

Emergency Department to Long-Term Care Handoff Communication Form Guideline

Purpose

- provide the long-term care center and patient's attending physician with information on diagnosis, procedures and treatments, new physician orders and discharge instructions
- ensure continuity of care and improve handoff communication
- ensure that medication reconciliation is complete
- facilitate an efficient, safe transfer
- ensure belongings brought with the patient are sent with the patient at discharge

Responsibility

nursing staff and the ED physician responsible for the patient's care

Patient Population

ED patients who will be discharged to skilled, intermediate and assisted living/residential care communities and other LTC centers, such as LTC hospitals, rehabilitation units and hospitals

Placement of Form

The completed form should be part of the patient's ED record.

General Instructions

1. Complete the handoff communication form before discharge.
2. Before discharge, fax the form and call the receiving LTC center to give a nurse-to-nurse report. Assisted living/residential care communities may not be required to have a licensed nurse on site 24/7. An ED nurse may give the report to a certified medication technician or certified nursing assistant. When giving the report, determine who is receiving the information and communicate at the level of the expertise.
3. The ED physician also should call the patient's primary care or attending physician at the LTC center.
4. A copy of the form and the records should be placed in a large envelope and addressed to the LTC community. This envelope should be given to the person (family or EMS) transporting the patient, with instructions for giving the envelope to the receiving LTC center.
5. Place the original copy of the form in the patient's medical record.

Instructions for Completion

LTC Information

1. Check the appropriate box to indicate the type of LTC center the patient is entering.
2. Enter the name, address, phone and fax number or affix label(s) with contact information of the sending hospital and the receiving LTC center.

Patient Information

At the bottom of the form, affix patient label or document the patient's name, birth date and medical record or Social Security number.

Records Sent with Patient or Faxed to LTC Center

1. Document the copies of records that were sent with the patient to the LTC center.
 - a. face sheet
 - b. record of medications/IVs administered in the ED or the ED treatment record
 - c. discharge medication reconciliation record used to reconcile new medication orders with the resident's medication record
 - d. handoff communication form (fax before giving verbal report)
 - e. reports or results of lab, radiology or special studies performed in the ED, nurse's and physician's notes, nursing discharge instructions and any physician orders not recorded on the handoff communication form

continued...

Emergency Department to Long-Term Care Handoff Communication Form Guideline

2. If Schedule II controlled substances are ordered, a prescription must be written.

Belongings Sent with Patient

1. Document the aids and appliances sent with the patient at discharge. It is not necessary to document clothing and other personal items.
2. Reconcile this list with the belonging list on the LTC transfer form.

Physician Orders and Follow-Up Appointments

1. Record the patient's new diagnosis and any procedures and treatments performed during the ED visit.
2. If a separate physician order sheet was used and a medication reconciliation record was completed, the remainder of this section may be left blank.
3. If a separate physician order sheet is not used, do the following.
 - a. Record any new medications or changes in patient's current medications, along with dose, frequency and route.
 - b. For new medications, indicate if the first dose was given, when next dose is due and if a prescription was written.
 - c. Reconcile LTC medications by using the medication reconciliation record.
 - d. Record follow-up labs/tests and physician appointments, diet, activity and any additional orders or restrictions.
 - e. Indicate and list if there are any pending labs or tests. Give a number for the LTC center to call to retrieve results.

Discharge Information

1. Indicate if you addressed the patient's discharge needs and transportation with the LTC center.
2. If there are any changes in skin condition from the LTC transfer form, check "yes" and describe in the nurse's notes.
3. Because LTC centers have special requirements and arrangements for resident's medications, indicate if you addressed the resident's need and availability of NEW critical medications, such as antibiotics and pain medications, with the LTC facility.
4. Record the patient's most recent vital signs and time assessed.
5. Mark the box indicating that the patient is stable for transfer and no emergency medical condition exists. (The EMTALA form also must be completed if the patient is transferring to a facility with the same or higher level of care.)
6. Record the discharge date, time and mode of transportation.
7. Document that the receiving facility was called, as well as the date, time and the name and title of the individuals giving and receiving the report.
8. Record any additional notes pertinent to the transfer in the space provided for notes.
9. Provide phone numbers for the LTC center to call for patient care questions and requests for additional medical records.
10. Document that the attending or primary care physician was called by the ED physician. If you are unable to reach the physician, note the unavailability and the date and time the attempt was made.

Signatures

If a physician uses a handoff communication form for physician orders, both the physician and nurse are required to sign and record the date and time.

Form Reviewed and Approved

Date: _____

Director of Nursing: _____