



# ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

## Procedure

<b>TITLE:</b> Unidentified (Unknown) Patients Identification Process	<b>NUMBER:</b> 1900
<b>Sponsor:</b> Manager, Information Management	<b>Page:</b> 1 of 9
<b>Approved by:</b> Director, Information Management/Information Technology	<b>Approval Date:</b> Feb 12, 2019 <b>Effective Date:</b> Mar 6, 2019
<b>Applies To:</b> IWK Health Centre Staff	

### POLICY STATEMENTS

Unidentified (Unknown) patients admitted to the IWK Health Centre must be issued a uniquely assigned name and K# to provide a temporary identification until a positive identification can be made. Once positive identification is made and specific criteria are met, merging of this information in the MEDITECH System will occur by staff who are trained and authorized to merge patients' unit numbers (IWK K#'s) in MEDITECH.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

There is a need to provide a process for the identification of unidentified (unknown) patients which will:

- Minimize Risk.
- Enhance Patient Safety.
- Define and enhance communication between departments and disciplines.
- Improve timeliness of updating the patient profile.

### PROCEDURE

Clinical teams contact Admitting and Registration to admit a patient into the IWK system. In situations where the patient is unidentified (unknown) and is to be registered to the IWK Health Centre the following occurs:

1. The Patient's surname must **always be entered in MEDITECH as UNKNOWN.**

This will be followed by:

- a space
- a # sign

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- the next sequential appropriate number (the numbering sequence for unidentified patients will be kept sequentially by calendar year);
- a forward slash **i.e.:** /;
- 2 digits denoting the year;
- a comma **i.e.;**
- then PATIENT as the first name.

Example: the naming format for the *first* unidentified/unknown patient admitted in the 2019 calendar year would be:

UNKNOWN #1/19, PATIENT

Each year on January 1<sup>st</sup> the sequence will begin over with #1 as the new calendar year; i.e. effective January 1, 2019 the first unidentified/unknown patient will be named as follows:

UNKNOWN #1/19, PATIENT

and the second unidentified/unknown patient in 2019 will be named:

UNKNOWN #2/19, PATIENT and so forth for the year.

**NOTE:** It is important to never choose a previously registered “Unknown patient” from the list. The UNKNOWN name will always remain in the Master Patient Index (MPI) in MEDITECH as another name for the patient, even after the merging of the two unit numbers (IWK K#’s).

**a. Armband**

The patient will have an armband with their “unknown patient” identification number on it. This armband will stay on the patient even if the patient is identified during the course of the admission. When the patient’s identification becomes known, see below for arm banding processes.

**2. Unidentified (unknown) patient becomes identified:**

- a.** When an unidentified (unknown) patient is identified, the team will consider the following criteria:
- Any outstanding results waiting in MEDITECH.
  - Master Patient Index (MPI) is checked for accurate patient information once patient is identified.
  - Before merging the two unit numbers (IWK K#s), all outstanding blood bank products need to be have been issued, received and infused for patients before merging occurs.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

***It is the responsibility of the Health Information Services Leadership Team in collaboration with the clinical care area where the patient is located to ensure that the above criteria have been met prior to completing the merge. Merging of the two IWK K#s should occur only when all other involved services and areas are aware and in agreement to merge the patient registration and associated information. This action impacts many other departments and consultation with other teams prior to merging must occur. Only Health Information Services Leadership Team is permitted to merge patients as outlined above trained in and authorized to merge patients' unit numbers (IWK K#'s) in MEDITECH.***

- Registration staff will edit the earlier registration to reflect the patient's true name (note that the system automatically defaults the original "UNKNOWN" name into the "MAIDEN /OTHER NAME" field).
- Name search will be completed.
- If the patient ***is found in the system*** with an existing unit number, Admitting & Registration must be notified immediately. Designated Health Information Leadership staff will arrange to merge the two unit numbers. ***Only Health Information Services Leadership Team is permitted to merge patients.***
- If the patient ***is not found in the system*** with the old unit number, the registration staff will edit the UNKNOWN registration to reflect the patient's true identity.

#### **b. Armbands**

- The patient will have a new armband applied with the known patient's identification. However, as noted in section 1 of this policy, the original armband that was applied to the patient as an unknown patient with designated number must also stay on the patient even if the patient becomes identified during the course (duration) of the registration and/or admission.

### **3. Reference Log**

- A reference log of unidentified patient registrations is maintained by the Emergency Department's Registration staff (Children's site), so that the next sequential number is readily available to the next clinical area needing to register an unidentified patient.
- At the start of each of his/her shifts in the Emergency Department, the registration clerk will be responsible for ensuring the unknown patient log is up-to-date.
  - a. Verification is done by entering the first unknown patient's name (UNKNOWN #1/19, PATIENT) appearing on the unknown patient log without a unit number in MEDITECH under the VIEW MRI DATA.
  - b. By doing a name search, the last unknown patient number should appear in the listing (See Appendix C for an example of an unidentified patient's log).

- c. For example: the log in appendix B indicates that for 2011 the last unknown patient was UNKNOWN #6/11, PATIENT. By doing verification in MEDITECH as noted above, there should not be an UNKNOWN #7/11, PATIENT found. If there is, the log is not current, and would therefore require updating based on this verification process.

## REFERENCES

Capital Health (2013). CDHA CH 07-041 Unidentified Patient. Retrieved last October 23, 2018 from [http://policy.nshealth.ca/Site\\_Published/DHA9/document\\_render.aspx?documentRender.IdType=6&documentRender.GenericField=&documentRender.Id=53596](http://policy.nshealth.ca/Site_Published/DHA9/document_render.aspx?documentRender.IdType=6&documentRender.GenericField=&documentRender.Id=53596)

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

### Policies

IWK Health Centre Consent to Treatment Policy #124.0  
IWK Health Centre Patient Identification Policy #1100

### Appendices

Appendix A – Definitions  
Appendix B - Health Records Staff Merging Steps  
Appendix C - Tracking Log Example for Unknown/Unidentified Patients

### Other

Double K# and MPI Education Module located on IWK PULSE under Admitting & Registration Department

## Appendix A DEFINITIONS

### **Unidentified (Unknown) Patient**

A patient who arrives to the IWK Health Centre for care and is unable to be identified by themselves or any other source. They are determined as unidentified (unknown).

### **Naming Format**

A standard by which a particular group of patients is named.

### **Merging**

A process within the MEDITECH system where a patient has two different K#s and all data is moved from the newest K# to the original K#. A notation in MEDITECH of the merged K#'s appears with the permanent K# in MEDITECH that a merge has occurred.

**NOTE:** This affects many other departments when this is required and facilitation and consultation with teams prior to merging needs to occur. Only Health Information Leadership Services Team is permitted to merge patients (Health Records Staff Merging Steps see Appendix A).

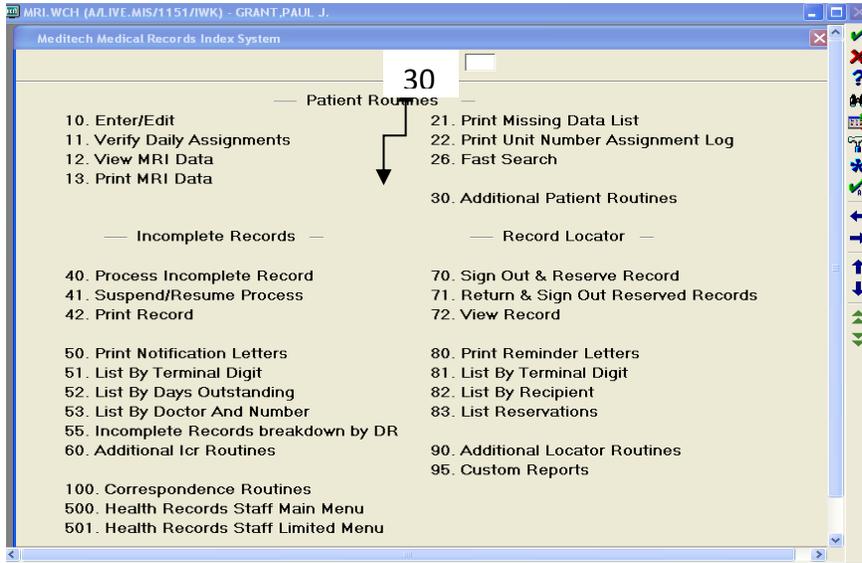
### **Master Patient Index (MPI)**

The Master Patient Index (MPI) is the patient's permanent Health Record and the authoritative source for unique patient identifiers. The MPI is the key to locating a patient's demographic data, visit history and health record. The MPI holds the following information: Patient's Name, Date of Birth, Age, Gender, Mother's first name, Maiden Name/Other name, Medical Record/Unit number and Health Care Number.

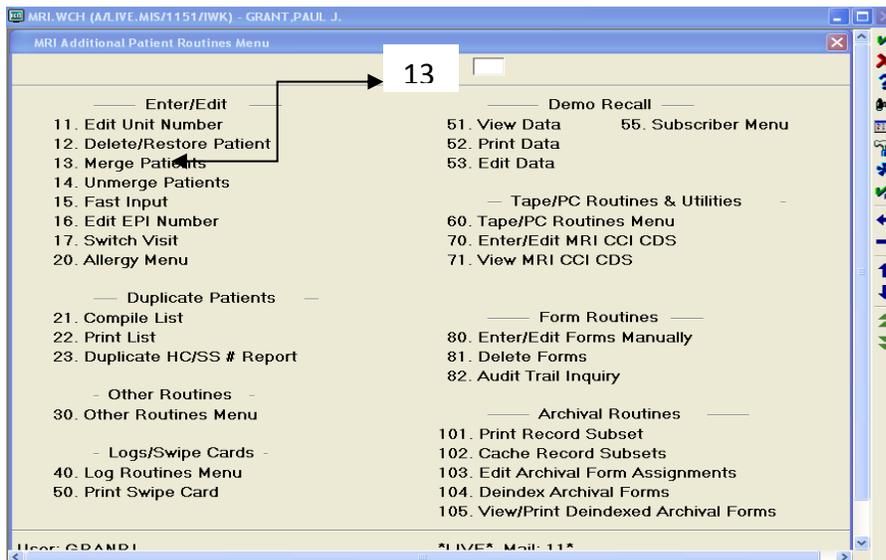
Master Patient Index (MPI) is defined as all of the Admissions, Ambulatory Registrations, Day Surgeries and Emergency Registrations for patients seen at the IWK Health Centre. A minimum data set is required to complete a thorough search for a patient in the MPI. This data consists of: Patients FULL legal name, patient's date of birth, Provincial Health Card Number, & Gender.

## Appendix B

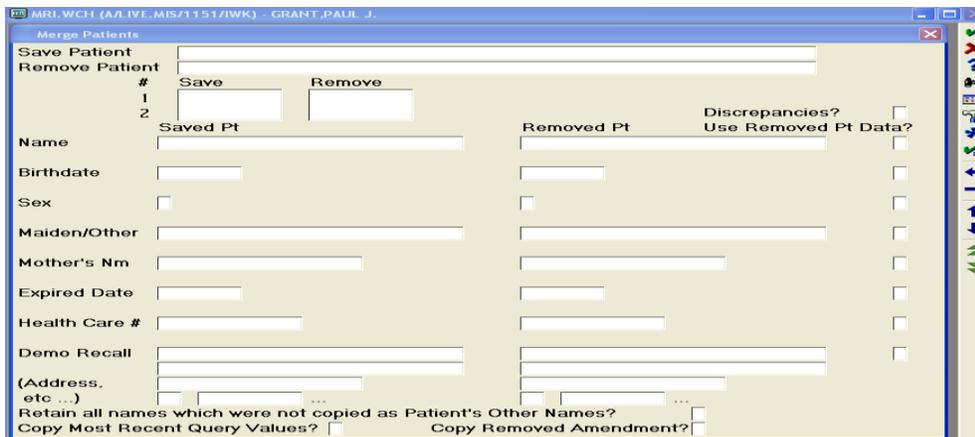
### Health Information Services Leadership ONLY - Merge Patients Steps



#30 Additional Patient Routines



#13 Merge Patients



**‘Save Patient’** - Here, we always select the oldest / first K number under ‘Save Patient’ (ie: K162443 versus K436459...we would select K162443) since this is the first, or older K#

**‘Remove Patient’** - Here, we always select/input the higher, or newer K# under ‘Remove Patient’ (ie: reverse order from the example illustrated above)

- Once the 2 K#s are entered, the screen will populate. You will be asked the following questions or criteria. First, please note the screen contains data for saved patient, and data for removed patient.
- The field/question you will see on the right hand side of the screen (and need to answer) is ‘Use Removed Pt Data?’ When you hit enter, the cursor will jump to the box you need to enter (Y) or (N) to. Note, it will skip boxes where information appears on the screen as identical. Depending on what is in the fields of information will dictate your Yes or No answer.
- Example: Field on left hand side contains old demo recall address info. Field on right hand side contains differing address info. Here, you would answer your Y (yes) or N (no) answers, again depending on the situation.

For the question ‘Retain all names which were not copied as patients other names?’

ALWAYS Y (yes)

Copy most recent query values ALWAYS Y (yes)

At this point if uncertain, choose no.

Otherwise, when prompted with Merge? (Yes / No)? >> choose Yes

### **Paper Charts and Merges of Records / K#s**

In most cases the double K# is a newly created K# and no other ‘paper’ record exists.

But, if another paper records does exist then admitting and registration must be notified as soon as possible so that the Health Information Leadership Services Team can merge the K#. They will need to get both charts, and the chart with the most recent unit # (the # that was merged away) – all paperwork in that chart will have to have the unit #

crossed out with the original unit # entered above. Health Information Services Leadership Team will collaborate with the team to ensure this is completed correctly.

**APPENDIX C**

NEW K#	NAME	DATE	CLERK/STAFF	AREA	MERGED TO K#
<b>2010</b>					
K#111111	UNKNOWN #1/10, PATIENT	5/01/10	AA	Emerg	K#123456
K#222222	UNKNOWN #2/10, PATIENT	5/02/10	BB	PICU	K#789123
K#333333	UNKNOWN #3/10, PATIENT	6/03/10	CC	BU	K#234567
K#444444	UNKNOWN #4/10, PATIENT	23/04/10	DD	OR CH	K#345678
K#555555	UNKNOWN #5/10, PATIENT	13/07/10	EE	Emerg	K#456789
K#666666	UNKNOWN #6/10, PATIENT	14/10/10	GG	OR WH	K#567890
<b>2011</b>					
K#777777	UNKNOWN #1/11, PATIENT	2/01/11	HH	Emerg	K#543345
K#888888	UNKNOWN #2/11, PATIENT	23/01/11	II	PICU	K#654456
K#999999	UNKNOWN #3/11, PATIENT	22/05/11	JJ	BU	K#765567
<b>2012</b>					
K#345123	UNKNOWN #1/12, PATIENT	1/01/12	LL	OR CH	K#876678
K#789987	UNKNOWN #2/12, PATIENT	15/01/12	MM	Emerg	K#987789
K#567765	UNKNOWN #3/12, PATIENT	2/02/12	NN	OR WH	K#678876

## District Health Authority/IWK Policies Being Replaced

Not applicable.

### Version History

(To Be Completed by the Policy Office)

Major Revisions (e.g. Standard 4 year review)	Minor Revisions (e.g. spelling correction, wording changes, etc.)