

The Mount Sinai Medical Center
General Surgery Residency Program

Protocol for Patient Hand-Off:

In an effort to ensure minimal transitions in patient care, a sign-off system has been developed and implemented at the end of each twelve-hour shift, ensuring that incoming staff are provided with a detailed review of each patient's clinical case. During a hand-off period, there is always an overlap in scheduled personnel. In addition, to maintain continuity of care between day to day transactions, mid-level practitioners comprised of Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants are staffed on a daily basis and compliment the care provided by the Housestaff. The hand-off system is comprised of the following steps:

1. Interns on call during the day shift sign off at the end of their shift to the night-shift Nurse Practitioner. During this sign off, the interns and Nurse Practitioners discuss, in detail, every patient, with particular focus on those patients that need active follow-up through the night.
2. For patients with urgent issues, the senior and chief residents speak with the senior resident on-call, to ensure the resident on-call follows-up with the patient throughout the night.
3. In the morning, the Nurse Practitioner from the night shift joins the team on morning rounds; a thorough handoff of patient issues is carried out, providing information on each patient's progress and clinical care throughout the night.
4. New patients are seen by the ER Consult resident, who signs the patient off to the chief resident on the team the patient will be admitted to. This process ensures that every patient is seen and properly handed off to the appropriate clinical team.
5. Throughout the aforementioned processes, the Epic Electronic Medical Records System is a key component in the entire hand-off process. Extensive notes are written in the Epic system for each patient, providing all individuals on the care team with constant, up-to-date information on each patient. When a patient is discharged from the hospital, a very detailed Discharge Summary is written in Epic, including information on where the patient's follow-up care will be provided. This enables the clinical team to follow-up with the patient to ensure continuity of care and the achievement of appropriate clinical outcomes.

In addition, the Department of Surgery utilizes a system referred to as SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, and Recommendation) as the framework for patient hand-off. Semiannual training sessions comprised of watching a video (featuring residents from the program in various clinical scenarios) and supplemented by role playing scenarios are facilitated by the Program Director.