

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Procedure

Transporting Patients

Revised: X

Date: 04/07/14

I. Transport to Off-site Legal Proceedings, Appointments or Transfers to Other Hospitals

- A. It is the responsibility of designated law enforcement to transport forensic patients to legal proceedings. Forensic patients are those patients who are in the custody of the Department of Corrections. It is also the responsibility of law enforcement to transport patients to proceedings in district court.
- B. Law enforcement personnel may be used to transport non-forensic patients only if the attending or on-call physician has determined that the use of a less restrictive transport method would present a risk of physical harm to the patient and/or to others by elopement or other behaviors. The physician must document the patient's risk(s) and the necessity of using law enforcement. The physician's determination of the necessity of using law enforcement must be based on the patient's mental status and risk(s) that exist at the time of the transport.
- C. Authorized persons may transport non-forensic patients to outside appointments, court hearings, or transfer patients to other hospitals unless a physician has issued an order for law enforcement transport pursuant to subsection B above. Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH) staff may not make any stops other than the specified destination or to refuel the vehicle, use a restroom or obtain a meal if necessary. In the event that the trip will last through a meal, staff may go through a drive-through to obtain a meal for themselves and the patient. Staff must use VPCH vehicles to transport patients; they may not use personal vehicles. Staff must possess a valid driver's license to transport patients. VPCH vehicles are available and should be reserved for all patient transports. If a VPCH patient is being transported to another hospital via ambulance, a VPCH staff member shall accompany the patient in the ambulance.

II. Guidelines for Transport by VPCH Staff

- A. There must be a minimum of one non-driving staff person assigned to supervise each patient that is being transported unless otherwise ordered by a physician. The patient shall not sit behind the driver. Staff must comply with the *VPCH Escorting Patients Policy and Procedure* when they are transporting patients. A staff person assigned to an individual patient must keep the patient generally within arm's length at all times during the transport. In the event the patient needs to use the bathroom, the staff member shall maintain voice contact with the patient while the patient is in the bathroom.
- B. Social Services staff may transport patients without a second staff person when that transport is part of the discharge planning process, and the transport with Social Services has been ordered by a physician.
- C. Staff from a Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) may transport VPCH patients who have been placed on Short Visit (SV) status by a VPCH physician. Staff of the CMHC must abide by their agency's transportation policy.

- D.** Each VPCH vehicle has a folder containing the *VPCH Transporting Patients Policy and Procedure*, *VPCH Escorting Patients Policy and Procedure*, and the *VPCH Elopement/Late Return Policy and Procedure*. All staff involved in transporting a patient must review these policies before they transport the patient, and are required to comply with these policies during transport.
- E.** All staff members transporting patients off hospital grounds will carry a cell phone at all times. The cell phones may be obtained from the Admissions Office.
- F.** Should a patient elope during transport, the VPCH staff member will follow the *VPCH Elopement/Late Return Policy and Procedure*. The staff member will immediately call 911 to report the patient elopement and provide patient information as outlined in the *Elopement Policy and Procedure*. The staff member will then contact the VPCH Admissions Office to notify the hospital of the patient elopement.
- G.** VPCH vehicles are booked by calling the VPCH Admissions Office.
- H.** There is no smoking in any of the VPCH vehicles.
- I.** The driver is responsible for leaving the vehicle clean and full of fuel.
- J.** The vehicle log must be completed following transport.

Approved by VPCH Policy Committee	Approval Date: April 7, 2014
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