

APPENDIX F – GUIDELINES FOR TRANSPORTATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS

Background

Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect mood, thinking and behavior. The majority of persons experiencing mental health symptoms are non-violent and do not present a risk to the personal safety to others.

This guideline for the transportation of mental health patients respects the patient’s dignity and also provides direction for the appropriate mode of transportation considering public and individual safety risks. It has been developed collaboratively with QHC Emergency and Primary Care Program and Mental Health Program, Ontario Provincial Police, Belleville Police Services, Hastings Quinte Paramedic Service and the Community Patient Transfer Group.

Guiding Principles

The selection of transport method will:

- Be done with careful consideration of risk factors to maximize safety of the patient, transport staff and care providers
- Minimise interference with the rights, dignity and self-respect of the patient
- Take a least restrictive approach, ensuring restriction is reasonable and proportionate to risk
- Recognize the need for Paramedic and Police Services to be available for community response

Selection of Transportation Method

Refer to decision-making framework at the end of this guideline to assist with determination of best method of transportation.

The **care team** refers to the patient family/supports and other providers involved such as physician, nurse practitioner, psychiatrist, nurses, crisis intervention staff, paramedics, police and others as required.

- The **Care Team** will collaborate to determine the most appropriate mode of transportation for each patient, in accordance with QHC Policy 3.18.6 Patient –Transportation of Patients to and from Hospital, including this guideline

- Decision will be based on assessment of the clinical situation and best interests of the person, made in consultation with the patient, caregiver(s), attending police officers, paramedic crew and the care team
- **Most Responsible Practitioner (MRP)** (Attending Physician/Nurse Practitioner Responsible for Patient's Care) will write an order for the mode of transportation required and need for staff accompaniment
- The **care team** will make best efforts to arrange for one escort/transport personnel to be of the same gender as the patient – QHC staff may be used to fulfill this requirement where appropriate to do so (e.g. security, others)

Use of Police

- Transportation of patients by police alone should never occur. Where police escort is required for safety/security reasons, police will accompany paramedics in the ambulance.
- Police escort should be requested where the Most Responsible Practitioner/Care Team and Paramedic Crew identifies a risk of safety to self/others during the transport despite application of risk mitigation strategies such as de-escalation, sedation and/or restraint. Any one or more of the following must apply:

Presence or risk of:

- Violent, combative, aggressive behaviour
 - Unpredictable or erratic behaviour
 - Uncooperative behaviour
 - Acute mania, paranoia or impulsiveness
 - Police custody
- If police officers are not already present, but are required for transport based on these guidelines, the request must be made through the OPP Provincial Communication Centre (1-888-310-1122) or Belleville Police Front Desk (613-966-0882 extension 2211) respectively.

Use of Private Vehicle for Transport

- Private vehicle shall not be used if QHC staff are required for accompaniment
- Private vehicle could include a taxi.

All of the following criteria must be in place when using Private Vehicle:

Family/Friend support person...

- Are willing, available, suitable and reliable.
- Understand the purpose of transfer.
- Are knowledgeable about the patient.

Patient ...

- Understand and accepts rationale for transfer.
- Are agreeable to transfer by private vehicle with identified support person.

Use of Restraints during Transport

If required, restraints during transportation will be used in accordance with QHC Policy 3.16.6 Nursing – Restraint Minimization.

- The Most Responsible Practitioner (MRP) will provide a written order indicating need for restraints during transportation
- Patient will be accompanied by QHC Regulated Health Care Professional during transport
- Restraints will be provided, applied, removed and otherwise managed by QHC Regulated Health Care Professional

Conflict Resolution

- If any concerns or discrepancies exist regarding the transportation order, the care team members will gather, review the rationale, review the patient's care needs and further collaborate.
- If discrepancies continue, the QHC Unit Manager (or designate), Paramedic Service Duty Officer and local OPP On-Duty Sargent/Officer in Charge will be consulted.

References

QHC Policies:

- 3.7.1 Emergency/Primary Care – Form 1
- 3.16.6 Nursing – Restraint Minimization
- 3.18.6 Patient – Transportation of Patients to and from Hospital

Dryden OPP and Dryden Regional Health Centre (2012). [Electronic Reference] *Mental Health Act Form 1 Protocol between the Dryden OPP, Dryden Police Service, Northwest EMS and the Dryden Regional Health Centre*. Retrieved March 25, 2014. Available at: <http://www.hsjcc.on.ca/Resource%20Library/Policing/Dryden%20-%20Mental%20Health%20Act%20Form%201%20Protocol.pdf>

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Social Services Administration Board (2004). [Electronic Reference] Policy G.4.47 Care and Transportation of Emotionally Disturbed Patients. Retrieved March 25, 2014. Available at: http://www2.msdsb.net/EMS/policies/G_4_47-Care--Transportation-of-Emotionally-Disturbed-Patients.pdf

Southwest Local Health Integration Network (SE LHIN) (2013). [Electronic Reference] Patient Transport (PT) Decision Guide – Version 3.3 Hospital initiated patient transfers at hospitals using EMS for codes 1 & 2 – Mental Health Algorithm. Available at http://www.southwestlhin.on.ca/uploadedFiles/Public_Community/Committees/Patient_Access_and_Flow/20130509_Patient%20Transport%20Decision%20Guide_v3-3%20Algorithm%20B.pdf

Victoria State Government – Department of Health. (2011). [Electronic Reference] Safe Transport of People with Mental Illness – Chief Psychiatrist’s Guideline. Available at: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/cpg/safetransport.pdf>

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – Emergency Health Services Branch. (January 2007). [Electronic Reference] Basic Life Support Patient Care Standards, Section 8, Psychiatric Disorders. Available at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ehs/edu/pdf/bls_patient.pdf