

KINGSTON GENERAL HOSPITAL

NURSING POLICY

SUBJECT	Telephone Nursing Practice	NUMBER	T-1600
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Definitions:

Telephone Nursing Practice (TNP) is based on the therapeutic nurse-patient relationship, involves using a telephone to provide nursing care to patients at a distance location from the nurse, is an interactive process, and encompasses patient assessment, planning, provision of information as well as support, evaluation and documentation (College of Nurses of Ontario, 2004).

Known Caller is a caller that the nurse has a current nurse-patient relationship with and who the nurse has seen or is seeing face to face, related to the caller's health concerns, and for whom an available health record exists (Southlake Regional Health Centre, 2002).

Unknown Caller is a caller, who the nurse does not know, regardless of whether the caller provides identifying information (Southlake Regional Health Centre, 2002).

Decision Support refers to tools developed and/or endorsed by the Programs to assist the nurse in clinical decision-making during the course of a telephone encounter. Examples of decision support include clinical algorithms, guidelines, or standardized interview tools (College of Nurses of Ontario, 2004).

Policy:

1. Registered Nurses (RN) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) engage in telephone nursing practice in compliance with professional nursing standards as defined by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and in congruence with Program-specific decisions.

Procedure:

1. Direct care nurses on in-patient units should not engage in TNP.
 - 1.1 When nurses provide callers with information related to health care resources that is within the public domain (e.g. Community Support Group information, Telehealth Ontario phone number, Immunization Clinic location) this is not TNP and does not require documentation.

Exception: In the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), RNs may provide breastfeeding telephone advice to mothers who may or may not have been an in-patient at KGH and whose baby is in the NICU.
2. TNP with known callers is endorsed for RN and RPN* practice in the ambulatory setting, if:
 - 2.1 TNP is determined by the Program to be an integral and essential component of care delivery (Appendix A).
 - 2.2 The nurse is provided an adequate length of time for each nurse-patient interaction.
 - 2.3 Program-endorsed decision support tool(s) is used.
 - 2.3.1 RNs and RPNs use clinical judgement when deviating from the tool.
 - 2.4 *RPNs may provide TNP in situations where there is immediate access to professional colleagues or information resources.

3. TNP with unknown callers is endorsed for RN practice in the ambulatory setting if:
 - 3.1 TNP is determined by the Program to be an integral and essential component of care delivery (Appendix A).
 - 3.2 A Program-endorsed decision support tool(s) is used.
 - 3.2.1 RNs use clinical judgement when deviating from the tool.
 - 3.3 The RN is provided an adequate length of time for each nurse-patient interaction.
4. RNs and RPNs engaging in TNP require current and in-depth knowledge, skill, and judgement in the clinical specialty relevant to the caller's care needs, including expert communication skills.
5. TNP documentation will be in compliance with the minimum standards as defined by the CNO.
 - 5.1 Documentation tools will be standardized across clinical areas/programs, as much as possible.
 - 5.2 TNP documentation will be sent to Patient Records.
6. Orientation to the telephone nursing practice policy and Program-specific applications of the policy will occur during unit-based nursing orientation.

References:

College of Nurses of Ontario. (2004). *Telephone Nursing Practice*. Toronto, ON: Author.

Southlake Regional Health Centre. (2002). *Telephone Triage and Contact Disposition*. Newmarket, ON: Author.

Authorizing Signature

Date

APPENDIX A

**KGH TELEPHONE NURSING PRACTICE
Clinical Areas/Individual Practitioners**

Program/Service	Clinical Area/Practitioner	RN		RPN
		Known Caller	Unknown Caller	Known Caller
Cardiac Critical Care Orthopedic	APN (Orthopedics)	No	No	
	APN/NP (Cardiac Surgery)	Yes	Yes	
	Cardiac Care Network Coordinators	Yes	Yes	
	Cardiac Rhythm Device Clinic	Yes	No	Yes
	Cardiovascular Laboratory	No	No	-
	CCU	No	No	-
	Davies 3	No	No	-
	Davies 4	No	No	-
	ICU/CVRI	No	No	-
Kidd 4	No	No	-	
Integrated Cancer Program	APN (Cancer Genetics)	Yes	Yes	
	APN (Pain & Symptom Management)	Yes	Yes	
	APN (Palliative Care)	Yes	No	
	Cancer Centre	Yes	No	-
	Kidd 6	No	No	-
	Ontario Breast Screening Program	Yes	Yes	
Stem Cell Program Coordinator	Yes	No		
Mental Health Neurosciences Medical Transitional Care	APN/NP (Neurosciences)	Yes	No	
	APN/NP (Regional Acute Stroke Care)	Yes	No	
	APN (Regional Stroke Prevention)	Yes	No	
	Connell 3	No	No	-
	Connell 4	No	No	No
	Kidd 3	No	No	-
	Kidd 7	No	No	-
Psychiatric Liaison Nurse	No	No		
Perioperative Surgery Ambulatory	APN (COPD)	Yes	No	
	APN/NP (Acute Pain Management)	Yes	No	
	Asthma Nurse Educator	Yes	No	
	Autologous Clinic RN	Yes	Yes	
	CIOC	Yes	No	-
	Connell 9	No	No	-
Connell 10	No	No	-	

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APPENDIX A (Cont'd)

Program/Service	Clinical Area/Practitioner	RN		RPN
		Known Caller	Unknown Caller	Known Caller
Perioperative Surgery Ambulatory (continued)	Continence Advisory Nurse	Yes	No	
	Endoscopy	No	No	-
	Enterostomal Therapists	Yes	No	
	FAPC 1, 2, & 4	Yes	No	Yes
	Hemophilia Nurse	Yes	No	
	Interventional Radiology (IVR)	No	No	-
	PACU	No	No	-
	OPPU	Yes	No	-
	OR	No	No	No
	SDAC	No	No	-
	Transfusion Nurse Coordinator	Yes	Yes	
Urodynamic Nurse	Yes	No		
Renal Emergency	Emergency	No	No	-
	Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurse	Yes	Yes	
	Renal Program	Yes	No	-
	Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Follow-up Nurse	Yes	Yes	
Women's & Children's	Clinical Investigations Unit/Designate	Yes	No	
	Colposcopy Clinic/Designate	Yes	No	
	Community Liaison Nurse, Pediatric Oncology	Yes	No	
	Connell 5	Yes	Yes	-
	Continence Advisory/Phallodynamics	Yes	No	
	Coordinator, Pediatric Oncology	Yes	No	
	FAPC 5	-	-	No
	Fetal Maternal Assessment Unit	Yes	No	-
	Gyne/Oncology Nurse/Designate	Yes	No	
	Kidd/Davies 5	No	No	-
	NICU	Yes ¹	Yes ¹	-
	Pediatrics	No	No	-
Women's Clinic	Yes	Yes	-	

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¹NICU: Phone advice as it relates to breastfeeding issues only will be given by RNs to mothers who may or may not have been an inpatient at KGH and whose baby is in the NICU.

