

GUIDELINES/TIPS: RC to Family Physician - Fax Request for Assessment

August 2016

The Residential Care Initiative (RCI) is a partnership between Interior Health and family doctors.

The Fax Request for Assessment form allows care homes to efficiently contact doctors about patient care. Proper use of the fax form will help to accomplish the RCI goals of reducing transfers to hospital; and improving quality of care and patient/provider experience. The tips below, created via feedback received from care homes and doctors, can help.

Please consider circulating this document to all staff who provide care in a residential care setting, and include it in staff training as appropriate.

Tips for Care Homes

- Ensure that all sections are complete and contain all required information, especially:
 - Level of urgency
 - Applicable vital signs and physical or behavioural changes
 - A direct telephone line to call (in addition to the fax number)
 - Identify which number the doctor should try first if there is more than one number on the form
- Leave space on the form for the doctor to write a response.
- Avoid faxing “emergent and same day” or “important and urgent” faxes after hours or on the weekend. Call the MRP and ask how best to get the information to them, or contact the doctor on call if the MRP is unavailable.
- If an on call doctor resolves an issue, inform the MRP. Do not assume the on call doctor will update them.
- Follow up on urgent issues with a phone call. Leave a direct line for the doctor to call back on with your name or who to contact if you are unavailable. Some doctors may not respond to faxes until the end of their workday (or even later) unless they also receive a call.

Tips for Doctors

- Encourage MOAs to look at the top portion of each fax and triage them based on indicated level of urgency. If an issue is urgent, the care facility will follow up with a phone call. If the doctor is unable to take the call, MOAs should mark the fax to indicate that a phone call was received.
- Respond to faxes based on the level of urgency selected on the form, within the recommended time frame. If it is frequently difficult to respond within the time frame recommended, please discuss with one of the physician leads for the RCI or with Division staff.
- Responding to faxed requests for assessment in a timely manner is a key component of meeting the goals of the RCI. Timely responses or visits from doctors can help care home staff avoid the need to transfer patients to hospital.
- If an incomplete (or incorrectly submitted) form is received, return it as soon as possible to the sender requesting completion/correction as need be.

Quality Improvement

If challenges persist, or you have ideas or discovered a solution to a reoccurring problem, please document it and inform Jen Bitz, RCI Project Manager. She will continue to pool ideas and work as a hub for RCI participants in an effort for continuous quality improvement.

For more information or if you have questions about the RCI, please contact any of the following:

Physician Leads: Dr Tara Sebulsky, Dr Bernie Lewke, Dr Willie Mackle, Dr Rob Williams

IH Contact: Vanda Urban vanda.urban@interiorhealth.ca

Divisions Contact: Jen Bitz jbitz@divisionsbc.ca 250-212-9789 (mobile), [888.577.1472](tel:888.577.1472) (fax), Tristan Smith tsmith@divisionsbc.ca

*The GPSC (General Practice Services Committee) is a partnership of the Government of BC and the Doctors of BC