

Ambulatory Clinic Policy and Procedure

Title: SUICIDE AND BEHAVIORAL RISK MANAGEMENT	Policy Number: EP 3.21
Regulation Reference: Texas Health and Safety Code Section 573.001	Effective Date: 06/2022

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso (TTP-EP) 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 TTP-EP ambulatory clinics.

Procedure:

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 immediate 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 emergency detention order (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.

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 Hotline at 877-562-6467
2. Call the El Paso Behavioral Health System at 915-544-4000
3. Refer the patient to the TTP-EP Psychiatry Clinic



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4. Refer the patient to the UMC Emergency Department (ED) or other ED with Psychiatry service.
5. Refer the patient to El Paso Psychiatric Center (EPPC) intake area. The patient may be released to family or responsible party to seek counseling or treatment.

Patients in Group 2: Patients in this group shall not be left unaccompanied at any point during their visit.

1. Direct attending physician approval is required to call the police department (911), ask for the CIT (Crisis Intervention Team), or the TTU Police Department, indicating that they have a patient they believe qualifies for an EDO.
2. Do not physically restrain a patient who is attempting to leave the premises. Only police and designed behavioral response team should lay hands on patients. 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.
3. An emergency detention order (EDO) is a powerful tool to assist in the care of a patient in crisis. The law requires certain prerequisites to be met prior to the temporary and emergency detention order under Section 573.001, Texas Health and Safety Code. The generally recognized indications for an EDO are patients, who threaten to harm themselves or others, and meet these prerequisites:
 - Have an imminent threat or plan
 - Are a danger to themselves or others
 - 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

Policy Number: EP 3.21	Original Approval Date: 11/2017
Version Number: 2	Revision Date: 06/2022
Signatory approval on file by: Juan Figueroa, M.D. Director of Clinical Operations Clinic Operations Committee, Chair Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso	

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Figueroa".