LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
HARBOR-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING AND COLLECTING PATIENT ALLERGY INFORMATION

POLICY NO. 334

CATEGORY: Provision of Care	**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 7/09
POLICY CONTACT: Jennie Ung, PharmD	**UPDATE/REVISION DATE:** 3/22
REVIEWED BY COMMITTEE(S): Pharmacy and Therapeutics	

PURPOSE:
To define the procedures to be followed in obtaining, validating, and documenting patient allergy information in the medical record.

POLICY:
Allergies will be reviewed and updated in the required field at the beginning of each outpatient visit and at the beginning and end of each inpatient stay. This must be completed by both a provider (e.g., Physician, Physician's Assistant, or advance practitioners) and a designated staff member (e.g., Nurse, Radiology Technologist, or Certified Medical Assistant). The allergy section in the medical record will be the main data site for patient allergy information to ensure a system is in place to reduce the risks associated with inaccurate or incomplete allergy information.

DEFINITIONS:
Allergy: A state of hypersensitivity induced by exposure to a particular allergen resulting in a clinically significant reaction on subsequent exposures. Allergens can include drugs, chemicals, food, latex, and environmental allergies such as pollen.

Codified allergens: Built-in list of allergens on Computerized Provider Order Entry (CPOE) data base.

NKMA: No Known Medication Allergies after interviewing the patient/family and reviewing the medical record.

NKA: No Known Allergies after interviewing the patient/family and reviewing the medical record (No known medication and non-medication allergies).

Patient encounter: A patient interaction within the health care setting that includes inpatient, outpatient, Urgent Care, clinic, and Emergency Department visits.

REVISED: 2/16, 3/19, 3/22
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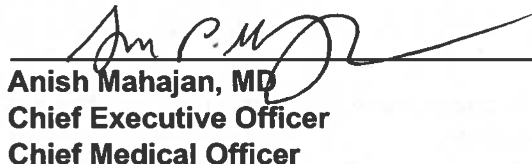
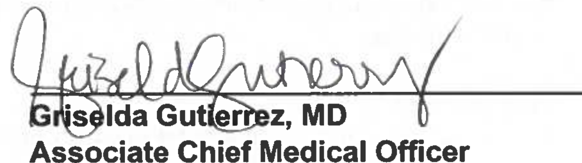
APPROVED BY:



Anish Mahajan, MD
Chief Executive Officer
Chief Medical Officer



Griselda Gutierrez, MD
Associate Chief Medical Officer

Jason Black, MBA, DNP, RN
Chief Nursing Officer

Unable to obtain: Allergy information is not available due to patient's clinical condition, absence of patient's family member/caregiver, or lack of previous clinical documentation. "Unable to obtain" is documented in the allergy field of the medical record. The allergy field is updated once allergy information is available.

PROCEDURE:

I. General Procedure (applies to all areas):

A. Authorized staff will inquire and document allergy or other type of reaction (e.g., sensitivity, side effect, toxicity, intolerance, etc.) information in the medical record as required. The assessment/comments on reaction type can be placed in the "Comments" field to communicate with other healthcare providers. The allergy warning box will alert electronic health record (EHR) users when related-drug class orders are placed.

B. Only codified allergens will be used. Un-codified allergens will be communicated to pharmacist via "Allergy Notification to Pharmacy-Non-Drug Allergy" orderable in PowerChart. The un-codified allergens will be entered as free text by pharmacist.

C. If a non-drug allergy (e.g., latex, egg) is documented, a NKMA must also be entered.

D. Designated staff will place a red allergy alert arm band on the patient with identified allergies.

E. Modification of allergy information must be communicated to a provider if such modification is directly related to the patient's current medication therapy.

F. Provider will review allergies at every encounter that generates a medication order and/or prescription and update allergy information directly in the medical record when a new allergy or change in severity is noted.

II. EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED):

The triage nurse will interview the patient to identify any known allergies, enter/modified identified allergies into the allergy section within the medical record, and place a red allergy alert band on patients with identified allergies.

III. AMBULATORY CARE CLINICS:

A. At each patient encounter, designated staff members will inquire about allergy status and document the obtained allergy history information in the medical record.

B. If the patient is scheduled to undergo any outpatient procedure involving administration of medications, a red allergy alert band will be placed on the patient with identified allergies.

IV. PROCEDURAL AREAS:

A. At each patient encounter, nursing staff will interview the patient to identify any known allergies, enter/modify identified allergies into the allergy section within the medical record, and place a red allergy alert band on patients with identified allergies.

B. The proceduralist/operating surgeon/anesthesia provider will review the medical record for allergy information.

V. INPATIENT:

A. On admission, the licensed nursing staff will obtain allergy information from the patient/family and document this information in the medical record.

B. The provider primarily responsible for the care of the patient will review allergy information and update as necessary.

C. If an allergy or adverse drug reaction occurs during hospitalization, the provider/nurse will document the incident in the medical record, in addition to updating the allergy section.

D. If the allergy section is not completed, the pharmacist will call provider or nurse to clarify allergy information before order verification.

VI. PHARMACY:

A. The pharmacist will not process or dispense medications without allergy information.
B. Upon request, the Pharmacist will enter un-codified allergies as free text in the EHR, which will populate in the allergy field of the medical record.
C. Outpatient Pharmacy personnel will obtain allergy information from the medical record or inquire directly from patients prior to dispensing medications.
D. When the modification of allergy information is directly related to the patient's current medication therapy, the pharmacist must communicate to one of the providers.

VII. RADIOLOGICAL IMAGING STUDY USING CONTRAST AGENT:

A. Radiology Technologist will obtain allergy information relating to contrast agent from the patient or family and by reviewing the medical record prior to administration of any contrast agent to the patient. The Radiology Technologist will also notify the ordering provider and update the allergy in the medical record if the patient reports to have an allergy to a contrast agent.
B. If the patient develops an allergic reaction to the contrast agent during the infusion or the procedure:
   i. The Radiology Technologist will immediately discontinue the infusion, notify the physician immediately, and implement emergency procedures. The Radiology Technologist will also update PowerChart.
   ii. A red allergy alert band will be placed on the patient by designated staff unless the patient will be discharged immediately following that radiology procedure.

VIII. FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

A. When the Food and Nutrition Department is informed of food allergies, an alert allergy notification will be printed on each patient's tray ticket; in addition to a bright "Allergy" sticker to heighten awareness during the tray assembly and delivery process.

B. Clinical Dietitians obtain and review allergy information during assessment. If discrepancies are identified, the clinical dietitian will update codified food allergy information in the allergy section in medical record and notify the provider and the patient's licensed nurse. The nurse will place an allergy alert band on the patient and an allergy sticker on the medical record.

Reviewed and approved by:
Medical Executive Committee on date 03/2022

Beverley A. Petrie, M.D.
President, Professional Staff Association