

**OLIVE VIEW-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

NUMBER: 11733

VERSION: 1

SUBJECT/TITLE: **ELOPEMENT OF PATIENTS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND PUBLIC HEALTH HOLDS**

POLICY: Olive View-UCLA Medical Center shall have an emergency response procedure to provide an appropriate response for elopement of patients on mental health and public health holds.

Reasonable attempts will be made to locate and return the patient to the facility and notification will be made in a timely manner to the responsible parties.

PURPOSE: To define staff responsibilities in the event a patient on a Mental Health or Public Health Hold elopes.

DEPARTMENTS: **ALL**

DEFINITIONS: **Elopement:** An act of escaping or running away.

Mental Health Hold: Involuntary detainment under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (LPS).

Public Health Hold: Involuntary detainment under laws on quarantine and detention.

Mental Health Patient: Any person voluntarily admitted to the psychiatric unit or involuntarily detained (legal hold) under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (LPS) regardless of unit of admission.

Public Health Patient: Any person who has an order to be isolated due to a communicable disease, such as tuberculosis (TB), under the authority of the Los Angeles County Public Health Department and the California Health and Safety Code.

Tarasoff Law: A California law that states all all therapists have a duty to protect intended victims by either warning the victim directly, notifying law enforcement directly, or taking other appropriate steps.

PROCEDURE: **A. MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS:**

1. For every elopement of a patient on a mental health hold:
 - a. Nursing staff will activate Code Green (refer to OVMC Policy No.

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- 10375) and a reasonable search will be conducted by the County Sheriff.
- b. Nursing staff will:
 - i. Notify the patient's primary physician (and psychiatrist, as appropriate) and Nurse Administrator.
 - ii. Complete a "Request for Apprehension of Involuntary Patient" form ensuring that it is signed by the patient's primary physician and the original and a copy is filed in the patient's electronic health record.
 - c. Notification of elopement:
 - i. If on admission, the patient has provided written consent to release information to an identified party, RN or MD will call the identified individual and advise that the patient eloped.
 - d. If a patient has been determined by clinical staff to be a Tarasoff case, the identified potential victim(s) of threat must be immediately notified about the patient's elopement. Make a nursing entry in the patient's electronic health record describing the circumstances of the elopement.
 - e. Event Notification will be submitted per policy in the Safety Intelligence.
2. If a patient on a mental health hold elopes and does not return within three (3) hours, the patient is to be removed from the unit census and a discharge 'Against Medical Advice' will be completed.

B. PUBLIC HEALTH PATIENTS:

1. For every elopement of a patient on a public health hold, Nursing staff will:
 - a. Activate Code Green and provide a copy of the detention order to the County Sheriff who will conduct a reasonable search for the patient on hospital grounds.
 - b. Notify the patient's primary physician.
 - c. Notify the public health investigator of the elopement by telephone (name/phone number available in the nursing station)
 - d. Make a nursing entry in the patient's electronic health record describing the incident.
 - e. Ensure an Event Notification is submitted in the Safety Intelligence System.
2. If the patient is located on hospital grounds, the Sheriff will escort the patient back to the Infectious Disease unit and stay outside the patient's room to ensure the patient does not attempt to elope again.
3. Upon the public health investigator's decision, the patient may either

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be transferred to LAC+USC Jail Ward via escort by Sheriff or the public health investigator; or the patient may remain on the infectious disease unit.

4. If the patient elopes for a second time, nursing staff will notify the Attending physician on-call and provide him/her the on-call public health investigator's contact information for disposition/determination.

References: Welfare and Institutions Code 5150, 5151 , and 5152 (Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (LPS)) California Health and Safety Code Section 120175-120250, 121365	
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