

Gunshot and Stab Wound Reporting

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

This policy provides clarity on responsibilities of the organization and its staff and physicians arising from the Gunshot and Stab Wound Disclosure Act.

1.2. Scope

All sites, programs, and Staff of Providence Health Care (PHC). Reporting is to be at the discretion and direction of the Most Responsible Provider.

1.3. Exceptions

Concerns for the safety of Staff or patients MAY impact the decision to disclose a gunshot or stab wound to the police in limited circumstances. However, justification is required and must be documented in the health care record.

2. Policy

PHC Staff will comply with the provisions of the Gunshot and Stab Wound Disclosure Act. Upon identification that a person has presented to a PHC facility with a gunshot or stab wound, the Most Responsible Provider will direct the Charge Nurse or designate to make a verbal report to the police as soon as practical without interfering with the injured person's treatment.

The Most Responsible Provider may decide not to disclose a gunshot or stab wound to the police if they reasonably believe that disclosure would place themselves, other staff, or patients at risk. If the Most Responsible Provider decides not to report a gunshot/stab wound due to concerns for the safety of staff or patients, justification is required and must be documented in the health care record.

Health care providers have a primary duty of care to the patient, and the requirement to report under this policy shall not interfere with the patient's treatment. Health care providers have a duty of confidentiality, including maintaining confidential the circumstances of the patient's reason for attendance at hospital, except as permitted or required by law.

2.1. Advising Patients

Health care providers are not required to advise the patient that a report has been made to the police.

2.2. Self-inflicted Injuries

If the Most Responsible Provider considers that a wound caused by a knife or other sharp or pointed instrument is self-inflicted or unintentional and is not to be reported to police, they will briefly note the rationale for that decision.

2.3. Police Access

Access by police to the patient for questioning will be granted unless it would interfere with the injured person's treatment or disrupt the activities of the facility.

Access by police to other information about the patient will be provided by the health care team only on authorization of the patient, presentation of a warrant, or decision by the organization to otherwise release consistent with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Most Responsible Provider

The Most Responsible Provider (MRP), upon identification that a person has presented with

- a. a gunshot, or
- b. a wound caused by a knife or other sharp or pointed instrument that is not reasonably considered to be self-inflicted or unintentional

will advise the Clinical Nurse Leader (or designate) to contact the police to verbally report a gunshot/stab wound. The MRP will document this directive in the health record.

If the MRP reasonably believes that a wound caused by a knife or other sharp or pointed instrument is self-inflicted or unintentional and need not be reported to police, they will document the rationale for that decision in the patient's chart.

3.2. Clinical Nurse Leader (or designate)

The Clinical Nurse Leader (or designate) will - as soon as reasonably practicable without interfering with the injured person's treatment or disrupting the activities of the facility - contact the police to verbally advise of:

- a. the injured person's name, if known;
- b. the fact that the injured person is being treated or has been treated for a gunshot or stab wound; and
- c. the name and location of the health care facility.

The Clinical Nurse Leader (or designate) will document in the patient's chart the time that report has been made to the police.

4. Compliance

All staff are responsible for adhering to this policy, and apprising others who might not be aware of this requirement. Any failure to follow this policy should be reported in the Patient Safety Learning System for further review.

5. Supporting Documents

5.1. Related Policies

[Release of Information and Belongings to Law Enforcement](#)

5.2. Guidelines/Procedures/Forms

Gunshot & Stab Wound Disclosure Practice Guide (Appendix A)

6. Definitions

Most Responsible Provider: The person who has the overall responsibility for the management and coordination of the care of the patient at any given time.

Stab wound is a wound caused by a knife or other sharp or pointed instrument but does not include a wound that is reasonably believed to be self-inflicted or unintentionally inflicted.

“Staff” means all employees (including management and leadership), medical staff (including physicians, midwives, dentists and nurse practitioners), residents, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors, researchers and other service providers engaged by PHC.

7. References

Gunshot and Stab Wound Disclosure Act, SBC 2010, Chapter 7
[Gunshot and Stab Wound Reporting](#) (VCH policy)

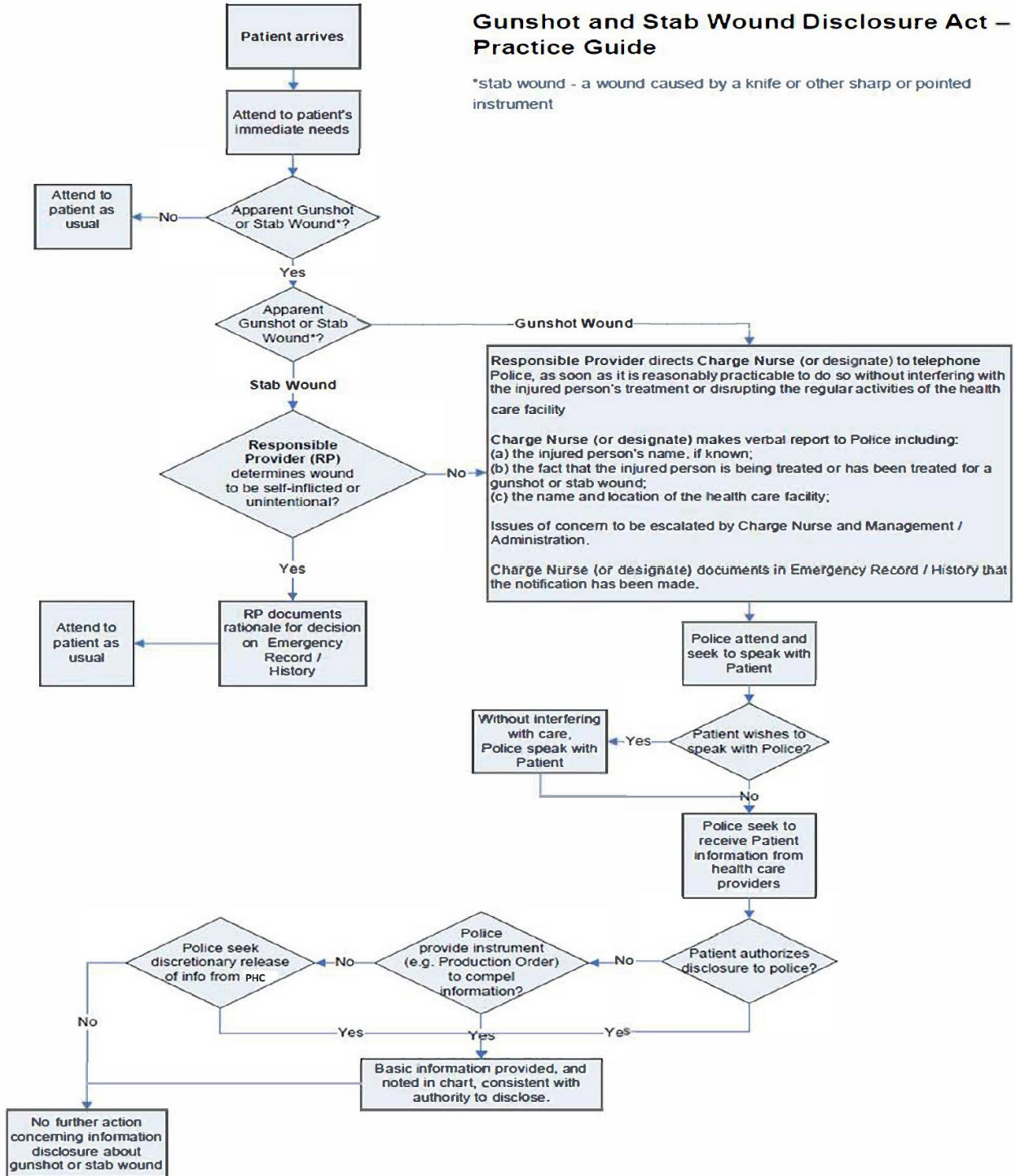
Questions:
Contact Risk Management or Privacy.

8. Appendices

[Appendix A: Gunshot and Stab Wound Action Sheet](#)

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