Identification of Patient, Resident or Client Using Two Identifiers

Corporate Policy & Procedures Manual

Policy No. VII-B-25

Date Approved February 29, 2016

Date Effective April 8, 2016

Next Review (3 years from Effective Date) April 2019

Approved by:
Vice President & Chief Medical Officer; and
Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

Purpose

This document provides guidance for safe care by supporting accurate patient, resident or client\(^1\) identification\(^*\) by utilizing consistent acceptable identifiers before tests, treatments, medication administration or provision of health services\(^*\).

Policy Statement

Covenant Health shall verify\(^*\) patient identity\(^*\) at point of registration and thereafter, prior to provision of any tests, treatments, medication administration or health services, using two identifiers.

Applicability

This policy and procedure applies to all Covenant Health facilities, staff, members of the medical staff, volunteers, students and any other persons acting on behalf of Covenant Health.

Responsibility

Covenant Health health care providers\(^*\) will demonstrate commitment to safety of all patients by the use of two identifiers before providing the patient with any health care service.

Principles

Safe patient identification occurs in two steps; 1) to accurately identify the individual as the person for whom the care, treatment or service is intended; and 2) to match the care, treatment, or service to that specific individual.

Active communication and non-leading questions are advised to engage the patients in the identification process whenever possible.

At Covenant Health facilities, acceptable identifiers include:

- Patient's full name – use active communication to confirm identity by asking the patient to state and spell his/her first and last name
- Unique Lifetime Identifier (ULI) – a provincial number assigned to all patients regardless of residency, who receive health care services in Alberta. For Alberta residents, it is the 9 digit number found on their Alberta Health Care card (PHN) and is also present on the patient ID wristband
- Date of birth
- Government issued identification card with photo identification
- Patient Identification Barcode
- Medical Record Number (hospital identification number provided by Registration staff)
- Identity wristband
- Recent patient photograph (only for use in settings with an approved photo identification process in place. An example would be Covenant Health policy #VII-B-420, Photograph of Admitted Mental Health Patients.)

---

\(^1\) Hereafter, all references to 'patients' includes residents and clients.

\(^*\) See "Definitions"
Use at least two of the following acceptable identifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use at least two of the following acceptable identifiers</th>
<th>And check against or verify by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Patient’s Full Name (first and last)</td>
<td>• Requesting patient or responsible party to state and spell patient’s full name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Patient ID wristband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alberta Personal Health Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Patient’s Date of Birth</td>
<td>• Requesting patient or responsible party to state patient's birth date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Patient ID wristband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unique Lifetime Identifier</td>
<td>• Patient ID wristband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Health record*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Barcode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alberta Personal Health Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Facial Recognition</td>
<td>• Photo (e.g. drivers license, health record photograph)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conducting an independent double check* – visual confirmation of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hospital Identification number</td>
<td>• Patient ID wristband or photo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Health record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Barcode</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unacceptable identifiers include:
  • Patient room number
  • Patient bed number or location

Procedure

1. All patients registering for a health service are required to identify themselves. Patients will be asked for two identification sources on registration. Registration staff/designated site staff will confirm identification using the appropriate verification process as outlined in the Provincial Registration Standards and Practices Manual.

2. For unconscious, confused or cognitively impaired patients who are accompanied by a family member or caregiver, the family member or caregiver may confirm the identity of the patient. If a family member or caregiver is not available, two health care providers will confirm the patient’s identity using two acceptable identifiers and shall then document the identifiers used on the health record.

3. In an emergency situation in which the identity of the patient cannot be verified, the provision of health services will not be delayed. Temporary identification shall be assigned and the method documented. The temporary identification is replaced once the correct identification is established and documented on the health record.

4. In the event of language barriers or other communication barriers (e.g., deafness) every effort will be made to have an interpreter present. If an interpreter is not available, two health care providers will confirm the patient's identity using two
acceptable identifiers and shall then document the identifiers used on the health record.

5. In care settings where identification wristbands are issued, wristbands will include the following information:
   - the patient’s name: last name, followed by first name, and
   - the patient’s ULI number.

5.1 Prior to application of the identification wristband, staff will ask the patient to state and spell his/her full first and last name and their date of birth. Once verified as accurate, the wristband is applied. Refer to points 2, 3, and 4 above if the patient is unable to confirm his/her identity.

Ongoing Verification of Identity

6. Two identifiers must be used to positively identify the patient prior to any tests, treatment, medication administration or service. Health care providers will match the requisition label or document label (eg. Medication Administration Record) to the patient to ensure the correct service, procedure or test is being performed for the correct patient.

7. Health care providers who prepare patients for diagnostic testing or the collection of specimens shall immediately label images and containers at the time of the procedure or collection, using two patient identifiers to confirm the identification of the patient.

8. In case of a discrepancy between wristband and patient identifiers, or if a wristband is not in place or illegible, the following actions are required:
   - Clarify patient’s identity using initial identification approach; ask the patient to spell his/her first and last name and state the date of birth and/or verify same with family or patient caregiver if required.
   - Notify Patient Registration to correct the error on the registration record and have new identification wristband produced;
   - Apply correct identification wristband and document on the health record;
   - Complete an adverse event report (refer to Covenant Health policy #III-45, Responding to Adverse Events, Close Calls and Hazards).

9. When patients with the same or similar last names are admitted to the same unit, the staff shall place a “Name Alert” notice on each patient’s health record, the kardex/care plan, medication record and on each patient’s door.

10. Pediatric staff will have the parent(s) or legal guardian verify the child’s name and birth date. If the parent or legal guardian is not available, two health care providers will confirm the patient’s identity using two acceptable identifiers and shall then document the method used on the health record. Both health care providers will sign the documentation.
Identification of Newborns

11. After birth, the following information is documented on an identification label containing the mother’s identifying information. This information is placed on the newborn’s ankle:
   - Baby’s date and time of birth
   - Baby’s sex

Multiple births are identified as “Twin A, Twin B”, etc.

12. As soon as reasonably possible after birth (not to exceed 24 hours), a new label for the newborn is created which includes the baby’s ULI number. When the newborn leaves the Labour and Delivery Unit, he/she is ‘admitted’ to the receiving department (e.g. ICN, Postpartum). At the time of transfer of the baby to the nursery or postpartum area, the baby’s identification is confirmed against the health record, the mother’s identification band on her wrist, the existing band on the baby’s ankle and then the new baby label is added as a second identifier to the other ankle.

   **Note:** For any tests, procedures, treatments, administration of medications or services required for newborns, it is important to ensure that the infant’s ULI is used (not the mother’s).

Definitions

**Health care provider** means any person who provides goods or services to a patient, inclusive of health care professionals, staff, students, volunteers and other persons acting on behalf of or in conjunction with Covenant Health.

**Health care professional** means an individual who is a member of a regulated health discipline, as defined by the *Health Disciplines Act* [Alberta] or the *Health Professions Act* [Alberta], and who practices within scope and role.

**Health record** means Covenant Health’s legal record of the patient’s diagnostic, treatment and care information.

**Health Service** means a service or procedure provided to a patient/resident/client to: (i) protect, promote or maintain his/her health; (ii) prevent illness; (iii) diagnose, treat or rehabilitate; or (iv) take care of the health needs of the ill, disabled, injured or dying.

**Identify – Identification** means a process to establish the identity of a patient/resident/client by determining and assigning appropriate patient identifiers. This may be done during the admitting or registration process or by any other approved method (e.g. assigning temporary patient identifier to a John Doe in an emergency situation).

**Independent double-check** means a verification process whereby a second health care provider conducts a verification of another health care provider’s completed task. The most critical aspect is to maximize the independence of the double-check by ensuring that the first health care provider does not communicate what he or she expects the second health care provider to see, which would create bias and reduce the visibility of an error. (Institute for Safe Medication Practices [ISMP], 2005.)
**Verification or verify** means a process by which patient information from two unique sources (e.g., health care card and driver's license) are compared and are confirmed as matching.

**Related Documents**

Covenant Health Policies/Procedures:
- *Medication Administration, #VII-A-50*
- *Photograph of Admitted Mental Health Patients, #VII-B-420*
- *Responding to Adverse Events, Close Calls and Hazards, #III-45*

**References**

Accreditation Canada, Qmentum Standards, Version 10 (2015)


Alberta Health Services Patient Identity Verification (June 1, 2012) and Patient Identification - Registration (May 28, 2014)

**Revisions**

June 15, 2011