FOX CHASE CANCER CENTER
HOSPITAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NUMBER: FCCC-ADMIN-PC S-1.10
CAMPUS POLICY: □  TUH POLICY: □
TITLE: SECURITY OF VALUABLES AND POSSESSIONS OF PATIENTS
EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/1978
LAST REVIEWED: 10/2013
LAST REVISED: 10/2013
REFERENCES: 
ATTACHMENTS: 1. Univault Patient Valuables Envelope sample

SCOPE:
This policy pertains to all FCCC employees who interact with hospital patients/next of kin about valuables that are in the patient’s possession when they arrive at the hospital.

PURPOSE:
To establish guidelines for the temporary storage of valuable articles that were brought to the hospital by the patient, when the patient is not able to assume that responsibility.

POLICY:
FCCC cannot assume responsibility for valuables or personal property retained by the patient while hospitalized at Fox Chase Cancer Center. Patients will be advised to avoid bringing valuables to the hospital when planning a scheduled admission. Patients will be advised to send home any valuables with family or next of kin if they arrived to the hospital with them in their possession.

The patient and the legal guardian/next of kin are responsible for safekeeping of all valuables and personnel possessions of the patient.

When hospital personnel have made an earnest effort to safeguard the possessions of the patient according to these procedures, the Hospital will not bear the burden of the loss or damage of the personal possessions— including eyeglasses, dentures, prostheses, jewelry, money and electronic devices.

Patients and next of kin will be advised of the procedure for retrieving valuables from the safe including the business hours of operation when the admission area is staffed with individuals.

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who can access the contents of the safe. The patient is advised of the inability to access items during evenings, nights and weekends.

Items placed in the valuables envelope will be witnessed by a nurse and security guard before the envelope is sealed, and the signatures of the security guard, nurse and patient or next of kin are required before the items are taken to the safe by the security guard.

This policy will be reviewed with the patient and a copy of the Patient Items Tracking Form will be incorporated into the patient’s records which will be signed by all patients admitted to the hospital or by a legal guardian or next of kin.

Valuables tamper-proof bags can be obtained from the nursing office or from the nursing supervisor.

The Hospital will not store any illegal, illicit, or potentially dangerous articles of patient property such as, but not limited to, alcohol, un-prescribed narcotics, drug paraphernalia, firearms, ammunition, knives, or other weapons. Upon approval of the Security Guard, such items will be properly disposed of or turned over to law enforcement personnel. Tobacco, tobacco products, and smoking paraphernalia are not permitted on patient units and will not be placed in storage.

**DEFINITIONS:** (N/A)

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**
Hospital employees who have any contact with patients who are scheduled for admission or are admitted to the hospital are responsible for informing the patient and family about the policy. Hospital security and the Admissions office staff will assist with placing items in the valuables safe.

Security officers are responsible for transporting valuables to the safe.

Nursing staff notifies Security, obtains valuables bag and documents in the medical record when valuables are sent to the safe.

**PROCEDURE:**

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1. All patients and accompanying family members are advised on admission to send home jewelry, cash, and other valuable items. The policy is reviewed with the patient/family including the times when items may be retrieved from the valuables safe. A minimal amount of cash may be retained for incidental expenditures.

2. If a patient would like to have valuables stored in the safe, the nurse will obtain a valuables bag from the Nursing office or the Nursing Supervisor.

3. The nurse will call security. The security guard and the nurse together will accept the items and place in a valuables tamper-proof bag. The items will be listed on the front of the bag, the patient’s name, medical record number. The Security guard, nurse and patient/family member will sign the list to verify the accuracy. The bag will be sealed in the presence of all witnesses. The receipt portion of the bag is torn off and given to the patient.

4. During normal working hours (8:45 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.), patient’s valuables envelopes are taken directly to the Admissions desk. The admissions staff member will place the envelope in the “valuables safe” located behind the desk area.

5. During hours when the Admissions desk is closed, the valuables envelope is placed in the safe’s drop slot by the Security Guard.

6. Reference should be made on the nurses’ admission note about the storage of the valuables.

7. If a patient asks to have a portion of the valuables removed from the tamper proof envelope at sometime during the hospitalization, the entire envelope will be retrieved during normal working hours and given to the patient.

8. The original procedure should be followed if any of the items are to be replaced in the safe. The remaining items must be placed in a completely new valuables envelope. The items are relisted and the employee and patient signatures are obtained once more.

9. At times, patients may want to keep in their possession certain valuables they are accustomed to wearing constantly, e.g. wristwatches, wedding rings, engagement rings, religious medals. When a patient goes to the operating room, these items are stored temporarily in the locked medication cart at the nursing station.
10. In most cases, patients are discharged during normal working hours and the valuables are reclaimed by the patient. In the event of an unexpected discharge after the 5 PM, the patient or family member will have to return to the hospital on another day during normal business hours. When discharge is scheduled for the weekend, patient or family member is asked to claim valuables on Friday with the understanding that the Center is not responsible for the valuables if kept by the patient in his/her possession until discharge. If a patient is unexpectedly discharged on the weekend, arrangements must be made to pick up valuables during normal working hours Monday through Friday. Larger items are taken home with family members or sent to security for the family to claim during normal business hours.

11. The patient must provide the section of the valuables envelope receipt when claiming the envelope from the safe. The patient will sign for the envelope when it is released in the designated area on the list of property form located on the bag. The employee who has relinquished the property will also sign the form.

**Deceased Patients**

1. Articles of value and other personal possessions belonging to a patient, who expires, should be given to family members before they leave the hospital. The disposition of valuables and personal possessions are recorded on the Patient Item Tracking form (Attachment A). The family member claiming the possessions will sign the form.

2. If a member of the family does not come to the hospital at the time of the patient’s death, the following procedure is used to secure all items until claimed by the family:
   A. Valuables, such as items of jewelry, religious medals and money, are placed in a tamper proof envelope by nursing personnel, who list the patient’s name, medical record number and contents on the front of the envelope and sign it. The envelope is taken directly to the Cashier’s Office during normal business hours or given to Security at other times for placement in the safe. Larger items will be recorded on the envelope and given to Security.
   B. A description of the valuables is recorded on the Patient Item Tracking form (Attachment 1)
   C. Family members are encouraged to claim these items at their earliest convenience.
   D. When a family member comes to claim possessions during normal working hours (M-F 9-5) nursing will direct them to the cashier’s office. If the family arrives off hours, nursing will direct them to return the next business day.
**Possessions left longer than 30 days**

1. Possessions of monetary worth will be held for seven years, and at that time will be turned over to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Nursing Administration will check the inpatient discharge printouts monthly and contact patients/families via telephone to recover unclaimed stored property. If there is no response to telephone contact, Nursing Administration will send a certified letter requesting immediate pickup of unclaimed valuables and property. Unclaimed valuables remaining 30 days after attempts to notify or notification of patient/family will be disposed of according to the statues of the Commonwealth.

Keywords: Valuables, possessions, security, safe
Written by: Jeff Greene
APPROVALS

Note: The signed original of this policy is on file in the Hospital Management Office

Approved by:

__________________________  ______________
Richard I. Fisher, M.D.  Date Signed
President and CEO,

__________________________  ______________
J. Robert Beck, M.D.  Date Signed
Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer,
Chief Academic Officer

__________________________  ______________
Judith Bachman  Date Signed
Chief Operating Officer

__________________________  ______________
Anne Jadwin, RN, MSN, AOCN, NE-BC  Date Signed
Vice President of Nursing /
Chief Nursing Officer

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Attachment 1