### Friday Night at the er – Game INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduction

**You will each play the role of a department manager in a community hospital. If you look at your game board, you will notice that we have compressed the hospital into just four departments to simplify your job so that you can get through a simulated 24-hour period in just one actual hour.**

**First, I’m going to orient you to the game board and give you basic instructions about the game play. Then, together, we will walk through the initial sequences of the game play so that you become familiar. Then, you will proceed to play the game on your own for about an hour. After the game play and scoring, we will take a short break; then we’ll be back together as a group to talk about the experience.**

**Now I’m going to give you all the information you need to play the game, and I ask that you pay close attention, and hold questions until I’m done. If you still have a question as you get into playing the game, just raise your hand at that time and I will come to you to answer.**

1. Name

**Your first task as managers is to take the blank card and the marker at your table and come up with a name for your hospital. Go ahead now at each table and take about one minute to come up with a name and write it on your card.**

**....{When they’re done}....OK, can each hospital team introduce yourself—just speak up and tell us the name you've chosen as I point to your table. ....{Point to one at a time to hear their names}.... Thank you!**

1. Flow

**Now look at the board and follow along with me to become familiar with the basic flow of the processes you will manage. During this game you will see patients arrive in your departments each simulated hour, you will make certain decisions, and you will have patients leave.**

**First, notice that the Emergency Department has two sources of patients: there are two arrows leading in to the Emergency Department—one for people who arrive by Ambulance, and one for people who walk in (arriving on their own or with families). Most Emergency patients, when they are done with treatment, just leave the hospital...do you see the arrow showing a person walking out? The rest of the patients in Emergency will require another hospital service as shown by the red arrows leading from Emergency to the other departments.**

**The other three departments also have inflow arrows marked with a person entering. Does everyone see the arrow leading into their department? This is where patients enter from external sources directly into your departments without first coming to Emergency.**

**You will also notice that each department has one or more outflow arrows, showing where patients go when they leave. Surgery patients go to one of the two bed units; Critical Care patients all go to Step Down; and Step Down patients all leave the hospital.**

**There is an Arrivals display on your table ....{hold one up}. This is your time clock during the game. You will flip to the next card each simulated hour, from Friday noon through Saturday 11 am. And this is where you will learn how many patients arrive at your departments at the start of each hour.**

1. Beads

**Now, you'll notice three different colored beads at your table. The blue beads are patients. You are starting with a certain number of patients in your departments, and there are more patients in the community who are represented by more blue beads in the jar.**

**The white beads in your departments represent your core staff. You can remember this by thinking of hospital workers typically wearing white coats.**

**You can see that you're starting with a certain number of patients in your departments, each one paired with staff. And notice that each department has one or two white staff beads in rooms that do not yet have patients. These staff are available for patient care, and you may use them to accommodate additional patients who may arrive.**

**The ratio of staff beads to patient beads, which you must maintain, is one-to-one. Don’t think of this as one-on-one nursing care—the white beads here don't just represent nurses; here they represent adequate staff to care for a patient. Think of the white beads as just the right fractions of doctors, nurses, technicians, and others who are needed for each patient, and you will have to keep adequate staff with each patient at all times.**

**If you don’t have sufficient staff to handle patient demand, you may choose to call in Extra Staff represented by clear beads in a jar. Think of Extra Staff as agency staff or overtime workers. In a few minutes, I'll describe the procedure for calling in these Extra Staff to supplement your core staff.**

1. Steps

**The best way for you to learn the rest of what you need to know is to walk through the steps with me for the first simulated hour of play. ....{Show the Steps Each Hour slide}.... These are the five steps you will complete each hour.**

1. Arrivals

**Let's start now with the first step, Arrivals. Look at the Arrivals display on your table for the Friday noon hour. Notice the number of patients arriving for your department. Go ahead now and take blue beads from the jar in the amount indicated for your department, and just place them on the arrow leading into your department.**

**Now, if you have staff capacity in your department—represented by white beads that are not already paired with blue beads—you may move arriving patients right into care. I believe that everyone at this time can bring arriving patients into care except for Surgery, which has one patient who must wait. Surgery managers, you can just keep that blue bead waiting on the arrow until you have available staff in your department to move the patient into care.**

1. Exits

**Next, you'll want to Exit patients from your departments. ....{Refer again to the Steps Each Hour slide}.... Now, bear with me while I walk you through the exit procedure by department, because it’s slightly different for each department.**

**First, Step Down managers, turn over the top Ready to Exit card in your department, and place it face-up on top of the deck. You will do this each hour to learn how many patients have completed their hospital stay and are ready to leave. Step Down managers, you may now take blue beads from your department in the number matching the number shown on that Exit card, and move them off the board and into a jar.**

**Then take the face-up card and put it face-down on the bottom of the deck; and Step Down managers, you have just completed your Exit step for this hour.**

**Next, Critical Care managers, would you turn over your top Ready to Exit card and place it face-up on top of the deck—but don't move any blue beads yet! The card tells you that some number of patients are ready to leave your department; but just because they're ready to leave, doesn't mean they can leave. First you have to notify the Step Down manager and request that he or she accept the transfer, and you should do this now by taking Request cards from your department in the number matching the number ready to exit, and just slide those Request cards along the purple arrow leading to the Step Down department.**

**Critical Care managers, that's all you can do during this hour to exit patients from your department. You have to wait until the Step Down manager initiates the transfer before you can actually move patients out.**

**Now, I have a question. How long do you think it takes to make a patient transfer happen in most hospitals—from the time a transfer order is written to the time the patient is moved? ....{For groups without hospital experience, mention that the process actually involves several administrative steps, and it often takes several hours.}.... In this simulation, we're going to say that it always takes at least an hour to accomplish a transfer.**

**So, Step Down managers, even if you have capacity in your department to accept more patients, you may not take an internal transfer until the next hour. After you flip the Arrivals cards at the start of the next hour, you may consider accepting internal transfers along with any new external arrivals.**

**Now, Critical Care managers, for each patient in your department that needs to go to Step Down, turn those blue beads over so that the green side faces up. If, for example, you have two patients that need to go to Step Down, you will turn over two blue beads. This green color will provide an easy, visible reminder to you that those patients are ready to go when your colleague is ready to accept them.**

**OK Critical Care managers, take your face-up card, place it face-down on the bottom of the Ready to Exit deck, and you have done your exit step for this hour.**

**Next, Surgery managers, turn over your top Ready to Exit card and place it face-up on top of the deck. Now Surgery managers, you will need to know where your patients are going after Surgery, so you will need to pick up and turn over Destination cards from your department in the number matching the number of patients who are ready to exit. Then issue Request cards in the proper number along the green arrow to the proper department. So, for example, if you have two patients ready to exit, pull two Destination cards and issue two Request cards, each to the department named on each Destination card.**

**Then, turn over blue beads so that the green side is showing. Again, this represents patients waiting for a transfer. Take your face-up cards and return them face-down at the bottom of their decks. And Surgery managers, you have now completed your Exit step for this hour.**

**Finally, Emergency managers, turn over your top Ready to Exit card and place it face-up on top of the deck. Then take Destination cards in the number matching the number of patients ready to exit, and just lay them out face-up in front of you. This tells you where each of your ready-to-exit patients will go. If you have Destination cards that say "Out,” take patients in that number, and move them out of your department and into a jar. If you have Destination cards that say the name of a department, issue Request cards in the proper number along the red arrow to the proper department, and turn over blue beads representing those patients waiting for transfer.**

**Then take your face-up cards, place them face down on the bottom of the decks, and that completes your exit step.**

1. Closed?

**Next, you all have two decisions to make each hour....{again point to the   
Steps Each Hour slide}....**

**The Closed decision allows you to signify that you are full and cannot take more patients at this time—or that you just don't choose to take more patients at this time. Surgery, Critical Care and Step Down managers, you signify that you are “closed” by raising the No Beds Available sign that you each have in your department.**

**You may do this any time during the hour, and you can raise or lower this sign more than once during the hour. It's primarily a communication device so that your fellow department managers can easily see, at a glance, the status of your department. Go ahead now, and use your No Beds Available signs to signify whether you are open or closed to more patients coming into your department at this time.**

**Now, this Closure decision has a special and different meaning for Emergency department managers. What do you think happens in the real world if a hospital emergency department is at capacity? ....{Allow answers, then tell the group}…. a hospital can divert ambulance patients to other hospitals, but you can never close to walk-in patients—they keep arriving}....**

**So, Emergency managers, if you want to reduce the number of incoming patients, put up your Divert sign and, at the start of the next hour ....{you may hold up an Arrivals display and turn a card}.... if you see that you have Ambulance arrivals, just don't take those beads from the jar and instead, log that number on your paperwork form as “Ambulance diversions.” If you have walk-in arrivals at that hour, do take them.**

**Emergency managers, whether you choose to be open or closed to Ambulance arrivals is your choice; even patients arriving by ambulance can wait in the waiting area. Both ambulance patients and walk-in patients can be placed in your waiting area.**

1. Staffing?

**The other decision you will make each hour ....{point to Steps Each Hour slide}.... is Staffing. If you want to call in Extra Staff to supplement your core staff, here's the procedure. Notice the place in each department labeled “Extra Staff Called.” If you want to call in one or more Extra Staff, just take one or more clear beads from the jar and move them into your Extra Staff Called box. Then at the start of the next hour, you can move those clear beads into care to accommodate new patients. Just like in the real world, it takes about an hour for extra staff to arrive, so you must wait until the start of the next hour to use those Extra Staff beads.**

**By the way, you can send Extra Staff home at any time during the game play if you no longer need them by moving them back to the jar—as long as you have accounted for those Extra Staff on your Paperwork form, as I will explain in a minute.**

1. Paperwork

**The final step each hour....{point to Steps Each Hour slide}.... is Paperwork, which each department manager will fill out. Find the Paperwork form on one side of the paper in front of you. Emergency managers, look at your form; we already indicated that you will log any Ambulance diversions each hour. At the end of each hour you will also count and record the number of patients you may have in your Waiting area.**

**For other departments, you have a place on your forms for logging Arrivals Waiting, which is the count of any blue beads that remain waiting on the arrivals arrow leading into your department. For this Friday noon hour, Surgery managers should all log "1" for Arrivals Waiting; everyone else should write "0.”**

**You also have a place on your form for documenting the number of Requests Waiting, which means the count of Request cards that are waiting to move into your departments.**

**Finally, you each have a place on your form for accounting for Extra Staff. For this item, at the end of each hour, just count any clear beads anywhere within your department and log that number on the form.**

**A useful point about these Steps Each Hour: they do not have to be done in the sequence shown here. ....{Point to Steps Each Hour slide}.... For example, if you have patients leaving your department during an hour, you may just go ahead and move any new arrivals waiting into care—as long as you wait the minimum hour delay for inter-department transfers.**

1. Performance Measures

**Your performance will be measured during the game in three areas: the quality of service that you deliver, your financial performance, and your ability to complete the game play within our allotted time.**

**You will affect financial performance when you cause patients to be turned away from the hospital (and you therefore lose a revenue opportunity), or when you use Extra Staff who are paid premium wages. You will accumulate quality errors when you keep patients waiting too long, when you divert ambulance patients to a more distant hospital, and if you use too many Extra Staff.**

**Your ability to complete the game play will require you to move along through steps and hours at a reasonable pace, within the time most groups require. I will periodically announce to the group where you should be in time so you can gauge your progress and adjust if needed.**

1. Go to “Friday 1 pm”

**Now, if everyone has done their paperwork for the Friday noon hour, we will together start the steps for the next simulated hour. Go ahead and flip the Arrivals card to the Friday 1 pm hour, take blue beads in the proper number and place them on the Arrivals arrow leading into your department.**

**At this time, if you called in Extra Staff during the prior hour, you will have clear beads in your Extra Staff Called box, which you should move into position in a treatment or bed space to be ready to care for additional patients.**

**Remember that the Arrivals step refers to the arrival of both extra staff and patients.**

**If you have staff available, this is a time when you may move any waiting blue patient beads into care, and you may also accept internal transfer requests from the prior hour. If you want to take an internal transfer request, and you have staff available, here's the procedure: take the Request card and give it back to the requesting department, and take the transfer patient into your department. The green side should face down because the patient is no longer waiting to transfer. ...{Give players brief time to do this.}....**

**Go ahead now with your Exit step by turning over a Ready to Exit card; and go through the procedure for your department to either move patients out or issue Request cards to others. ....{Give players brief time to do this...and now you will be raising your voice, but just proceed}….**

**Next, make your decision about whether you are Closed; and decide about Staffing for the next hour. ....{Pause briefly...you are about to be ignored from now on!}….**

**And don’t forget to complete your Paperwork at the end of the hour. Then go ahead and continue to play on your own, through 2 pm and beyond.**