



# LINTON HOSPITAL

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**Policy:** Patient Follow-Up Calls

**Purpose:** To establish a unified way to communicate with our discharged patients in regards to their health status, their understanding of their continuing health maintenance, and their opinion of their stay at Linton Hospital.

**NOTE:** A follow-up call is to be done on each patient admitted into our hospital except for our Outpatient Treatment Room patients.

**Procedure:**

- 1) Upon a patient's discharge, a copy of their discharge instructions is to be printed and placed in the Follow-Up Call binder.
- 2) During a nurse's downtime, a nurse is to go through the Follow-Up Call binder and call each patient, as time allows, by utilizing the "Patient Follow-Up Call" form.
  - a. It is best practice for the nurse to always start with the visit where the greatest amount of time has passed instead of starting with the most recent visit.
  - b. The nurse is to try to save time in their daily regimen to call every patient in the binder as time allows during daytime hours. Some conversations tend to be lengthy or get off topic, so for time's-sake, the nurse is to politely keep conversations reasonably short and focused.
- 3) If the nurse calls a patient and they are not reachable by phone, a brief message may be left on the patient's voicemail as long as there is NO PERSONAL INFORMATION left on the voicemail (there is a format to follow on the "Patient Follow-Up Call" form).
  - a. Each patient should be attempted to be contacted on 3 different occasions for the survey, which are to be documented each time on the "Patient Follow-Up Call" form, before the form can be taken from the folder and handed in to the Medical Records department.
  - b. **IF** a voicemail is able to be left at any time with the patient, whether on the first or second phone call to the patient, no further attempt to reach the patient is necessary. The form may be placed in the appropriate folder within the file organizer at the nurse's station.
  - c. Should a phone number be found to be incorrect, or disconnected; it is to be documented as such on the "Patient Follow-Up Call" form, and the phone number removed from the patient's electronic medical record so that the next time the patient comes to the Linton Hospital, the receptionist will be prompted to get a correct phone number.
  - d. Should a patient be contacted only one or two times, but their visit is greater than 2 weeks ago, the nurse discovering this is allowed to remove the form from the Follow-Up Call binder and shred it.

**NOTE:** Each follow-up conversation is going to be as unique as the patient. The nurse will need to be creative in their questions for each patient to establish the best form of



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communication. The questions on the “Patient Follow-Up Call” form are standardized, but other questions should be utilized to get a well-rounded synopsis of the patient and the patient’s hospital experience.

- 4) The nurse is to utilize the “Patient Follow-Up Call” form to guide them in questioning the patient. The conversation should be geared towards:
  - a. How is their current health status since they have been discharged?
    - i. Sample questions: “How have you been feeling?”, “Has your pain improved with the medications?”, “Have you had any fever or chills since you have been home?”, etc.
  - b. Does the patient understand their role in continuing their health maintenance?
    - i. Sample questions: “Did you understand your discharge instructions?”, “Can you tell me what you were in the hospital for?”, “Have you been having any troubles following the provider’s instructions?”, “How has it been going with your new medications?”, etc.
  - c. What was their experience with the Linton Hospital?
    - i. Sample questions: “How was your communication with the doctors, nurses, and other staff while you were here?”, “How was your overall experience with all of the staff at the hospital; for example, housekeeping, nurses, doctors, or lab techs?”, etc.
- 5) The nurse is to mark each response of the patient, as pertinent, on the “Patient Follow-Up Call” form. The nurse is to prompt the patient to utilize the numerical grading system on the standardized questions.
- 6) The nurse is to document on the “Patient Follow-Up Call” form the date and time of the conversation and any extra comments, whether positive or negative, on the form as well.
  - a. Should the follow-up call conversation unveil a disgruntled patient that is unhappy with certain parts of their care while at the Linton Hospital, the comments should be documented on the form and the nurse is to ask the patient if they would like to file a grievance and their call, or their name and phone number, can be transferred on to the CNO/COO or the QA/CoP of the Linton Hospital.
- 7) When the conversation has ended and the form well filled-out; the forms are to be handed in to the Medical Records department.