

Policies and Procedures: Discharging a Patient

Section: Ambulatory Services
Chapter: Administration
Policy: Discharging a Patient

I. PURPOSE

To establish a policy which addresses the manner in which patients may be discharged from one or all WVUPC clinics for various reasons, including but not limited to:

- a. Failure of the patient to follow treatment recommendations;
- b. Abusive or threatening behavior toward provider and/or support staff;
- c. Violation of medication use agreements;
- d. Willful refusal to pay for services by individuals who are capable of payment;
- e. Repeated failure to arrive for scheduled appointments, without calling and cancelling the appointment (no shows).

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all WVUPC clinical locations, providers and staff. Under no circumstances shall care be refused to any patient who presents to any WVUPC location in an unstable condition, active labor or with any bona fide emergent health need.

III. POLICY

When the need arises to discharge a patient, the discharging provider shall do the following:

1. Complete Section I of the *Request to Discharge a Patient* form (see Attachment A) and provide the same to the department Administrator and Chair.
2. Complete a discharge notification letter to be sent to the patient under the signature of the discharging provider(s). This letter shall contain the information described below, and shall be in substantially the same form as in Attachment B. Unless extenuating circumstances exist (such as abusive or threatening behavior), a thirty-day (30) grace period shall be given to the patient during which WVUPC shall continue to provide acute or emergent care. Deviations from the 30 day grace period rule require advance approval by corporate legal counsel.

The letter relating to the discharge of the patient shall include the following:

- a. Termination of care date
 - b. Brief statement of reason for the discharge
 - c. Department phone number which patient can use to request transfer of their records
 - d. Statement of the 30 day grace period for emergent care needs in order to allow the patient to locate another provider
3. The provider shall forward the discharge form and letter to the department Administrator and Chair for review. The Administrator shall then provide an electronic copy of the proposed discharge letter to the WVUPC General Counsel for approval.
 4. Once approved by Counsel, the Administrator or his/her designee will send the letter to the patient's designated address, via certified mail return receipt requested. The discharge form, letter and return receipt shall be filed in the patient's clinical record.
 5. Once the return receipt is received back from the patient, the Administrator or his/her designee will enter a registration flag with appropriate comment regarding the dismissal into the patient's account data on the IDX system.
 4. If the certified mail letter is returned as unclaimed, the discharging department will:
 - a. Document the effort made to contact the patient in the clinical record; and
 - b. Provide the discharge letter to the patient at any subsequent appointment.

IV. Amendment or Termination of this Policy

This policy may be amended or terminated at any time.

POLICY/PROCEDURE NO.: B-25
Effective date: March 26, 2009
Date(s) of revision: _____