



# Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

## DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

### ADMINISTRATIVE

### POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**SUBJECT:** NURSING DECISION MAKING THROUGH  
CHAIN OF COMMAND

**Policy No.:** A456  
**Effective Date:** 06/1999  
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**Purpose:** The purpose of escalation and initiating the chain of command is to resolve problems/concerns related to patient care, to clarify a care management plan, to obtain a necessary patient care intervention, to provide for patient advocacy, to support patient safety by maintaining the standard of care and/or to support risk management by mitigating liability exposures.

#### **Policy Statements:**

- Rancho's Department of Nursing is committed to providing safe, quality patient care.
- Any staff member who identifies a problem regarding patient care and is unable to resolve it should escalate the issue to successively higher levels of authority (Chain of Command) until a satisfactory resolution is achieved.
- All employees and contracted employees shall be empowered to invoke this procedure in furtherance of patient safety and Rancho's mission, vision, and goals.
- It is the responsibility and the obligation of the nursing leadership team to support staff members to speak up when they witness or have knowledge of actions which could adversely impact patient safety.
  - The Nursing Department provides resources to the personnel within the department to assist in clinical and organizational decision making.
  - Employees of the Department of Nursing are responsible to know the available resources and to utilize them when there is a clinical or organizational situation beyond their knowledge, skill, or expertise.
- The Chain of Command is an administrative process, which is promoted by the nursing leadership team, and utilized to resolve clinical patient care issues. This ensures that,
  1. The appropriate people are aware of the situation
  2. Issues progress from the level closest to the event and move up as the situation warrants
  3. Further information can be obtained which may result in resolution of the issue, thus contact information of the reporting personnel is essential
- Clinical situations often involve judgment, which at times may differ among caregivers. However, caregivers have a duty to advocate for the patient through the organizational chain of command when they believe that a practitioner is unresponsive to concerns about the patient's condition or is making decisions that would be detrimental to the patient's well-being.
- Because Rancho places patient and staff well-being above all else, retaliation against anyone who invokes Chain of Command procedures is prohibited

#### **Procedural Steps:**

- The Chain of Command procedure can vary depending on the potential or immediate possibility of patient harm. In an emergent situation (e.g., deterioration of patient clinical status),

movement through the chain of command should occur more rapidly, and the person(s) contacted may vary depending on the nature of the circumstances and patient condition.

- The Administrative Nursing Supervisor (ANS) is the on-duty administrative representative for the hospital in the absence of the nurse manager or other nursing leadership. Any staff member may contact the ANS for assistance as needed.
- The Nursing Chain of Command is as follows:
  1. The Supervising Staff Nurse (SSNI)/ designee of the unit/department
  2. The unit/department Manager or ANS
  3. Clinical Director/ Assistant Nursing Director
  4. The Chief Nursing Officer
  5. The Chief Executive Officer
- When there is any incidence or issues identified by a nursing employee, a consultation can be sought from peers, colleagues and organizational standards (i.e. policies/procedures). If the employee is not a Registered Nurse, seek the assistance of the Registered Nurse first. Other clinical resources available to nursing personnel include but not limited to the following:
  - A. Clinical Nurse Educators
  - B. Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
  - C. Certified Diabetes Educator
  - D. Wound Care nurse
  - E. Pain and Palliative Care Nurse Consultant
  - F. Interprofessional Team members including the Psychologist, Patient Advocate, Clinical Social Worker, Therapy personnel, Case Manager, and Chaplain
- The employee seeks direction from the Supervising Staff Nurse (SSNI) or designee when there is no resolution determined from either of the following:
  - a. published organizational standards
  - b. consultation with co-workers
  - c. consultation with the Registered Nurse responsible for the care of the patient
- If there is no resolution following consultation with the SSNI or designee, the employee seeks direction from the Nurse Manager or Administrative Nursing Supervisor (ANS).
- If further consultation is required to resolve the issue, the employee's Nurse Manager or ANS seeks direction from the Clinical Nursing Director, Chief Nursing Officer, or Administrative Officer of the Day/Area Administrator (Administrative issues only).

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**References:**

California Nurse Practice Act

2019 The Joint Commission: NR 1.01.01, LD 2.02.01, LD 3.06.01, HR 1.06.01

RLANRC Policy A107 – Chain of Command

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06/99 – New

07/07 – Reviewed

06/16 – Reviewed

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03/10 – Revised

03/20 – Revised

02/04 – Reviewed

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