



Patient Transfer Process

Purpose

COVID has exacerbated the challenge of identifying available beds at other facilities for patients in rural communities. Today, many receiving facilities remain near, at, or above traditional capacity. The healthcare system in Alaska must continue to provide equitable access to care to our rural communities. The process, described below and depicted on the associated flowchart, is designed to minimize the time spent away from patient care by the providers in the rural facilities trying to transfer a patient while leveraging existing transfer infrastructure.

Transfer Process & Expectations for Sending Facilities

When a medical provider identifies a patient needing further care for acuity, specialty care or both; the sending facility should begin calling for a transfer in their usual process. If no bed is available at the intended receiving facility, the receiving facility should ask if further assistance is needed in finding a bed.

- Assistance should be declined if this is one of the first receiving facilities called and the sending facility has the ability to call additional receiving facilities.
- Assistance should be accepted if multiple receiving facilities have been attempted and no bed has been identified or the acuity within the sending facility makes it not feasible to call additional receiving facilities.

When assistance in finding a bed is requested, the potential receiving facility will review the patient with internal leadership to see if the receiving facility can identify a means of accommodating the patient. If a bed is identified through this process, then the receiving facility will call the sending facility back and inform them of this decision. If the receiving facility still cannot accommodate the patient, then the intended receiving facility will initiate a text string between other appropriate receiving facilities to attempt to identify a facility that can accommodate the patient and the initiating receiving facility will call the sending facility to inform them of this decision and action.

If assistance has not been offered or the sending facility has tried several receiving facilities without success, then the duty officer can be contacted by a sending facility at 907-903-3721. The duty officer will take the patient details and contact information for the sending facility and initiate a text string between appropriate receiving facilities to identify a facility that can accommodate the patient.

During this process, the sending facility will be updated approximately every hour by a pre-identified member of the text string. When a bed is identified through the text string, the sending facility will be contacted with directions on arranging transport by this same pre-identified member.

Transfer Process & Expectations for Receiving Facilities

When a sending facility initiates a transfer call but an appropriate bed cannot be found to accommodate the patient, the potential receiving facility will ask, "Have you exhausted your usual channels or do you need further assistance finding a bed for this patient due to the volume or acuity in your facility?"

- If assistance is requested by the sending facility, the receiving facility will discuss the presentation with the clinical providers and/or administrator(s) to see if there a means of accommodating the patient can be identified.
 - If this process is unable to identify a bed, then the text string should be initiated and the sending facility should be informed of this decision and action.
- If no assistance is requested by the sending facility, the call is logged per usual operation.

