



“Homeless Patient Dumping:” Discharge to the Streets Results of SRCEH Questionnaire: 2/12/2018

SRCEH surveyed 20 homeless direct service providers from 1/29-2/9/2018 regarding their experiences, if any, with “homeless patient dumping.” Below are the results along with SRCEH recommendation:

Results:

- 7 agencies stated that their agency had recently experienced homeless people being dropped off by an ambulance, cab or ride share after being discharged to the streets from a hospital;
- 6 agencies stated that their agency did not experience homeless people being discharged to their agency;
- 7 did not respond to the questionnaire

Pattern of responses: The agencies that did experience “patient dumping” were all emergency service agencies. Those programs that provided longer term services did not experience homeless people being discharged to their agency.

Name of hospitals/agency that discharged homeless patient: Agencies specifically identified the following hospitals or agency that dropped homeless people off: UC Davis, Heritage Oaks, Sutter, Mercy, Kaiser, Woodland-Dignity Health, Sierra Vista and one agency identified Sacramento County Adult Protective Services.

Arrived by: all 7 agencies identified they arrived either by ambulance; cab or Uber/Lyft

Frequency of discharges to agency: one agency said 2-3 times a week; three [50%] said one time a week; one said two times a month; two said two times a year.

Does your agency track these discharges? [hospital name, date, medical condition[s]: 2 agencies stated they tracked these discharges; 4 agencies did not track and one did not answer.

Physical health issues; behavioral health issues [drugs, alcohol or mental health] or combination of both: 100% of agencies responded it was a combination of both physical health and behavioral health issues

Medical issues:

- ✓ **Wearing hospital gown:** 71% said the person was still wearing a gown
- ✓ **IV still in arm:** No agencies reported this
- ✓ **Wheelchair:** 67% said the person was in a wheelchair
- ✓ **Walker:** 57% said the person had a walker
- ✓ **Open wound:** 57% said the person had an open wound
- ✓ **Injury not fully taken care of:** 83% said the injury was fully taken care of [stiches uncovered; poorly bandaged; unclean drain tubes]

Medication: 67% said the person had medications to treat their medical condition and 33% said no

Prescription: 57% said the person had a prescription and 43% said no

Discharge papers: 57% said person had discharge papers and 43% said no

Skilled facility or recuperative care facility: 100% said in their opinion the person needed to be in a skilled nursing facility or recuperative care facility

Behavioral health issues: 100% of the agencies identified behavioral health issues including person was confused; person still in crisis and person needed counseling

A Crisis of Conscience:

Homeless woman who recently had a double mastectomy was dropped off with tubes still in her body

A 78 year old women who had soiled her clothes was dropped off by Sacramento County Adult Protective Service

SRCEH RECOMMENDATIONS:

Sacramento City Council and Sacramento Board of Supervisors immediately hold a joint hearing on the crisis of discharging homeless people to the streets with the intent of adopting the following actions:

- Comprehensive training to all health and behavioral health discharge planners based on “EMTALA: A Guide to Patients Dumping Laws,” by the California Hospital Association. This should include creating seamless communication between discharge planners and discharge planners and homeless service providers;
- Full implementation of the Emergency Medical Treatment Action Labor Act [EMTALA] which states the Office of the Inspector General can impose civil penalties up to \$50,000 for a hospital and physician [\$25,000 for hospitals with 100 beds or less] and/or exclude a hospital or physician from Medicare and Medicaid programs;
- Full implementation of California Penal code 374.3 which imposes up to \$10,000 fine for illegal patient dumping on public or private property;
- Full implementation of California Health & Safety Code 11775 which states a person who dumps illegally is punishable by up to six months in jail;
- Adopt a City and County Municipal Code patterned after Los Angeles Municipal Code 41.60 [passed in 2008] which imposed a fine not to exceed \$1,000 and a term of probation not to exceed three years or both;
- Sacramento City & County establish civil fines of no less than \$250,000 per occurrence;
- All penalties, fines and fees to be placed into a City/County Recuperation Care Facility Fund to expand the number & quality of the current recuperative beds in Sacramento.