MONTANA CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY CENTER POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Policy Subject: Patient Elopement	
Policy Number: CTP 21	Standards/Statutes: MCA 53-24-208 ARM 37.27.130
Effective Date: 01/01/02	Page 1 of 3

PURPOSE: To establish procedures dealing with patient elopement.

POLICY: Supervisory staff on duty at the time of a patient elopement will implement the following procedures whenever the whereabouts of a patient is unknown or when the patient leaves the unit without notice. In the case of an elopement confidentiality is supersede by the need to protect the patient or others.

PROCEDURE:

I. General elopement of any patient:

A. The staff on duty at the time of the elopement will notify the charge nurse who then notifies the Clinical Supervisor.

B. The supervisor on duty will organize a systematic thorough search of the building and grounds.

C. The counselor or designee will notify the emergency contact person listed on the consent for treatment form. The next-of-kin/family member/responsible person should be asked to notify Montana Chemical Dependency Center immediately if the patient returns home following the elopement.

D. The decision to notify the Silver Bow County Law Enforcement Authorities will be based upon the risk involved in this elopement. Examples of when to call law enforcement include, but may not be limited to:

1. Is the patient considered potentially dangerous to self or others?

2. Does the patient's psychiatric condition (i.e. confusion) present the danger of wandering or getting lost?

3. Is the patient capable of caring for himself?

4. Does the patient's physical condition necessitate finding him as soon as possible?

II Civil (Involuntary) committed patients:
The counselor, or designee, will notify the following in numerical order:

A. Follow all procedures in I above.

B. The Silver Bow County Sheriff. Phone Number - 911

C. Sheriff of the county in which the commitment proceedings were completed.

D. Sheriff of the county of the patient's permanent residence (if different from the county of commitment).

E. County Attorney of the county in which the commitment proceedings were completed.

F. Judge of the committing court.

G. Next-of-kin/family members/responsible person.

H. Referring professional person or agency.

III. Patients on therapeutic leave from Montana State Hospital:

A. Follow all procedures in I above.

B. Notify Warm Springs State Hospital immediately when it is determined the patient has eloped. Contact the admissions supervisor or shift supervisor 693-7000

C. The Silver Bow County Sheriff. Phone Number - 911

D. Silver Bow County Attorney

E. County Attorney of the county in which the commitment proceedings were completed.

IV. Information disclosure to all persons or Agencies notified:

A. Name of the patient, including AKA, if any.

B. Date and probable time of elopement.

C. Age of Patient.

D. Usual and/or permanent address or community location frequented by patient.

E. Type of commitment or legal status.

F. Other pertinent information (i.e. anticipated behavior, ability of patient to meet his/her basic needs, potential danger to others, etc.)

V. Information to Law Enforcement Agencies:

A. In addition to all of the foregoing information, law enforcement agencies should be supplied the following data concerning the patient:

B. Age

C. Height

D. Color of hair

E. Weight

F. Identifying marks (scars, tattoos, etc.)

G. Color of eyes

H. Description on how they were dressed.

VI. The staff must document in the patient's file:

A. A chronological order of describing the events of the elopement and action taken.

B. The time and circumstances the patient's absence was discovered.

C. All Phone communications.

D. The time each call was made and the general information disclosed or the reason the call was not completed.

E. Record any follow-up the staff may need to accomplish on the next shift.

Revisions _____

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Name Title Date

Approved By: _____ 01/01/02
David J. Peshek, Administrator Date