LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER – SHREVEPORT

PATIENTS LEAVING AWOL WITHOUT NOTIFICATION/PERMISSION

Purpose:

To delineate the procedures that staff are to take when an inpatient leaves a nursing unit, for reasons other than medical purposes, and does not return for an extended period of time and does not notify the nursing personnel. This policy does not address the patient who leaves Against Medical Advice (AMA).

Policy:

A. When a patient is gone from his/her inpatient room for more than 30 minutes and the staff does not know their whereabouts, hospital personnel shall make an effort to locate the patient and instruct them to return to their room. Measures to locate the patient should include checking public areas such as the cafeteria, smoking areas, and the front of the hospital. Staff may request the assistance of University Police in looking for the patient if they are unable to leave the patient care unit.

B. For patients who leave the inpatient unit for longer than two (2) hours for reasons other than scheduled treatments, tests, procedures or surgery, the nursing staff will notify the Administrative House Manager (AHM) and the patient’s attending physician, indicating the measures taken to locate the patient. If a search by the staff fails to locate the patient, the AHM shall advise staff to discharge the patient from the computer. Nursing staff shall document in the medical record that the patient was not in the room, estimated time the patient has been gone and what efforts were made to locate them.

C. Should the patient return to the inpatient unit once discharged from Net Access or computer system, the unit will contact the service physician for formal discharge instructions or readmission orders. If readmission is determined to be appropriate, medical and nursing staff will follow all normal admission procedures.

D. This procedure is not applicable for patients signing out AMA, but for those who leave the facility without authorization for an extended period of time.