

Transitional Year Residency Program

Transition of Care Policy

Transition of care is defined as one physician transferring the care of a patient to another physician. This includes daily sign-out and sign-in of patients on inpatient services, transfer of patients from one level of care to another, and transfer of patients to the care of another physician at the end of a scheduled rotation.

Effective communication is vital to safe and effective patient care. Many errors are related to ineffective communication at the time of transition of care. It is vitally important that communication be consistent and effective when the care of a patient is handed off from one physician to another. This policy is meant to define the expected process involved in transitions of care, and applies to each of the teaching sites where transitional year residents provide inpatient care.

1. Daily Sign-in and Sign-out of Patients on Inpatient Teaching Services

There must be a formal transition of care twice daily by each resident on an inpatient service, once when assuming the care of patient(s) in the morning and again when going off duty in the evening. Sign out must include direct communication between residents and must be face-to-face. If a code pager is handed off, the hand off must also be face-to-face.

The resident signing out patients to another resident must provide a formal sign-out of these patients that includes, at minimum, the following information:

- Patient name, age, sex, and room assignment
- Relevant diagnoses
- Active problems
- Code status
- Follow up and/or required actions, e.g. check H/H, re-check abdominal exam, etc.

Residents that are post-call must communicate the events of the preceding night to the resident(s) coming on the next morning. This includes:

- All new admissions to the teaching service
- Any patient transfers or deaths
- Any significant patient developments that occurred overnight

Residents that are leaving the hospital to attend continuity clinic, or absent from the hospital for any other reason, must sign out their patients to the resident who will cover these patients in their absence. Sign out must be face-to-face, and must include all of the elements described above.

2. Transfer of Patients to Another Level of Care

Any decision to transfer a patient from one level of care to another must be made with the knowledge and consent of the attending faculty physician. In the event of an emergency, this may be obtained immediately after the transfer.

When a patient is transferred from one level of care to another **and** a different resident physician or group of physicians assumes the care of that patient, there must be documented communication between these physicians that includes all information necessary to provide effective care.

The resident physician that "sends" the patient to the service providing a different level of care should communicate verbally with the resident that "receives" the patient, and should write a transfer note that summarizes the clinical events preceding the transfer. That note should include a brief history, relevant exam findings, relevant labs and/or imaging studies, advanced directives, current medications, and a brief review of the preceding diagnostic and therapeutic plan.

3. End of Rotation Transition of Care

On completion of an inpatient rotation, each resident physician must communicate to the resident physician that is coming on service information about the patients they will be assuming. Communication should ideally be face-to-face to provide an opportunity to discuss each patient and to allow questions and clarification of any issues. Communication should also include a written off-service note. This verbal and written communication should summarize each patient's hospital course to date, and address any active problems, advanced directives, pending diagnostic tests, current medications, and the current diagnostic and therapeutic plan.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Dr. Craig and/or the director of the inpatient service on which the resident is rotating.