

CAROLINA FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS, INC.

PROCEDURE

TITLE: RM-200.03 Operations During Utility and Network Failures

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 2014

SECTION: Risk Management

REFERENCE POLICY: RM-200 Emergency Plan

RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OF STAFF: Chief Compliance Officer

RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE: Central Committee-Compliance

REVIEWED: 3/17, 5/13/2019, 1/9/2023, 11/10/2025

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a systematic approach to manage the interruption of clinical activities during utility or network outages.

II. PROCEDURE

In the event of a utility outage, the staff notifies the Chief Finance Officer, and for network outages, the staff notifies the Director of Information Technology. For either event, the Health Information Management (HIM) team is notified. The HIM staff confirms the Epic outage and reviews access to remote.ochin or our disaster recovery site, with direction provided to Carolina Family staff depending on the outcome. The HIM staff then checks the OCHIN outage page for updates. If none is available, they attempt to reach OCHIN via OCHIN live so an estimated outage timeframe can be provided to the team. If all sites are down, the Clinical Site Managers or HIM staff access the Business Continuity Computer at their location and immediately generate the Business Continuity Access Reports (BCAR). The BCAR includes a daily appointment report, that is provided to the Front Office Supervisors, and a staffing and clinical summary report that is provided to the clinical Harvest Family Health Center is responsible for printing the reports for Carolina Family Dental Center. In the event of a closure, a blast notification is sent to patients by the HIM staff when needed.

The Front Office Associates (FOA) notify patients of the power or network outage and that a clinical person will be with them shortly to assess their needs and determine if they can be seen. If a patient cannot be seen or chooses not to wait, the FOA documents this on the BCAR report and verifies the patient's phone number. If it is expected that the event will not be resolved within the hour, the FOA calls the patients affected to notify them of the issue and to reschedule them. The FOA uses the BCAR report to check the patients who were seen in/out and contact patients to reschedule appointments once the electronic health record system is functioning.

The nursing/dental staff triages patients at the front office to assess their needs and determine if it is feasible to see the patient under the circumstances in consultation with the provider.

- A. Medical: Patients presenting for uncomplicated acute health concerns may be seen.
- B. Dental: The dental units and equipment in each operatory, the intraoral radiograph scanner, and the panoramic x-ray unit are nonfunctional in power outages. Diagnosis and treatment are limited by the functionality of the dental equipment. Patients cannot

be safely or effectively treated without power. The dental FOA's alert the patients in the reception area of the power outage and gives patients the option to wait until the issue is resolved or to reschedule the appointment. Patients in the operatories are notified by the dental assistant, dental hygienist, or dentist. The dental clinical staff assists the patients in sitting upright in the dental chair safely, as there is no functionality of the controls.

Clinical staff and providers utilize hard copies of the *Clinical Documentation* form (see attachment), Lab Corp's requisition form, and prescription pads to complete the patient's visit. The *Clinical Documentation* form is used by the medical and dental providers to document services provided and is referred to when completing their progress notes in the electronic health records system. Prescription pads are kept locked in the safe at each of the locations and can be obtained by the Clinical Site Managers. It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure documentation is made within the electronic health record once the system is functional. The original copy of the Clinical Documentation form is provided to the Front Office Supervisor as a check and balance. The supervisor or his/her designee notifies the patients that they will be billed for services and contacted at a later date to set up a follow-up appointment.

III. DEFINITION

Utility outage typically includes electrical power failure, water, heating, or air conditioning, but may include fire alarm systems, sewer stoppage, or the failure of telephone and computer systems.

Network failure implies that the utilities to the building are functioning, including power, but the patient management and electronic health record systems have failed due to issues with hardware, software, or internet access.

IV. ATTACHMENTS

- *AWV Documentation* Form
- *Clinical Documentation* Form
- *Dental Documentation* Form
- *IBH Documentation* Form