

Violent Patient Event

The front office / receptionist staff has been checking-in patients and performing customary duties. Patients are directed to the waiting room to be called by staff and be taken back to the exam area. A female patient in the waiting room begins to look agitated and starts saying out loud how ridiculous it is patients must be 15 minutes early, but doctors can be as late as they want. Patient then comes to the front desk to express their dissatisfaction with wait time and demands to be seen.

Who should be informed of this behavior?

What concerns might you have?

What actions would you consider taking, if any, at this stage?

Update:

Patient attempts to go back to exam room area.

What actions should you take?

How are you communicating with employees? With patients? Who is communicating?

Who is in charge of the situation?

Who is responsible for contacting law enforcement?

What information do you relay to them?

Update:

Patient is yelling, slamming things around, and hitting the walls. Other patients in the waiting room are visibly frightened, some have gotten up and ran out of the clinic, others are frozen / afraid to move, and one patient has gotten up to subdue the agitated patient.

What action will you take to ensure the safety of the other patients and staff?

Who is responsible for deciding what actions to take?

What additional concerns do you have at this time?

Are you able to communicate with employees? How?

Update:

Agitated patient has now become physically violent, hitting the other patient that came to help several times rendering him / her bloody and unconscious. The agitated female patient has blood on her face and hands; blood has also gotten on the floor, walls, and doors.

What are your immediate concerns at this time?

What will you do about the patient laying unconscious on the floor bleeding?

What actions are being taken, and who is doing what?

Update:

Law enforcement personnel arrive on-site. The agitated female patient was uncooperative and was subdued by law enforcement using a taser. Paramedics arrive, and law enforcement accompany the female patient to the hospital. A separate ambulance arrives and takes the good Samaritan patient to the emergency room.

How will you account for patients? Employees?

How do you prepare your employees for the disturbing scenes they may encounter as they leave the building?

Who is responsible for communicating with law enforcement?

Who is responsible for communicating with news media?

What information will you give them?

Can you control who else the media approaches? If not, what can you do?

Update:

The building is designated a crime scene and will be closed for a minimum of two days for investigation and hazmat cleaning.

Who initiates business continuity plans?

What else needs to be considered?

How is information disseminated to employees? To patients?

Update

Two Days Later...

You are able to get back into the building and resume normal business operations. Several employees ask for more time to emotionally recover from the event.

Are you able to continue normal business operations using fewer staff?

How will you accommodate individuals who have been emotionally traumatized by the event?

What resources will you make available to staff? To patients?

How will you communicate your clinic's resilience to concerned clients?

END OF EXERCISE