



Ambulatory Clinic Policy and Procedure

Title: SUICIDE AND BEHAVIORAL RISK MANAGEMENT	Policy Number: EP 3.21
Regulation Reference:	Effective Date: 11/2017

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) to provide a method of triage for patients who express behavioral health concerns and may pose a threat to themselves or others.

Scope and Distribution:

This policy applies and will be distributed to all TTUHSC El Paso ambulatory clinics.

Procedure:

An emergency detention order (EDO) is a powerful tool to assist in the care of a patient in crisis. The law requires certain thresholds to be crossed to issue a warrant for an EDO. The generally recognized indications for an EDO are patients who threaten to harm themselves or others, and:

1. Have an imminent threat or plan
2. Are a danger to themselves or others
3. Have the means to accomplish the plan

OR

The patient is so impaired for any of the above reasons that they are unable to care for themselves.

Patients expressing behavioral health concerns or requesting assistance may fall into one of two groups, based on severity of symptoms and complaints:

Group 1: Individuals who are requesting behavioral health assistance but are not in crisis; includes those who are voluntarily seeking help from a behavioral health specialist upon the advice of their medical provider, and who do not meet the requirements for an EDO.

Group 2: Individuals who meet the criteria for an EDO, irrespective of whether they are seeking help voluntarily.

The Texas Tech Police Department serves as a valuable resource in assisting providers caring for patients with behavioral health issues. However, there is a significant potential for the appearance of coercion or involuntary detention on the part of the patient.

To balance these risks, the following actions shall be performed:

Patients in Both Groups:

Continuous direct observation of the patient until evaluated by the attending physician. Clinic physician intervention and de-escalation is highly recommended before deciding the most appropriate resource for the patient.



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Patients in Group 1: Patients in this group will be referred to community resources as appropriate. Patient compliance with the referral/s is voluntary. Options include:

1. Call the Emergence Health Network at 877-562-6467.
2. Call the El Paso Behavioral Health System at 915-544-4000.
3. Call the psychiatry clinic at 915-215-5850 or the clinic manager, Paulina Rodriguez 915-215-5896. Have the patient’s insurance information available.
4. Refer the patient to the UMC Emergency Department (ED).
5. Refer the patient to El Paso Psychiatric Center (EPPC) (note EPPC cannot initiate medication management in their ED).

Patients in Group 2:

1. Patients in this group shall not be left unaccompanied at any point during their visit.
2. Direct attending physician approval is required to call the police department (911) indicating that they have a patient they believe qualifies for an EDO. Police will respond, perform their assessment, and, if in agreement, remain with the patient and escort them to the nearest appropriate facility.

Note that all calls to the police department must be directed by the attending physician – not a staff member or resident.

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