THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES INCLUDED IN THIS MANUAL ARE NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SHOULD NOT BE RELIED ON AS SUCH. THESE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE SUBJECT TO AND MAY BE CHANGED AT ANY TIME BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

A. Policy

Patients being treated at the Medical University not only expect the best possible medical care, but other services as well. Among the other expected services are personal safety and security, courtesy, respect, consideration and of course confidentiality.

As used in this directive, patient confidentiality means the protection of medical and personal information from unauthorized disclosure and the preservation of individual privacy. This pertains to general and confidential patients.

In keeping with the hospital patient focused care policy, it is our job to fully protect and preserve the rights and privacy of all those we serve. Failure to fulfill this commitment will not only constitute unsatisfactory service, but could result in legal action against the university, this department, as well as disciplinary action against the employee, who, without authorization, discloses confidential information intentionally or otherwise. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each member of this department to thoroughly understand and comply with this policy.

B. Procedure

1. General Patients

   a. At no time will Public Safety employees reveal information about patients to anyone. Refer all inquiries to Information Services, Hospital Admissions or Medical Center Safety & Security. This includes the acknowledgment that a person is a patient, and their location or phone number. Official inquiries such as those which might be made by Police
& Lawyers, must be referred to the Hospital Authority Legal Council's Office or the PCC after normal operating hours. At no time will a member of this department escort a police officer, lawyer or other official directly to a patient's room without first complying with the above procedures.

b. Through the course of our duties it is inevitable that occasionally Public Safety employees will inadvertently become aware of a patient's status or condition. This information must be kept strictly confidential. At no time will a member of this department, discuss a patient's medical problem or condition with anyone. If inquiries of this nature should be made, say you do not know and that such matters must be discussed with medical staff. There are no exceptions.

c. On occasion, VIP patients will be admitted to the hospital. In this case special security instructions may be issued by the hospital or this department. If there are no special instructions, comply with standard visitation rules.

2. CONFIDENTIAL PATIENTS:

Patients may be given confidential status by the hospital upon request or for a variety of other reasons. The reasons may range from nothing more than personal choice to domestic problems, personal safety or because the individual is a VIP. All Psychiatric patients are automatically categorized as confidential unless the patient or an authorized family member requests otherwise. Regardless of the reason, once a patient is designated as confidential, Public Safety must insure their privacy.