

Patient Armbands in Ambulatory Care

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BACKGROUND

The Joint Commission 2022 National patient safety goal NPSG.01.01.01 “Use at least two ways to identify patients.”

Patient armbands are a standard practice in the inpatient setting as a method for verifying patient identity. This practice is not consistent in the outpatient and ambulatory care setting. According a recent FDA study, the use of barcode armbands “would intercept fifty percent of all medication/ patient identification errors.”

PURPOSE

To strive for standardized, evidence-based clinical practice, and meet criteria set by The Joint Commission for using two patient identifiers, specifically, in the ambulatory care setting. UMC Ambulatory Care Division has implemented armbands for use in the Quick Care clinics April 2022.

METHODS

The aim is to standardize the methodology for obtaining and verifying two patient identifiers. The process begins during registration; an admission representatives prints the barcoded armband, patient then verifies the information is correct, and armband is placed on patient extremity. The clinical staff utilizes the armband to verify patient identity throughout the visit. Following best practice, the two patient identifiers are verified upon entering a patient room, during the administration of medication, procedures, specimen collection, and any other interactions warranting verification of patient.

RESULTS

The Ambulatory Care Division will collect data, using Safety Intelligence Reporting to assess improvement and number of incidents involving: specimen collection errors, medication errors, and any near misses. A data comparison will be compiled one year after initiation of armbands (April 2023).



EXPECTED CONCLUSIONS

Historically, the Ambulatory Care Division has had a relatively low number of medication/lab errors related to patient identification. However, even the prevention of one error reaching the patient justifies the initiation of the arm banding process. This process improvement measure also ensures our compliance with National Patient Safety Goals for 2022.

REFERENCES

References available upon request

