelines:

- a. Patient must notify the assigned nurse prior to leaving the unit.
- b. Patient may not be outside the assigned unit for any reason from 8:00 PM to 9:00 AM, or off the hospital grounds at any time, unless participating in a hospital-approved therapy or activity (e.g. rehabilitation-specific "overnight pass" or Rancho Los Amigos practice apartment).
- c. Patient must return to the unit within 1 hour.
- d. Patient who is taking any form of narcotic or sedative must wait 1 hour or wait time as determined by staff after taking the medicine before being permitted to leave the unit.
- e. Patient may not return to the unit with contraband or items including alcohol, non-prescription medications, or illegal substances.

NOTE: Rancho is a tobacco-free campus. Rancho recommends the use of smoking alternatives including nicotine gum, a nicotine patch, or prescription medicines. Clinicians shall discuss these options with patient who wishes to leave the unit to smoke.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 1992

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES • DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

APPROVED BY:

4. A medically stable adult patient with mental capacity who fails to follow the “Unit Absence Guidelines” is communicating to the hospital that he/she no longer wishes to receive hospital services and will be discharged from the facility.
 - a. For continuation of patient care after discharge, the patient will be informed of or referred to outside resources as applicable.

DOCUMENTATION:

1. Nursing will document on the medical record that the facility policy was reviewed at the time of admission (under the basic admission information).
2. Any staff providing coaching or discussion with patient against unsafe behavior or violation of “Unit Absence Guidelines” will document discussions in the medical record (this may include a team conference note).
3. The treating team will document discharge planning in the medical record per policy.

References:

Administrative Policy B826 “Discharge Planning”

Administrative Policy B706 “Patients Who Sign Out Against Medical Advice”

California Hospital Association: Consent Manual 2017, Chapter 6 “Refusal of Treatment...”

Revised by: SH:PM:ec June 16, 2006 May 5, 2009
 CM; MEC/EC October 16, 2012
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