ADVANCE DIRECTIVES POLICY

Purpose:

To define the rights of patients to establish decisions concerning their medical and psychiatric care, including the right to formulate Advanced Directives.

Policy:

1. Definition

Advanced Directives are defined as living wills, healthcare power of attorney, or other instructions of a patient about their medical and psychiatric care.

2. For all adult inpatients Admitting personnel assess whether patients have designated a medical decision maker. This information is documented on the admit Form (SN 1175). A patient handbook containing advance directive information is provided to the patient upon admission. Exception: Outpatient surgery staff complete this information with their patients.

3. Inquiry is made of all adult patients as to whether they possess or wish to execute an Advance Directive. This information is obtained and documented on admission by the registered nurse who completes the Patient History/Assessment and Discharge Record or other approved unit specific admission form. This information is obtained and documented on the ambulatory care record by the nurse during the initial clinic visit. Information regarding Advance Directives will be provided to those patients desiring more information. Forms are available at no cost to the patient.

4. If the patient already possesses an Advance Directive but does not have a copy, the patient’s wishes may be documented in the patient’s medical record in lieu of the actual advance directive. If the patient elects to have the original directive used rather than completing a new one, the nurse attempts to briefly document the contents of the directive prior to the copy arriving.
5. If the patient has an Advance Directive, the inpatient registered nurse or ambulatory care nurse will notify the patient’s primary physician that the patient has an Advance Directive.

6. If the patient desires further information on executing an Advance Directive or desires to execute a directive, the nurse may consult case management to assist with additional information and/or execution of the directive. If case manager is not available, the inpatient registered nurse or ambulatory care nurse shall assist the patient with the additional information and/or execution of the directive. (Form SN 1288)

7. Case Managers/Social Service Personnel are available to all units and clinics during regular business hours.

8. The Case Manager/Inpatient Registered Nurse/Ambulatory Care Nurse shall meet with the patient to provide additional information and answer any questions the patient may have about Advance Directives. If an Advance Directive is executed by the patient, the Case Manager/Nurse shall place it in the patient’s medical record and contact the unit registered nurse or clinic nurse. The nurse shall then contact the patient’s primary physician so that appropriate planning of care may be accomplished.

9. Refer to Hospital Policies 5.21 “Withholding or Withdrawal of Life Sustaining Treatment” or 5.19 “Do Not Resuscitate” for additional information.

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Administrator

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Date

Approved by Clinical Board:  10/16/01
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