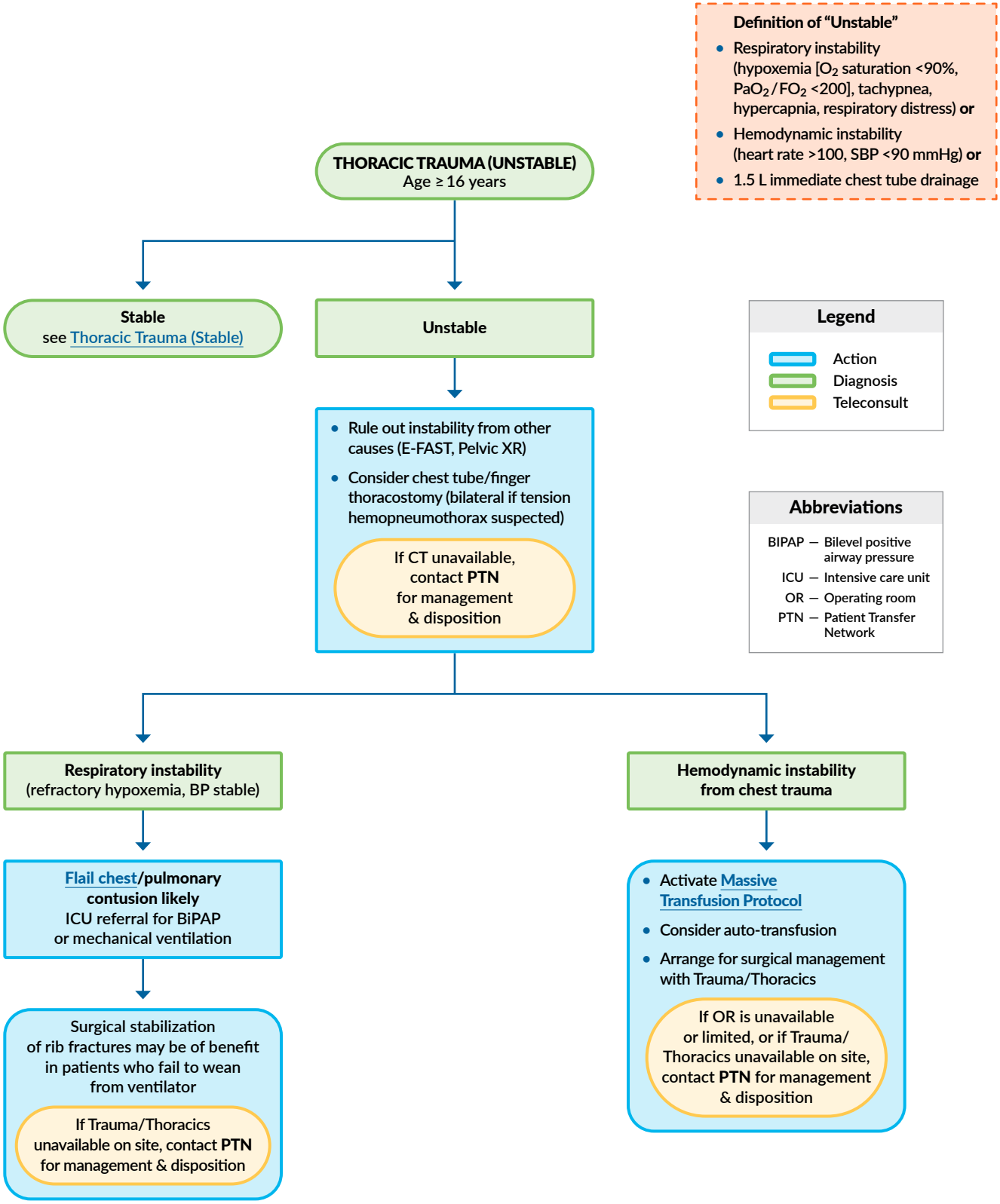
Definition of "Unstable"
Respiratory instability (hypoxemia [O_2 saturation <90%, PaO_2/FO_2 <200], tachypnea, hypercapnia, respiratory distress) or
Hemodynamic instability (heart rate >100, SBP <90 mmHg) or
1.5 L immediate chest tube drainage
THORACIC TRAUMA (UNSTABLE)
Age ≥ 16 years
Stable
see Thoracic Trauma (Stable)
Unstable
Rule out instability from other causes (E-FAST, Pelvic XR)
Consider chest tube/finger thoracostomy (bilateral if tension hemopneumothorax suspected)
If CT unavailable, contact PTN for management & disposition
Legend
Action
Diagnosis
Teleconsult
Abbreviations
BIPAP — Bilevel positive airway pressure
ICU — Intensive care unit
OR — Operating room
PTN — Patient Transfer Network
Respiratory instability (refractory hypoxemia, BP stable)
Flail chest/pulmonary contusion likely
ICU referral for BiPAP or mechanical ventilation
Surgical stabilization of rib fractures may be of benefit in patients who fail to wean from ventilator
If Trauma/Thoracics unavailable on site, contact PTN for management & disposition
Hemodynamic instability from chest trauma
Activate Massive Transfusion Protocol
Consider auto-transfusion
Arrange for surgical management with Trauma/Thoracics
If OR is unavailable or limited, or if Trauma/Thoracics unavailable on site, contact PTN for management & disposition