Definition: To assure appropriate processing of a medical order for physician consultation. As used in this policy, "referring physician" means the physician who is referring the patient for consultation, and "consulting physician" means the physician to whom the patient is referred. Physician-to-physician consultations will significantly improve the communication process of obtaining consultations for inpatients.

Process to be followed:

1. The patient may be added to the census list of the consulting physician *or his/her designee, via verbal or written order. Listing the patient on the census list; however, does not constitute request for a consult.

Procedure:

* 1. The referring physician is responsible for directly contacting the consulting physician *or his/her designee, when a consultation is needed on an urgent or emergent basis, i.e. the patient needs to be seen that calendar day or sooner. The only exceptions to this will be routine laboratory, routine radiological procedures and Internal Medicine and Pediatric consults at Behavioral Health Center. It is understood that physicians actively participating in surgical procedures may relay information to other physicians using intermediaries in urgent clinical circumstances.

2. If a specific physician is requested for a consultation but is unavailable, the physician on-call is responsible for assuring the consultation is completed within the required time frame.

3. The timeliness of response can be negotiated with the referring physician based on the patient’s acuity. In the event of a disagreement regarding appropriate response time, the referring physician’s opinion will control.

4. It is understood that all consultations not designated as urgent/emergent by the requesting physician will be seen within 24 hours of the request for consultation, as outlined in the Bylaws. The referring physician is strongly encouraged to communicate with the consulting physician on a direct basis when referring patients have had a prolonged hospital course, a complicated medical problem or history, or complicated communication dynamics with the patient and/or his or her family.

Notwithstanding anything contained in this policy, if any governmental agency that administers the Medicare, Medicaid or other federal programs (or their representatives or agents), or any other federal, state or local governmental or regulatory agency that has jurisdiction over Carolinas Medical Center, or any accreditation agency or body from which Carolinas Medical seeks accreditation or approval, requires by law, rule, regulation, standard, interpretation, order, decision or judgment ("Requirement") a different, or more detailed or restrictive process for requesting and/or accepting consultations, then the policy of Carolinas Medical Center shall be to follow and adhere to such Requirement.

* Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, or Registered Nurse employed or under the direct supervision of the physician, and who has been identified in writing to the hospital by the physician as the physician’s designee for purposes of accepting consultation requests.

Approval: Medical Executive Committee: 11-08-04