Observation status: key points to remember

- Patients who are admitted to observation are those who need more than six but fewer than 24 hours of observation to determine whether they require an inpatient admission or are stable enough to discharge.

- Observation time begins at the time the patient is admitted to an observation bed (when the patient arrives on the nursing unit).

- For patients admitted under observation status, the physician’s order must state, “Admit to observation for ______.”

- Required documentation includes a history and physical, physician orders, progress notes, nursing notes, treatment plans, test results, discharge status and discharge instructions.

- Although observation patients may be on an inpatient unit, they are technically outpatients.

- Observation patients may be bedded on any unit except the ICU, CCU and C1.

- The observation case manager is available on pager 15644. On evenings, nights and weekends, contact the clinical nursing supervisor at pager 16918 for questions.