

SOM- Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology	TITLE: Prisoners as Patients	Policy: GR002
Department Guideline	Date: October 11, 2005	Rev. 0
Approvals:		
Chairman/Date	Dept. Manager/Date	

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MCG Health, Inc.
Subject: Prisoners as Patients
Effective Date: July 1, 2000

Policy Number 9.59
Revision 2
Revision Date: April 21, 2003

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to provide a mechanism for accepting prisoners as patients to the MCG Health System.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all MCG Health, Inc. employees, medical staff, patients, visitors, and any prisoners attending Hospitals & Clinics for treatment.

POLICY

All prisoners while at the MCG Health, Inc. will be closely controlled to provide the greatest amount of safety and security for all employees, patients, visitors, and prisoners.

PROVISIONS

I. GENERAL

A. For Inpatient Admission: Upon accepting a prisoner as a patient including Youth Development Center (YDC) and Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) individuals, the attending physician (or his/her designee) must notify the Department of Patient Access Services (Admissions). Admissions will notify Health Systems Safety and Security (HSSS). HSSS will make inquiries about the prisoner's history and classification.

B. For Ambulatory Patients: HSSS will be notified of the arrival of all incoming prisoners in one of two ways:

1) All incoming prisoners will be transported to HSSS Headquarters prior to being transported to any other areas on MCGHI campus. In emergency situations, prisoners will be transported to Emergency Services (**See Section V: Emergency Situations**)

2) Augusta State Medical Prison (ASMP) will fax a **preliminary** prisoner appointment list showing all prisoner appointments scheduled for the next business day to HSSS prior to 4:00 p.m. each day. HSSS will also fax a **confirmed** prisoner appointment list by 7:00 a.m. the day of the scheduled appointments. These lists will include date, name of requesting institution, names of all incoming prisoners, birth date, ID#, location of appointment, time of appointment, MCG Health System physician's name, name of any procedure being performed. HSSS will contact each outpatient treatment area by telephone the morning of the appointment and notify them of prisoner's name and appointment time.

C. A [Prisoner Treatment Approval Form](#) must be completed for each prisoner in one of two ways:

1) A [Prisoner Treatment Approval Form](#) will be completed at HSSS Headquarters on each prisoner prior to being seen in the practice site or admitted to the hospital. (See explanation of form below)

2) HSSS Headquarters personnel will fill in the Prisoner Treatment Approval Form on each prisoner using the information faxed to them from ASMP. The form will then be faxed to the proper outpatient treatment area prior to the assigned appointment time.

D. In order to process the prisoner, all agencies must supply both a medical file and a current identification profile on every prisoner to be seen at MCGHI. This profile must identify the prisoner's name, age, date of birth, weight, height, eye color, hair color, convictions, sentences, last home address, recent photograph (if available), and isolation status (Blood and Body Fluid Precautions).

E. At no time will a prisoner be left unattended or unguarded by any agency transporting a prisoner for treatment on the MCGHI campus.

F. The MCG Public Safety Division has overriding authority of all agencies for all prisoners (within scope of Georgia Law) during their visit/stay at the MCG Health, Inc. Hospitals & Clinics.

G. All prisoners, regardless of their security classification, will be secured in the appropriate restraints, as deemed appropriate by HSSS.

H. A prisoner must NEVER be placed in a room with a regular patient. If admitted, a prisoner must be placed in a room by him/herself. A correctional officer of the same sex is preferred to escort or provide security coverage for state prisoners. A gender specific post assigned to the hospital will be based on requirement of same sex coverage when: security tasks involving routine or anticipated contact with unclothed inmates or routine or anticipated strip or bodily cavity searches or procedures may occur.

This policy is in keeping with the MCGHI Policy # 12.87 "Patient Rights and Responsibilities," which states: "Patients will have the right to have a person of the same sex present during certain segments of physical examinations or treatments performed by a health care professional of the opposite sex."

I. For the safety of hospital personnel, a correctional officer will be present in the prisoner's room anytime personnel enter the room.

J. Prisoners are not permitted to receive phone calls and/or visitors during their visit/stay at MCGHI.

EXCEPTION: A terminally ill patient may have limited family visitations, upon the written request of the prisoner's attending physician AND with approval from the Director of HSSS or their designees ([approval form attached, see exhibit B](#)). The Director HSSS (or designee) will notify the agency having custody and Patient Care Services (house supervisor and charge nurse) of the approval or denial of such visitation.

K. All messages received for the prisoner will be communicated to the correctional officer guarding the prisoner. The officer will communicate the message to the prisoner only if it does not violate security requirements.

L. If a prisoner is to be moved from one location of the Hospitals & Clinics to another location, and the officer is not familiar with MCGHI facilities, then HSSS must be called (1-4787) so that an escort officer can be provided.

II. ADMISSION TO HOSPITAL

A. Notification to Patient Access Services: Immediately upon receiving an admission directive for a prisoner (including YDC & RYDC personnel), Patient Access Services must notify the HSSS Dispatcher (721-4787).

B. Admission Process: Upon notification of a prisoner being admitted, Patient Access

Services will assign a room. The prisoner will be taken directly to the room and a P.A. S. representative will accomplish all registration functions in the prisoner's room. **At no time will a prisoner be taken to the Hospitals Admissions department to be processed.**

(NOTE: All potential ASMP admissions and referrals of prisoners to the Secure Unit must first be approved by ASMP. No inmate will be admitted to the unit until this approval is confirmed).

C. Confinement to Room: SMOKING – Prisoners are not permitted to smoke.

D. Notification of Staff: All ancillary / diagnostic areas need to be notified via phone prior to treatment that a prisoner is involved. These areas should make every effort to confine the prisoner in a separate area away from other patients.

E. Eating Utensils: Nursing Staff is responsible for notifying Food & Nutrition Services that only plastic eating utensils should be provided with a prisoner's meals. Before a prisoner is given a meal, correctional officers are to check for and remove all metal utensils.

III. VISITS TO AMBULATORY AREAS (Ambulatory Procedures Center & Ambulatory Care Center)

A. HSSS will notify clinics of prisoner appointments prior to being taken to the clinic. Notification will be documented on the [Prisoner Treatment Approval Form](#).

B. Correctional Officers and staff escorting prisoners should use the least conspicuous means of transporting the prisoner through public areas (i.e., service elevators and entrances, as appropriate and safe). These routes are designated on the Outpatient Services Prisoner Access Routes Spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is located on the back of each Prisoner Treatment Approval Form and in each outpatient treatment area.

C. Treatment areas should make an effort to confine the prisoner to a separate room from other patient populations; preferably a room that can be used as both a waiting room and an exam/treatment room. (See Outpatient Services Prisoner Access Routes Spreadsheet)

D. The sharps box will be removed from any exam/procedure room in which a prisoner is to be treated. For all bedside procedures requiring the use of sharp instruments, a portable sharps container will be transported by a licensed staff member to the bedside. The procedure will be performed in the presence of a correctional officer. Once the procedure has been performed, the sharp(s) will be placed in the portable sharps container, then immediately transported back to the nursing station.

E. Any books or reading materials must be approved and provided by correctional officers for all prisoners receiving treatment.

F. To eradicate the potential for access of needles, sharps or tools (scissors, razors, silverware, stethoscope, keys), by the prisoner population being treated in ambulatory areas, all sharps, needles and tools are to remain secure in the treatment area and access to these items is to remain locked at all times.

G. No needles, sharps or tools are to be in the prisoner patient care area unless currently being used by staff in the provision of care. Once care has been appropriately provided in the presence of a correctional officer, the sharp will be placed in the disposable sharps container or the tool will be immediately removed from the treatment/procedure room.

H. Any staff member that observes contraband possessed by any prisoner will immediately report the findings to the correctional officer accompanying the prisoner. Contraband is defined as weapons, drugs or non-prescribed medications, metal

objects, razors, pens, pencils, lighters, cigarettes, coat hangers, sharps, silverware, or any item that can potentially be used to inflict harm.

I. The officer is to remain **in the treatment room** at all times during the ambulatory area visit.

J. All employees, contractors and physicians carrying contraband must leave the contraband in the nursing station area when entering the treatment area unless the contraband is specifically being used to provide care for the prisoner being treated.

K. Prisoners are not allowed cola cans or metal of any type. All metal items are to be kept out of the treatment area unless they are being used to provide care for the prisoner being treated.

L. If a meal is provided, plastic silverware is to be used. The staff will ensure that the plastic silverware is collected and discarded well outside of the treatment area.

M. No Physical Plant or Environmental Services work is to be performed in a treatment room in which a prisoner is located. If repairs or cleaning is needed immediately, the prisoner will be moved to another empty and equally secure treatment room before work is begun. No carts are allowed in a room with a prisoner.

IV. COMMUNICATION TO PRISONERS

A. All prisoners will be given a “No Information” status.

B. No information will be released to prisoners (or families) regarding future visits.

V. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In Emergency Situations: All prisoners (YDC & RYDC included) will be transported to Emergency Services. Facility Services Dispatch (721-4787) will be notified by the emergency services communication specialist or the triage nurse prior to arrival of the prisoner to the ER, in order to provide necessary security measures.

VI. PRISONER TREATMENT APPROVAL FORM

A. A [Prisoner Treatment Approval Form](#) must be completed on each prisoner by HSSS prior to being seen in the practice sites or admitted to the hospital.

B. HSSS and the correctional officer are responsible for completing the routing section (Treatment Area Section) on the bottom of the form indicating the areas the prisoner will visit.

C. Upon arrival to the practice site, the practice site manager, physician leader, or practice site charge nurse must sign the Prisoner Treatment Approval Form.

D. Prior to departure, the practice site manager, physician leader, or practice site charge nurse must notify the subsequent treatment area of the pending arrival of the prisoner to their area. The [Prisoner Treatment Approval Form](#) should be signed indicating this communications has occurred.

E. The officer guarding each prisoner is required to return the completed [Prisoner Treatment Approval Form](#) to HSSS prior to departing the campus.

VII. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A. Per the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 42-5-2, the outside agency must agree to provide continuous protection or make arrangements with HSSS personal to provide the service at a cost to the agency involved.

B. Before a prisoner can be accepted, a signed statement of financial responsibility must be obtained from the agency requesting services.

C. In emergency situations, HSSS will obtain the statement of financial responsibility as soon as feasibly possible so that arrangements can be made with the official agency involved.

VIII. TRAINING FOR OFFICERS FROM OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A. When an officer from an outside agency arrives at the HSSS Division Headquarters, or Emergency Services (See Section V), HSSS is responsible to brief the correctional officer on MCGHI’s “Code 17”, “Code Orange,” “Code Signal D,” chemical spills, and

“Prisoners as Patients” procedures. There must be documentation that each officer reviews these policies on an annual basis.

B. HSSS will provide the officer with an Orientation for Visiting Law Enforcement Agencies Escorting Prisoners Pamphlet. (These pamphlets are located in HSSS and Facility Services dispatch).

C. HSSS is responsible to note at the bottom of the Patient Treatment Approval Form that the officer has been trained in accordance with this section.

D. At the beginning of each shift, the HSSS Supervisor is responsible to determine if there are any inpatient prisoners being guarded by an outside agency. If there are any prisoners being guarded, the HSSS Supervisor is responsible to train and provide the officer(s) with a copy of the Orientation for Visiting Law Enforcement Agencies Escorting Prisoners Pamphlet. The HSSS Supervisor is responsible to have an entry made in the Facility Services Dispatch log acknowledging the officers receipt of the pamphlet.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Departments of Facility Services and Patient Care Services share joint administrative responsibility for the upkeep of this Policy.

Approved  April 21, 2003

President/Chief Executive Officer Date
MCG Health, Inc.