

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Gang Policy: Gang Activity in the Emergency Department, Graffiti and Tattoos

POLICY:

[Name of Hospital/Medical Center] must be cognizant of the threat that street gangs impose on the Emergency Department and hospital and take proactive measures to prevent unauthorized entry of individuals who may create a danger for patient, visitors and Emergency Department staff. It is critical to recognize the hallmark signs of gang membership for identification and for staff awareness to protect against violence from this cohort.

[Name of Hospital/Medical Center] cares about its patients and staff and will implement policies and procedures to provide enhanced protection and security measures to ensure the safety of patients and staff.

The enhancement of a human resources hiring policy may be necessary to include the statement of prohibition of display of any visible tattoos by the staff.

The enhancement of a security or facilities management policy may be necessary to include the management and professional removal of graffiti from the hospital/medical center campus.

PROCEDURE:

1. Internal communication regarding the danger and the potential for incursion of street gang members into the Emergency Department is essential. Gang members may seek employment within the hospital to gain access to drugs. Gangs may mark an area on the hospital campus with graffiti as a warning to other gangs to stay away. It is essential for the safety of the patients and staff to be advised about all aspects of potential gang incursion.
2. Individuals who are members of a street gang may have certain types of tattoos and wear specific types of clothing. Management should establish, with the assistance of the local police department, data regarding the gangs that are prevalent in the hospital's geographic location and educate the Emergency Department staff regarding specific traits and identifiers of these gangs.

3. It is critical that regular staff and physicians, PRN/agency staff and EMS are trained to recognize gang identifiers and to know the procedures and to implement when gang members arrive or are present in the waiting room and/or treatment area.
4. Lockdown procedures must be initiated immediately when a patient arrives (ambulatory or via EMS) and is the victim of a gunshot wound or penetrating (knife or blade) injury or is the victim of a beating. This type of injury may be the result of gang warfare and it is well regarded that gang members may follow the injured individual to the Emergency Department. It is critical to protect the patient and the other patients and staff from retaliation or a gang war that may result.
5. Hand signals are used by gang members as methods of communication and/or of techniques of intimidation. The use of hand signals are to be prohibited in the Emergency Department. Communicate strict policy against the use of hand signals via posted signs that state the consequences of using hand signals. Post signs in visible locations throughout the Emergency Department.
6. Threats against staff or other individuals may be another way that gangs intimidate those perceived to be in authority. The proclamation of threats is to be prohibited in the Emergency Department. Communicate the strict policy against the use of threats via posted signs that state the consequences of using threats. Post signs in visible locations throughout the Emergency Department.
7. Staff must be trained in recognition of gang identifiers, the signs of impending violence and in de-escalation techniques to provide every possible level of protection for staff.
8. Policies regarding the prohibition of weapons and illicit substances of any kind are to be followed by all patients, families and visitors to the Emergency Department. Gang members must abide by screening procedures.
9. Individuals who are members of a street gang may have certain types of tattoos and wear specific types of clothing. Management should establish, with the assistance of the local police department, the local gangs that are prevalent in the hospital location and educate the Emergency Department and hospital staff regarding specific traits and identifiers of these gangs.
10. Gang members may attempt to seek employment in the hospital/medical center in order to have access to drugs. Human Resources policies must ensure diligent background checks regarding the involvement of any potential employees in illegal activities prior to hire.

11. Human Resources policies must also ensure diligence with regard to the prohibition of visible tattoos. Certain tattoos may indicate gang involvement. Tattoos are not professional and must always be hidden beneath clothing while employed at [name of Hospital/Medical Center]. It is essential for the safety of the patients and the staff to strictly enforce the policy of no visible tattoos as a Human Resources dress policy.
12. Individuals who are members of a street gang may wear specific types of clothing. Management should establish, with the assistance of the local police department, the gangs that are prevalent in the hospital location and educate the Emergency Department staff regarding specific traits and identifiers of these gangs. Human Resources policy must be written to reflect the prohibition of clothing that may indicate gang involvement. It is essential for the safety of the patients and the staff to strictly enforce the policy.
13. The presence of graffiti may indicate that one or more gangs have “marked” the area as their territory and could present a danger to patients, families and visitors to the Emergency Department and to staff. The marking of a territory with graffiti often is an invitation to fight or function as a warning to other gangs to stay away. Since few gangs would be intimidated by a warning from another gang, it could potentially lead to a gang war.
14. Security will make daily walking rounds of the hospital campus to survey for new applications of graffiti on hospital property.
15. If graffiti is found, the Security officer will photograph the graffiti and will note the date, time and location of the graffiti.
16. Security will communicate the information internally, to other Security officers, to the CEO office and to the management of the Emergency Department.
17. Security will email the photograph of the graffiti to the local Police department and will request information relative to the significance of the graffiti and of the gang who may be responsible, if this information is unknown. Any relevant information is to be communicated to other Security officers, to the CEO office and to the management of the Emergency Department.
18. Security will notify the plant operations/maintenance office to either remove or have the graffiti removed as soon as possible.
19. Security will document the incident via a photograph of the graffiti and the date, time; and location of the graffiti.

APPROVALS

Director, Emergency Department

Date

CNO (Chief Nursing Officer)

Date

CMO (Chief Medical Officer)

Date

Medical Director, Emergency Department

Date

CEO / Administrator

Date

Next review date _____
(6 months from current review)

NOTE: This policy may require adaptation or shared as a dual policy with the internal Security Department, Facilities Services and/or the Human Resources Department.