

## Clinical TRACERS



A “tracer” is defined as a method used by an Accreditation Canada surveyor, by which the path of a client or an administrative process in a healthcare setting can be followed across the continuum of care. They can be referred to as either administrative or clinical tracers.

Prior to the tracer beginning, ask the surveyor if they would like a tour of the site. If yes, please provide them with one.

There are 4 main activities/stages during a tracer (stages are not independent nor sequential- some stages can occur at the same time):

1. **Reviewing documentation:** the surveyor will present to the nursing station or community office – introduce themselves and explain why they are there. They may ask to see a roster of current clients. SEE SPECIAL NOTES BELOW ON TYPE OF CHARTS BASED ON PROGRAM. They may identify some clients they wish to review their chart. The surveyor will review the Client Profile, Referral Source, Care plan along with other criteria such as, diagnosis, medications, age, procedure, complexity of services to help them determine the tracer path.

**INPATIENT TRACER:** After reviewing the files and assessing their compliance to standards, a staff member will guide the surveyor to the client they wish to follow within the facility.

**COMMUNITY TRACER:** After reviewing the files and assessing their compliance to standards, they may ask if there are clients they can speak too. Staff are to prepare clients who are willing to receive a phone call from a surveyor. SEE SPECIAL NOTES BELOW ON HOW MANY CLIENTS.

The staff member needs to be available to answer any questions the surveyor may have about the path of a client from first contact at the site or program until they are discharged.

2. **Talking and Listening:** Tracers can involve the surveyor speaking to patients/clients, staff, volunteers, etc. and listening to their responses.
  3. **Observing Process and Procedures:** Tracers will include observing processes and procedures. Surveyors will talk with people on site. They may ask for policy and procedures. They are looking for consistency with information being gathered.
  4. **Recording:** Surveyors note their observations and share relevant information with other surveyors. If two pieces of information are contradictory, then a third piece of evidence is obtained.
- ➡ Tracers are flexible and customized – no two tracers are ever the same! Surveyors may share their expertise throughout the survey.

- ➔ Surveyors may stop staff members to verify information and check compliance. They may verify the information in a variety of ways.
- ➔ A surveyor may speak with patients and ask questions – about the perception of quality of care.

**SPECIAL NOTES:**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Type of Charts</b>	<b>Number of Clients/Patients Surveyor would like to speak with either in person or by phone. Ask permission first from client/patient</b>
Long Term Care	5 charts for each tracer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New admission</li> <li>2. A resident who was transferred to hospital and then transferred back to PCH</li> <li>3. A longer term client</li> <li>4. Two other charts</li> </ol>	Surveyor would like to talk with resident and families. It can be the client from the chart or any other resident/ family. If they are not in person, provide phone number.
Primary Care	5 charts for each tracer – a variety of ages and types	Surveyors would like phone numbers of 5 clients – a variety of ages
Mental Health	5 charts for each tracer – a variety of ages and types, including a long term client	Surveyors would like phone numbers of 5 clients – a variety of ages
Home Care	5 charts for each tracer – a variety of issues	Surveyors would like phone numbers of 5 clients – a variety of issues
Public Health	5 charts for each tracer – a variety of ages and types	Surveyors would like phone numbers of 5 clients – a variety of ages, including child/parent
EMS	5 charts for each tracer – a variety of issues, including a child	Surveyors would like phone numbers of 2 clients - one with a child & parent