

Solano County Health & Social Services Department



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POLICY MEMORANDUM 6700

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REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:



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SUBJECT: DESTINATION PROTOCOLS FOR AMBULANCES

AUTHORITY: CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE, DIVISION 2.5, 1797.222

I. PURPOSE/POLICY:

To ensure that patients are transported to the appropriate facility and to establish the on-line medical control responsibilities of the designated base hospitals. This policy does not apply to trauma or ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) patients.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Emergency Patient:** A person who experiences an injury and who is subsequently transported by ambulance on an unscheduled basis.
- B. **Critical Patient:** An emergency patient who is at immediate risk to life or limb as evidenced by one or more of the following circumstances:
 - 1. Cardiogenic, hypovolemic, septic or anaphylactic shock.
 - 2. Severe respiratory distress and/or need for assisted ventilation.
 - 3. Coma or severe alteration of mental status.

4. Airway problems when measures available to the prehospital personnel are insufficient to establish and/or maintain a patent airway.
 5. Trauma patients as defined by Policy 6105, Solano County Prehospital Trauma Triage Plan.
 6. Active labor when delivery is imminent and complications are expected.
 7. Any patient who has a 12-lead EKG which is interpreted to show "acute MI" or "STEMI" per Policy 6609, ST Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction.
 8. Any patient with the new onset of stroke symptoms that are less than three hours old.
 9. Any other patient that the Paramedic deems critical.
- C. **Non-Critical Patient:** An emergency patient who does not meet the criteria for "critical patient".
- D. **Patient Choice:** The chosen destination facility as stated by the patient or surrogate decision maker. If a patient is unable to communicate a choice the prehospital personnel shall use whatever other sources of information that might be available to indicate a pre-existing relationship. In the absence of a stated choice or indications of a usual provider, the patient is considered an undesignated patient.
- E. **Undesignated Patient:** A patient, or surrogate decision maker, who does not or cannot choose a destination facility.
- F. **Base Hospital:** A receiving hospital in Solano County which has contracted with the Solano County EMS Agency to provide on-line medical direction to ALS ambulances. The base hospitals in Solano County are:
1. North Bay Medical Center (NBMC)
 2. Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, Vallejo (KVH)
 3. Sutter Solano Medical Center (SSMC)
 4. VacaValley Hospital (VVH)
 5. Kaiser Foundation Medical Center, Vacaville (KVV)
- G. **Ambulance Zone A:** The cities of Vallejo and Benicia plus both directions of Interstate 80 (I-80) west of the American Canyon Road overcrossing, including the overcrossing. Zone A also includes the westbound lanes of I-80 between Red Top Road and the American Canyon Road overcrossing and both directions of Interstate 680 from Lake Herman Road up to but not including the Parish Road overcrossing.

III. GENERAL

- A. No ambulance shall transport an emergency patient to any facility other than one licensed pursuant to Title 22, California Code of Regulations as having Basic or Comprehensive Emergency Medical Service.
- B. Patients are entitled to choose the hospital where their care is to be given. With all Solano County hospitals participating in giving on-line medical control, in most cases the base hospital guiding their prehospital care will be their chosen facility. With the exception of situations when the patient requests David Grant Medical Center (DGMC), the base hospital will also be the receiving hospital.
- C. All patient advisories and requests for physician orders or destination decisions shall be made to the base hospital using the established pre-recorded phone lines. In event of communication failure or inability to contact a physician at the receiving facility, prehospital personnel may contact another base hospital to obtain orders.
- D. In "Ambulance Zone A", SSMC and KVH are considered equidistant and will alternate in receiving undesignated patients by date. KVH will receive undesignated patients on the odd days of the month. SSMC will receive undesignated patients on even days of the month. The day of the call is determined by the time the call is dispatched. In the event of multiple undesignated patients during a single call, the patients will be divided equally among receiving facilities.
- E. Solano County EMS policy does not allow for ambulance diversion except in cases when a facility is incapacitated or temporarily unable to provide a vital service such as, but not limited to, CT scanning. These will be rare events and such redirection should be documented by the Base Hospital using a Field Advisory Report. Hospitals may not divert patients due to problems with staffing or hospital or Emergency Department (ED) bed availability.
- F. Destination for all Multi Casualty Incident (MCI) patients will be determined by the designated MCI base as outlined in Policy 6180 MCI Response.

IV. DESTINATION PROTOCOLS

- A. Critical patients will be transported to the closest facility regardless of patient preference. Prehospital personnel will contact that hospital for any requested orders and for a patient advisory. If DGMC is the receiving facility, prehospital personnel will contact NBMC or VVH for physician orders.

- B. Non-critical patients may be transported to the receiving facility of the patient's choice. In the event that a non-critical patient being transported to DGMC requires physician orders, Paramedics will contact NBMC or VVH.
- C. In the event that a patient does not meet the definition of a critical patient but the evaluating Paramedic is concerned that the patient may be unstable for transport to a more distant facility, the paramedic is advised to discuss the case with the base physician at the facility of the patient's choice. The base hospital physician may then, if appropriate, override the patient's choice destination and direct the ambulance to the nearest receiving facility. In these cases, the base hospital will be responsible for communicating with the receiving facility.
- D. Patients requesting transport to receiving facilities outside of Solano County which are not the closest receiving facility may be accommodated only if **all** the following circumstances are met:
 - 1. The patient is non-critical;
 - 2. The patient's chosen facility is open to receive ambulances and is licensed as having Basic or Comprehensive Emergency Services and;
 - 3. The ambulance provider agency has the capability to provide the requested transport without adversely impacting any of their responsibilities regarding 911 system response.

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