

PATIENT CARE POLICY
Emergency Department

Title: Medical Screening Evaluation by Physician in Emergency Department
Original Date: _____ **Review Dates:** _____
Revision Dates: _____

Policy:

All patients presenting to the Emergency Department will be provided with a medical screening examination (MSE) by an emergency department physician. This screening examination will utilize all appropriate capabilities of the hospital, as deemed appropriate by a physician, to reach a definitive diagnosis. The Emergency Department fully intends to comply with COBRA, and Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) regulations. The purpose of this policy is to assure that no patient with an emergency medical condition will be refused treatment.

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners – These nurses have the knowledge and training to recognize a medical emergency. In the event, a medical condition is present, a physician is notified. Medical care takes precedent over the forensic proceeding. The SANE protocols will be followed in all cases.
- Patients presenting to other locations for a SANE examination will have a MSE by an Emergency Department Physician before transfer for SANE examination.
- Mental Health Evaluators – These individuals are credentialed. These individuals are involved in the mental illness aspects of the patient’s care after medical conditions and sexual assault complaints have been stabilized and/or treated.

Standard of Care:

To provide optimal and efficient care to all patients presenting to the Emergency Department all patients will be evaluated by a physician, regardless of financial status.

Standard of Practice:

1. All patients presenting to the Emergency Department will be provided with a medical screening examination by an emergency department physician, except those patients presenting with obstetrical related complaints and are > 20 weeks gestation. Obstetrical patients will be escorted to the Birth Center for evaluation of the onset of labor where a medical screening exam will be performed by a physician, obstetrical nurse, or midwife. An additional exception is made for patient’s presenting with the complaint of sexual assault. These patients will receive evaluation by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. A physician will be contacted if there is any evidence of trauma requiring intervention or acute medical condition.
2. This medical screening exam will be completed by a physician with documentation of emergency care provided. If it is determined that an emergency medical condition exists, we will do one of the following:
 - A. We will provide medical care and treatment to stabilize the existing condition within the capabilities of the staff and facility.
 - B. Consider appropriate transfer following stabilization. procedures. Transfer of patient will be dependent on the professional judgment of the physician following consultation with patient and family.

3. Determine from the patient or family if they have a personal physician or if they are meeting a physician in the Emergency Department.
 - A. In a critical situation the Emergency Department Physician will initiate immediate care.
 - B. All adult and pediatric patients with multi systems trauma are evaluated by a Trauma Surgeon in the Emergency Department as delineated in Trauma Alert Policy.
4. All patients (and/or families) will be asked for the name of their private physician. This physician, or his/her designee, will be notified according to his/her code on file at the Emergency Department.
5. If a private physician notifies the ED of a non-narcotic medication order for an incoming patient, the patient will still receive an examination by the ED physician, unless the primary care physician chooses to examine the patient in the ED.
6. Discharge Procedure:
 - A. A patient who is discharged is defined as any patient whose emergency treatment is complete. Patients will receive documented discharge instructions specific to their diagnosis with referral to a physician for follow up care and evaluation. The Emergency In a critical situation the Emergency Department Physician will initiate immediate care.
 - B. Department staff will comply with the current policy “Discharge and Follow-up Care of Emergency Department Patients”.