OBJECTIVES

- To minimize the risk of **venous thromboembolism** to **patients** admitted to acute and sub-acute care facilities within Alberta Health Services by requiring assessment for risk of venous thromboembolism.

- Clinical judgment is not anticipated to be required in this policy. Any deviation from the standard or expectation within this policy must be carefully considered. Discussion with one’s direct report is expected prior to deviating and documentation shall be included on the patient’s health record to reflect both this discussion and to identify the rationale for such deviation.

PRINCIPLES

Venous thromboembolism is one of the most common complications of hospitalization and the most common preventable cause of hospital death. Patients admitted to acute and sub-acute care settings are to be assessed by the **most responsible health practitioner** for their risk of venous thromboembolism and receive appropriate **thromboprophylaxis**, if indicated.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary) working in Acute Care and Sub-Acute Facilities.
ELEMENTS

1. **Assessment for Venous Thromboembolism Risk**
   
   1.1 Every acute and sub-acute care hospitalized patient shall be assessed by their most responsible health practitioner for venous thromboembolism risk at the time of admission to hospital/facility, at the time of a significant change in clinical status, at the time of transfer from one type of care to another, and at discharge.

2. **Commencement of Thromboprophylaxis**
   
   2.1 Optimal, evidence-based thromboprophylaxis shall be provided to every acute and sub-acute care patient in whom it is indicated based on their risk of thrombosis, their risk of bleeding, and available options in the Alberta Health Services facility.

**DEFINITIONS**

*Most responsible health practitioner* means the health practitioner who has responsibility and accountability for the specific treatment/procedure(s) provided to a patient and who is authorized by Alberta Health Services to perform the duties required to fulfill the delivery of such a treatment/procedure(s) within the scope of his/her practice.

*Patient* means an adult or child who receives or has requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers or individuals authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents, clients and outpatients.

*Thromboprophylaxis* means the use of mechanical methods or anticoagulant medication to prevent venous thromboembolism from developing in patients who are at risk.

*Venous thromboembolism* means a thromboembolic event (“blood clot”) that develops within the venous system and includes both deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

**REFERENCES**

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - Venous Thromboembolism Prophylaxis Guideline (#PS-09-01)

**VERSION HISTORY**

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