


## BHS Policies and Procedures



City and County of San Francisco  
Department of Public Health  
San Francisco Health Network  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

1380 Howard Street, 5th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
415.255-3400  
FAX 415.255-3567

### POLICY/PROCEDURE REGARDING: **Medical Emergencies in Ambulatory Behavioral Health Centers**

Issued By: Kavoos Ghane Bassiri, LMFT, LPCC   
Director of Behavioral Health Services

Manual Number: 3.02-21.

Effective Date: July 25, 2017

#### **New Policy.**

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure for responding to medical emergencies in ambulatory behavioral health centers.

#### **Scope:**

This policy applies to all BHS and BHS-affiliated staff in specialty behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder treatment) ambulatory care programs in Adult & Older Adult (AOA) and Children, Youth and Families (CYF).

#### **Policy:**

Staff will provide emergency triage in the event of client/staff/visitor (for the purpose of this document, called "patient.") medical emergencies that occur at ambulatory behavioral health facilities. All medical emergencies that occur in the behavioral health center will be evaluated to optimize the patient's well-being. The goal is to get qualified emergency personnel to the patient as soon as possible.

#### **Procedures:**

1. If a medical emergency occurs when medical staff are present (e.g. physicians, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, clinical pharmacists or psychiatric technicians), a medical staff member will take the lead of the emergency situation and provide immediate assistance.
2. If no medical staff are present, then the lead staff member on duty will take the lead of the emergency situation and provide immediate assistance.
3. Other clinical staff shall assist with ensuring that the area where the emergency is taking place is cleared. Staff shall follow instructions from the lead staff member.
4. If the patient appears to be having a medical emergency, personnel shall initiate a call to 911. The lead staff member will ensure that reception staff or other staff members are prepared to direct emergency medical personnel to the patient's exact location.
5. In those instances where it is clear that no medical emergency exists, management staff at the behavioral health center shall be contacted to determine what other resources are needed.

6. Lead staff shall complete any required reporting such as the BHS Quality of Care report, as applicable.

**Contact Person:**

BHS Chief Medical Officer

**Distribution:**

BHS Policies and Procedures are distributed by the Behavioral Health Services Compliance Office

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