

CARDIAC CARE 2.0

Frequently Asked Questions For Referring Physicians

1. What is Cardiac Direct Access?

Cardiac Direct Access is a dedicated unit that provides same-day, comprehensive assessment and treatment for patients with cardiac symptoms that are non-life threatening but require prompt attention. Patients must be referred by a physician's office. You can speak directly with the cardiologist on duty and initiate your referral by calling 617-632-7777. The unit is staffed by experienced clinicians dedicated solely to cardiac care. The facility includes patient exam rooms, overnight observation rooms, testing equipment, a telemedicine facility and an outpatient diuresis room.

2. Which patients should I refer to Cardiac Direct Access?

- Patients with volume overload who do not have unstable vital signs or significant hypoxia (more than 2-3L Nasal cannula requirement)
- Patients with concern for malignant syncope
- Patients with angina chest pain who you feel need a rule-out and urgent stress test. Please note: Patients with ST elevations or unstable vital signs should go to the Emergency Room
- Patients with rapid, symptomatic atrial fibrillation
- Decisions about admission to the inpatient floor will be made in the Cardiac Direct Access Unit and do not require involvement of the Emergency Room. Treatment and workup started in the Cardiac Direct Access Unit will transfer seamlessly to our inpatient service
- **Patients you deem appropriate for ambulance transport with Advanced Life Support from your office should still be referred to the Emergency Room.**

3. Why is Cardiac Direct Access innovative?

Cardiac Direct Access provides referring physicians with the ability to bypass the Emergency Room and arrange referrals for patients with concerning cardiac symptoms to be seen the same day by a cardiologist. The unit is open 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday. It is staffed from 8 a.m.–11 p.m. by an attending cardiologist and at all times by experienced advanced practice providers and clinical nurses. This expertise and the capacity for overnight observation mean fewer preventable hospital stays. Patients are seen immediately with no wait or lengthy triage process. Extended hours for testing and consultation allow our call center to accommodate all urgent (less than 48-hour) consult requests either in our Shapiro 7 Cardiovascular Clinic or in the Cardiac Direct Access Unit.

4. How do I make a referral?

Call the attending cardiologist at **617-632-7777**. If the attending is with a patient and unable to answer, you will be routed to the unit coordinator who will enter the consult referral into our system and leave your contact number for the cardiology attending to call back as needed. You will always receive a call back after your patient is evaluated to review the initial impression and plan.

5. What are the administrative and fax numbers?

Administrative: 617-632-7770. Fax: 617-632-0120.

6. How will my patients access the unit?

Patients typically arrive by car. The unit is located on the first floor of the Deaconess Building, accessible through the Farr Complex lobby on BIDMC's West Campus at 185 Pilgrim Road. The closest parking is in the BIDMC garage on Pilgrim Road. Valet parking is available in front of the Rosenberg Clinical Center. From there patients will be directed to the Cardiac Direct Access Unit. During regular daytime hours, patients may walk into the Farr Lobby and ask the ambassador to call the unit or provide an escort. After 8 p.m., the Farr Building is locked and patients will call the Cardiac Direct Access Unit from a call monitor located to the right of the main door. The call monitor is clearly marked "Cardiac Direct Access." A staffer will meet the patient at the door and accompany him or her to the unit.

7. What services are available in the Cardiac Direct Access Unit?

Same-day evaluation by a cardiologist, including evening evaluations, overnight observation, in-unit testing (labs, echocardiography and stress), direct transfers to the inpatient cardiology service as needed, diuresis (scheduled and urgent) and telemedicine consultations.

8. How does Cardiac Direct Access care differ from emergency care and urgent care?

Cardiac Direct Access care is similar to urgent care except that it is dedicated to cardiac care, and patients must have a referral from a physician. This policy is designed to assure that patients with unstable vital signs or evidence of acute myocardial infarction go to the Emergency Room and those at low and intermediate risk benefit from Cardiac Direct Access care.

9. Who staffs the Cardiac Direct Access Unit?

Staff includes a cardiologist, advanced practice providers, nursing director, clinical nurses, medical assistants and technicians. All are experienced in cardiac care.

10. How do I arrange a telemedicine consultation?

Call the attending cardiologist on duty at 617-632-7777. The attending physician will work with you to arrange a call into our virtual meeting room. Our software allows desktop computers, iPhones and Androids to be used for the teleconference.

11. How do I arrange for diuresis for my patient?

Diuresis is available on both an urgent basis and a scheduled basis. To arrange a session, call the administrative number at 617-632-7770.

12. What if a patient presenting at the Cardiac Direct Access Unit has a myocardial infarction or other high-risk event?

In the event that a patient experiences a sudden event or becomes unstable, Cardiac Direct Access staff will arrange immediate transport to the BIDMC Emergency Room.

13. Will Cardiac Direct Access visits be covered by health insurers?

Yes. Please note that a referral to an observation status stay is an outpatient event, so co-insurance and co-payments apply.

14. Can patients ever self-refer to the Cardiac Direct Access Unit?

No.

15. What if my patient needs a referral during the off-hours, between Saturday at 12 noon and 8 a.m. on Monday?

If symptoms are urgent and potentially life-threatening, refer your patient to the Emergency Room. Otherwise, call our attending cardiologist at 617-632-7777 Monday morning.

16. Whom can I call for a tour or more information about the Cardiac Direct Access Unit?

Cardiac Direct Access Nursing Director Gail Lopez, RN, MS, welcomes your inquiry. Please call her at 617-632-0118.