

# PERSONAL HOUSING UNIT (PHU)

## Healthcare Provider Information Sheet

In preparation for the surge of COVID-19 cases and the strain on hospitals in the New Orleans region, the State of Louisiana has established a Personal Housing Unit (PHU) capable of medical monitoring on the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center grounds to ease the burden on acute care hospitals. This document is to help hospital staff understand which patients qualify for transfer to the PHU, the process to initiate transfer of these patients, and to provide answers frequently asked questions.

The PHU is run by the US Navy and functions as a medical monitoring facility for patients who have pending COVID-19 tests, are clinically stable, but are unable to be safely discharged to home. Patient care capabilities are limited to providing basic medical services such as taking vital signs, conducting telehealth visits, providing over-the-counter medications, and making available an isolated environment available outside of the hospital setting.

### To qualify for transfer, patients must:

- Be referred by a physician, PA, or NP (working in a clinic, Urgent Care, ED, hospital, nursing home)
- Come from Region 1, Region 3, or Region 9
- Have a COVID-19 test that has been performed and is still PENDING
- Not meet any of the exclusion criteria described below. Please note, these criteria differ slightly from the criteria for the MMS.

### Exclusion Criteria include the following:

- Has not had a COVID-19 test performed
- Has a resulted COVID-19 test
  - The PHU is for patients with a pending COVID-19 test
- Requires bariatric bed
- Third trimester pregnancy
- Incarcerated/in custody
- Age < 18

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## Exclusion Criteria continued:

- Suicidal/ Homicidal/ Violent
- Behavioral issue or disability requiring a 1:1 sitter
- Altered mental status with delirium
- Acute change in mental status
- Alcohol dependence with possibility of progression to alcohol withdrawal
- Open wounds requiring more than once daily dressing changes
- Requires suctioning
- Requires aerosolizing interventions (nebulizers, CPAP, BIPAP, ventilator)
- Needs continuous telemetry monitoring
- Manifests critical or severe illness:
  - Altered mental status
  - Respiratory distress
  - Worsening respiratory status with
    - Respiratory rate > 24
    - Oxygen saturation < 91% on 3L NC
  - Mean arterial pressure (MAP) < 65
  - Requires vasopressors
  - Unable to take PO medications or food (unless patient has a PEG tube) or has persistent vomiting
- Hospice or palliative care patients with life expectancy < 14 days

## Instructions for initiating patient transfer:

Call (225) 465-9183. This is a call center run on site by the US Navy physicians, PAs, and NPs staffing the PHU. These staff will speak directly with the hospital staff to determine patient eligibility for acceptance. If the patient is accepted, the PHU staff will coordinate patient transport by Acadian Ambulance. All patients must be transported by Acadian Ambulance. This transport is free of charge to the patient.

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## The caller will also be asked the following questions at the time of transfer request:

- Patient Name
- Patient DOB / Age
- Is this a bariatric patient?
- Does the patient have mobility issues?
- Does the patient have an oxygen requirement?
- Is the patient a diabetic on insulin?
- Does the patient take any other injectable or IV medication?
- Is the patient DNR/DNI?

## All health provider are required to provide the following for any patient transferred to the PHU:

- Patients transferred from the inpatient hospital setting must be sent with a 14 day supply of all medications and medical supplies.
- Patients referred by a clinic, urgent care, or ED must have 14 days worth of all medications and medical supplies e-prescribed, phoned in to, or faxed to the CVS at 800 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Phone: 504-528-7099, Fax: 504-528-7871.
  - Specify “PHU patient” in the sig line
  - Rx’s received 8AM-3PM will be delivered the same day.
  - Rx’s received after 3PM will be delivered the next day by 11AM.
  - Medications that must be obtained more urgently after normal hours can be e-prescribed, phoned in to, or faxed to the CVS at 4950 W Esplanade Ave, Metairie, LA 70006. Phone: 504-888-9000. Fax: 504-888-7601.
- Name and phone number of referring physician/PA/NP
- Patient face sheet
- Documentation of a pending COVID-19 test result
- If coming from the inpatient or ED setting:
  - Discharge summary
  - Code status paperwork
  - Walker or cane as needed for mobility
  - Hospital arm band left on patient (please do not cut it off)
  - Notify the patient’s family of their transfer to the PHU

# PERSONAL HOUSING UNIT (PHU)

## Frequently Asked Questions for Healthcare Providers

### What types of services are provided at the PHU?

- An isolated environment for patients pending COVID-19 test result
- Twice daily vital signs monitoring
- Blood glucose monitoring for diabetic patients
- Oxygen and titration up to 3L via nasal cannula for oxygen saturation >91%
- Food services
- Refills of medications through outpatient pharmacy delivery
- Refills of medical supplies through outpatient pharmacy delivery
- Limited in-house over-the-counter medications
- Dialysis transportation for patients with already-established dialysis regimens
- Onsite paramedics to initiate care and transport of decompensating patients
- Limited nursing, nurse practitioners, physicians, and EMTs
- Temporary housing

### What types of services are NOT provided at the PHU?

- Labs (blood, urinalysis, etc.)
- Diagnostic imaging
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Suctioning (i.e. for patients with tracheostomies)
- Chemical/ physical restraint
- Ventilator support
- On-site pharmacy
- On-site medical supplies
- End-of-life care
- Psychiatric services
- Consultative services
- Family visitation

# Frequently Asked PHU Questions for Healthcare Providers

## Who can refer a patient?

Any physician, PA, or NP working in a clinic, urgent care, nursing home, ED, or hospital can refer a patient for acceptance/transfer. The patient MUST have a COVID-19 test performed to be accepted.

## Who do I call to transfer a patient?

Exclusively the PHU Call Center at (225) 465-9183 will coordinate all patient transfer acceptances and dispatch of units for patient transport.

## Can patients drive themselves to the PHU or be dropped off?

No. All patients must be transported by Acadian Ambulance, which is free of charge to the patient.

## What are the hours of patient admission/ transfer acceptance?

Transfers are accepted 24/7.

## Who is the accepting physician?

The accepting physician's name will be provided at the time of acceptance.

## How is the nursing report given?

No nursing report will be required. A paper copy of the discharge summary should be included with the patient on transfer to include any information needed by the receiving team.

## Are patients with pending COVID-19 test accepted?

Yes. These are the only patients accepted to the PHU. Patients with positive or negative tests cannot be accepted at the PHU.

## Can a patient be sent to the PHU for the sole purpose of self isolation?

Yes. Patients with mild illness who are awaiting the results of their COVID-19 test and have a need for assistance with self-isolation can be referred to the PHU.

# Frequently Asked PHU Questions for Healthcare Providers

## **Are the PHU able to accept dialysis patients?**

Fresenius, Davita, and DCI have agreed to provide dialysis for COVID-19 patients. All attempts should be made to coordinate dialysis services at one of these companies for a patient discharged with new dialysis needs. We have the ability to transport patients needing dialysis to COVID-19 dialysis clinics near the Convention Center, provided that the patients are ambulatory or can be transported in a wheelchair. We do not have the capability of drawing labs within the facility or weighing patients daily.

## **Is wound care provided?**

Patients accepted to the PHU are expected to be capable of self care, including the ability to change their own dressings. A wound care team will not be available. If a wound progresses, the patient will be transferred to a higher level of care.

## **Can heart failure patients be cared for?**

The PHU does not have the capacity to perform labs, imaging, or active medical management of patients. The PHU can accommodate medication refills and monitoring for clinical deterioration necessitating transfer to a hospital. The PHU not have the capability of measuring daily weights or urine output.

## **Does the PHU care for Foley / Catch-Dependent patients?**

The PHU does accept patients with urinary catheters, as long as they are able to provide self-care for their catheter. The patient should be sent with 2 days-worth of supplies, as well as 14-days-worth of medical supply refill prescriptions. These supplies will be ordered as would normally be done for outpatients and not supplied by the facility itself.

## **Can incarcerated patients be accommodated?**

No. Incarcerated patients cannot be safely accommodated at the PHU.

## **Can special diets be accommodated?**

The contractor providing meals to patients is able to prepare special diets needed for patients.

# Frequently Asked PHU Questions for Healthcare Providers

## **Are chaplain services provided at the PHU?**

Yes, a chaplain is available to provide these services at the PHU.

## **Does the PHU provide counseling services?**

The PHU does not have capacity to provide regular counseling services, but will have a psychologist onsite to assist with emergent psychiatric issues that may arise.

## **What can be done for homeless patients?**

Bayou Segnette should continue to be utilized for clinically stable homeless patients pending COVID-19 test results. Homeless patients who require medical monitoring that cannot be provided by Bayou Segnette and do not meet exclusion criteria will be cared for at the PHU.

## **Does the PHU provide Hospice / Palliative Care services?**

The PHU has limited capacity for active medical management of patients in need variable pain control during disease progression. The PHU does not have in-house hospice or palliative care specialists. The PHU is unable to allow visitors in the facility. For this reason, the PHU does not allow any hospice or palliative care patients with a life expectancy less than fourteen days.

## **What are the charting capabilities of the PHU?**

Only limited paper charting is available at the PHU using forms adapted from those used in emergency shelters during disaster response. The PHU does not have access to remote electronic records at other facilities.

## **Can the PHU provide Telehealth Services?**

The PHU will conduct daily telehealth visits to monitor all patients.

# Frequently Asked PHU Questions for Healthcare Providers

## How will medications and medical supplies be supplied for patients?

Patients transferred from the inpatient hospital setting must be sent with a 14 day supply of all medications and medical supplies.

Patients referred by a clinic, urgent care, or ED must have 14 days worth of all medications and medical supplies e-prescribed, phoned in to, or faxed to the CVS at 800 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Phone: 504-528-7099, Fax: 504-528-7871.

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## Are patients with tracheostomy accepted?

The PHU has no capacity for suctioning in the facility, and we are not equipped to contain aerosolized infectious particles. Therefore, we are unable to care for patients with tracheostomies.

## Are hospitals expected to send oxygen-dependent patients with a supply of oxygen?

No. Oxygen is supplied by the PHU.

## How are patients with oxygen requirements cared for?

Patients will have oxygen saturation measured twice daily and oxygen will be weaned based on protocol. The PHU does not have continuous oxygen pulse oximeter monitoring. If the oxygen need increases to more than 3 LPM by nasal cannula, the patient will be transferred to a hospital. The PHU is not able to provide oxygen by other delivery methods or give any nebulized treatments.



# Frequently Asked PHU Questions for Healthcare Providers

## **Will hospitals or primary care physicians be notified of patient discharge from the PHU?**

The PHU does not have a process for notifying hospital systems of discharge from the facility. The PHU is actively developing systems to notify primary care providers of discharge to facilitate this transition of care.

## **How will it be determined which hospital a patient will return to if such transfer is indicated?**

Critical patients are taken to the nearest appropriate hospital to meet their clinical needs. Non-critical patients in need of hospitalization can be sent to the hospital of discharge unless that hospital lacks a COVID-19 bed or services needed by the patient (e.g. COVID-19 ventilator, hemodialysis, etc.)

## **What paperwork will be provided to the patient upon discharge?**

The PHU uses paper charts. In addition to the hospital discharge paperwork provided by the referring hospital, a brief summary of care provided is to be sent home with the patient.

## **Do you have a website?**

Please visit <http://ldh.la.gov/COVID-19response> for more information and updates on the MMS and PHU.

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## Transfer Checklist

- Ensure patient qualifies for transfer to the PHU per inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Call the PHU call center at (225) 465-9183
- Call the Acadian Ambulance transfer center at (504) 323-1719
- Address medication needs:
  - Patients transferred from the inpatient hospital setting must be sent with a 14 day supply of all medications and medical supplies.
  - Patients referred by a clinic, urgent care, or ED must have 14 days worth of all medications and medical supplies e-prescribed, phoned in to, or faxed to the CVS at 800 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Phone: 504-528-7099, Fax: 504-528-7871.
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- Provide patient face sheet
- Provide documentation of a pending COVID-19 test
- If coming from the inpatient or Emergency Department setting:
  - Discharge summary
  - Code status paperwork
  - Walker or cane as needed for mobility
  - Hospital arm band left on patient
  - Notify the patient’s family of their transfer to the PHU