



Discharged Against Medical Advice Flowchart

Admitted patient informs medical or nursing staff they wish to discharge against medical advice (DAMA)

Inform shift coordinator. Medical / nursing review to occur including a risk assessment.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO RISK OF HARM FROM DAMA:
abnormal observations, neonates and children, previous DAMA, Aboriginal patients, known to Department of Child Protection and Family services (DCPFS), mental health history, domestic violence and elder abuse victims

PATIENT INFORMED OF POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF DAMA
Use plain language, Aboriginal Health Workers and interpreters as required.
Where a patient is deemed to lack decision making capacity, consider duty of care obligations and involve a substitute decision maker

LOW RISK

- Give patient advice on follow up options
- Give option to return
- Notify Next of Kin (NOK)

MODERATE RISK

- Ensure patient (and/or NOK or responsible person) comprehends the significance and risks of DAMA
- Provide:
 - Option to return
 - Discharge medications
 - Discharge letter
 - Follow-up appointments
- Contact GP
- For Aboriginal patients additional actions include:
 - Enlist assistance from Aboriginal Health Worker (if available)
 - Phone-call and/or faxed referral to Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health Service with discharge summary
- For patients lacking decision making capacity (e.g. cognitively impaired, intoxicated, delirium), consider duty of care obligations and detention for treatment purposes
- For minors, involve DCPFS/crisis care in decision making

HIGH RISK

- As for Medium Risk plus:
- Consider urgent guardianship for patients lacking capacity
- For patients that have left prior to counselling/provision of advice, the shift coordinator is to attempt to make contact with the patient, NOK or responsible person to encourage return. Unsuccessful attempts requires escalation as per the WACHS [Missing or Suspected Missing Inpatient Procedure](#)

All patients are requested to sign to the [MR36 WACHS Discharge Against Medical Advice Form](#)
All risk assessments, actions and outcomes for DAMA must be documented:

- in the MR55 for inpatients
- in the MR1 and on webPAS in "Discharge Comments" for ED patients

Always source the current version from [WACHS HealthPoint Policies](#).