POLICY
To assure residents have the freedom and opportunity to wander freely within the community while ensuring that the community’s egress control is operable and in compliance with state rule.

DEFINITIONS
Wandering is considered to be a normal component of the dementia process and is not to be confused with exit seeking.

PROCEDURES

Egress Control
- The community utilizes a keypad egress control system that affords residents the ability to wander freely while preventing intentional elopement from the community.
- Entrance and egress codes for families and staff will be communicated to allow access into the dementia wing.
- The egress control system will be monitored daily and upon any emergent need to assure the system is working.
- If the system is not in working order, all doors will be monitored routinely until the egress system is returned to working order.

Courtyard Access
- Except in weather extremes residents will have unrestricted access to the secured courtyard.
- Furniture and flower pots, etc. in the courtyard will be placed and or secured in a manner that prevents residents from utilizing them to elope over the fence.
- The community will place chairs and or benches in places that would serve as cues for wandering residents to sit and rest.

Posted Notice to Family and Visitors
- A notice will be placed on all exit doors which states:
  - “In order to prevent unintended exits of residents from the community, please do not exit the community with anyone other than those persons you entered with, or with your loved one whom you are signing out of the community.”
Policies and Procedures
Residential and Assisted Living Communities

Policy Title: Wandering, Exit Seeking and Egress Control
Policy Number: HS.11.40.01 Effective Date: 1-16-2012
Approved By: Kevin Cox

Wandering
- Ensure that the resident is dressed appropriately for the areas in which they are wandering.
- Evaluate if the resident’s wandering is a natural part of their dementia or if the wandering is due to pain, distress, frustration, anxiety, etc. Attempt to resolve factors contributing to other than “natural wandering”.
- If resident is wandering outside, ensure that the resident is monitored at least every 30 minutes and that resident is protected from the elements.
- Offer finger food and fluids for residents wandering for prolonged periods or those wandering at mealtimes and offer a meal or snack when wandering has ceased.
- If resident is wandering for a prolonged time and is tiring, attempt to interrupt the wandering with a rest period by approaching the resident with an alternative activity, food, holding their hand and coaching them to sit and visit with you, etc.

Exit Seeking
- If a resident is exit seeking, try to redirect or satisfy the resident’s need to be out of the community. For example, does the resident simply want to be out of doors? Would a ride in the van or walk in the secured courtyard or neighborhood satisfy their need? Would a visit from a particular friend or family member be helpful?
- Have the Licensed Nurse assess the resident for any medical contributing factors.
- Hold a care conference with key staff and family in an effort to identify triggers and diversional interventions.
- Service plan prevention and staff training are to occur to put a plan in place to monitor any resident that is exit seeking.

Elopement
- See Missing Resident Policy and Procedure

RELATED POLICIES/REFERENCES
Missing Resident Policy and Procedures