

## What is a Code Amber?

Hospital wide alert indicating a possible:

- Abduction of an infant or child by the parents or other family members against medical advice, against social services hold (CPS cases) or abduction (by family members) as perceived protection from the birth mother or father.
- Abduction of an infant or child by someone unrelated to the family. This can be an employee of the hospital or someone impersonating a healthcare worker, someone who is in search for an infant or child to call their own, or to sell for income.



## How Often Do Abductions Happen?

- Infant abduction is **not** an epidemic problem, however one case is too many.
- There have been a total of 345 infant abductions related to healthcare in the U.S. from 1964-2024.
- New York State is ranked 6th in the United States for the number of cases reported for infant abductions by a non-family member .
- Many of the reported cases have been newborns abducted from the mothers room in a health care facility.

\* Guidelines for prevention of and response to infant abductions, 10<sup>th</sup> edition 2014., National center for Missing and Exploited Children



## Abduction Facts

- Most abductions occur directly from newborn nursery or the mother's rooms by non-family members impersonating staff.
- Some abductions may be planned by a hospital employee working in the maternity unit or elsewhere in the hospital.
- Abductions from homes in the first 0-6 months may be violent in nature and the victim may have been targeted by social media, announcements in the paper, or even decorations on lawns indicating new births.
- Other abductions, such as from families, may escalate the violence and it is unlikely the infant or child will be found.



## How Might an Abductor Behave?

- Will not target any one particular infant, take what is available. However, usually the same race.
- Well-planned event, NOT USUALLY ON IMPULSE.
- May be carrying infant instead, or transporting in bassinet or car seat (for discharge).
- Personable, smiles.
- Act like they belong.



## What are Common Characteristics of Abductors?

- Female of child bearing age.
- Race and skin color usually match infant.
- May be overweight to suggest pregnancy.
- Married or cohabitating; companion desires an infant or person believes that companion will stay connected to them if an infant is involved.
- Infertility or history of past fetal/neonatal losses.
- Usually lives in the community and has been in the hospital.
- May visit hospital or nursery and ask questions about floor layout.
- May be wearing hospital scrubs and an overturned ID.
- May seek stairwell to exit (“don’t like elevators”).



## What are the Security Layers Here at Crouse?

- Hugs Tags.
- House wide camera system with ability to focus on a specific area.
- Dedicated personnel in command center.
- Visitor identification on entry to hospital.
- Nursing assessment of family.
- Lock-out doors.
- Employees aware of the location of the Mother-baby unit in hospital.
- Staff reporting suspicious behaviors.



## The HUG Tag System

- Security responds to site if not otherwise notified that infant has been found secure.
- Charge RN searches for infant to confirm missing, parents are removed from assigned room and room is blocked off.
- Staff responds to portals of exit, other staff places parents and infants in designated rooms accounting for all infants.
- Doors being propped open will alarm.
- Police are notified along with upper management by security.



## What is Expected From OB or Postpartum Staff?

- Search for the infant, if infant is confirmed missing by the charge RN.
- The staff will go to the nearest portals of exit (stairs or elevators).
- **All** persons, including staff in the stairwells, should be stopped and any bags/backpacks checked.
- All people (employee or not) will be observed for suspicious behavior.
- No one will be allowed off the unit until secured.
- All bags and backpacks should be checked.
- Any infant in a car seat being discharged must be accompanied to the vehicle by an authorized staff member.
- Any visitor with a small infant must have visitors ID from security on their person.



## What is Expected from all Hospital Staff?

- Observe portals of entry and exit.
- Look for unusual bags or behavior.
- Stop or delay any suspicious staff or visitor *when possible*.
- Do not try to detain anyone *if you find the infant*, do not provoke or threaten the person.
- If the person states their intent to leave the building; encourage the person to use the elevator; call security immediately; notify them of which elevator the abductor entered and on what floor, and give a description of the abductor.
- The portals near the HUGS system tag will lock out. Others will remain accessible. IF the tag is tampered with or removed the portal will be unobstructed .

