


FACULTY PRACTICE GROUP – Ambulatory Operations		
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES		
SECTION:	Front Office Practice Operations	REFERENCE #:
SUBJECT:	Telephone Access	PAGE: 1 OF 2
APPROVALS:	FPG: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAO-SC: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APCA: N/A EAC: N/A	EFFECTIVE: 10/2008

PURPOSE:

It is the goal of the FPG to provide our patients with a consistent and standard greeting through out FPG services. This will apply to FPG staff in the outpatient practices, Physician Support Services in the Managed Care and Billing operations.

DEFINITIONS:

Service Level Objective- The number of seconds the phone system is set for calls to be answered by an individual. If a phone tree is being utilized, the Service Level Objective is calculated from the point the call is received by the phone tree to the time the caller is speaking with an individual.

Abandoned Calls- Those calls that are terminated by the caller prior to being answered by an individual.

Abandonment Rate- Number of calls abandoned divided by total of all calls received.

POLICY:

Telephone Response Time

- All clinical area phones will be answered in 3 rings (or 22 seconds) or less. This applies to all clinical areas and all employees with patient or referring physician contact.

Abandonment Rate

- All service areas with Automated Call Distribution systems will strive to meet FPG goals in regard to call abandonment rate of no more than 8%.

Phone Greetings

- All greetings must include all three following components.
 - Identification of staff member’s name.
 - Identification of clinical area.
 - Offer of “How may I help you” or “How may I direct call?”

Gathering Patient Information

- When a patient calls, the staff member will perform the necessary search on the patient by asking the appropriate questions. It is not mandatory that the patient have their UCLA Patient ID, as the search can be accomplished through the individual’s date of birth. Please also verify the last 4 digits of the patient’s social security number. The intent is to provide assurance to the caller that we have their information and we are able to assist them with their question or concern.

Transferring the Call

- If it is determined that the call needs to be transferred, the following procedure will be used:
 - The caller will be advised that they will be transferred and given the name and number of the individual or area of which they are being transferred to.
 - The staff person will stay on the line and will introduce the caller to the transferred area.
 - Example: “Mr. NAME OF CALLER, I am transferring you to NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR AREA at PHONE NUMBER.” Once the call is transferred, the individual transferring the call will continue by saying “Hello, this is NAME OF INDIVIDUAL. I am transferring Mr. NAME OF CALLER. He needs...”

Voice Mail Utilization

- Use of voice mail or answering machine is prohibited in clinical areas between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, except when all lines are busy.
- Voice mail and answering machine can be used for internal or business communications, not for clinically related communication.
- For appropriate numbers answered by voice mail or answering machine, the system should include the ability to automatically transfer the caller to the answering service for emergency. The caller should not have to hang up and dial another number.

Phone Tree Utilization

- The use of phone trees is discouraged between 8:00am and 5:00pm. If used, the caller must be given the option to speak to an attendant within the first 30 seconds of the message.
- Phone trees referring the caller to another phone number must use a system that automatically transfers the caller. Callers should not have to hang up and dial another number.

REVISION HISTORY

Effective Date:

Review Date:

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