

Emergency Department Policies & Procedures

DRAFT

Policy:	Taxi Vouchers and MBTA cards for patients discharged from the ED
Description:	Describes circumstances under which taxi vouchers and MBTA cards will be distributed to patients
Applies to:	ED Staff
Effective Date:	November 17, 2008
Reviewed by:	ED Operations Committee, ED Executive Group
Approved by:	ED Executive Group
Last Revision:	November 10, 2008

Policy:

It is the patient's responsibility to find transportation home once discharged from the ED.

The ED will support providing MBTA cards to patients should they present a hardship or challenge in getting home.

Detailed Procedure:

1. If patient requests assistance with transportation, the clinical care team assesses appropriateness of ambulance, chair car, or other clinically indicated transportation. If these are not indicated, the patient should be told they are responsible for arranging transportation home.

A handout is available to give to patients, outlining some suggestions/potential resources for facilitating that discussion:

- Suggest they call someone to pick them up.
- Directions to Taxi Phones in the lobbies. Direct them to ATMs in various lobbies if they need to get funds.
- Charlie Tickets for the MBTA are available at the ED Front Desk, if appropriate.
- Shuttle Schedules to the following locations will be at the ED Front Desk:
 - Charlestown HC
 - Chelsea HC
 - Revere HC
 - Everett HC
 - North End HC
 - East Boston HC
 - Brigham and Women's Hospital via Prudential Center
- During night shifts when public transportation may be limited or unavailable the patient can obtain a Charlie Ticket, and wait till the morning, wherever most appropriate, in the ED or Main Lobby.

2. The Charge Coordinator does not have access to Taxi Vouchers in the ED.

In extreme or unusual circumstances, Nursing may access a taxi voucher as follows:

- A limited number of vouchers are stored in the APS Omnicell for patients needing transportation to a shelter or Detox.
- A limited number of vouchers are stored on the SANE Cart for victims of assault.

Nurses who give out these vouchers must document the reason on the Voucher Log, which is

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stored with the vouchers.

3. Social Service and Case Management should not be consulted for the sole purpose of providing a Taxi Voucher.
 - a. Case Management - Patient can be referred to Case Management if assessment for a chair car or ambulance is appropriate. This would apply to patients who are unable to safely get home or to the next setting of care without assistance or supervision
 - b. Social Service can be contacted for a financial assessment. If deemed appropriate, the ED will provide the taxi voucher from the SANE Cart.

What if?

What about frail, elderly patients? Need to consider need for ambulance or chair car, because taxi driver cannot be held responsible for care to home.

What about special cases like mothers with small children at 2am? These patients can be discharged to the waiting area until morning when public transportation is available.

What about patients who say they have no resources - but could be discharged with a voucher? These patients can be discharged to the waiting room to wait for authorized personnel. They can often become resourceful while waiting.

What about patients who say they were promised a return voucher by Chelsea or other MGH Health Center? Explain that vouchers have been taken away in this ED. Chelsea medical practices cannot make this promise. Offer a Charlie Ticket and/or the Health Center Shuttle Schedule.

What about extreme or unusual circumstances? As with any policy in our department, should you have a concern that needs support, your leadership is available by page 24 hours per day.