



San Benito County Emergency Medical Services Agency

TRIAGE FOR RECEIVING HOSPITAL DESTINATION

Policy : 1070
Effective : July 1, 2015
Reviewed : May 2015

I. Purpose

- A. To set guidelines for determining patient destination in San Benito County's prehospital emergency medical services system.

II. Definition

A. Closest Most Appropriate Medical Facility:

1. The most appropriate medical facility shall ordinarily be a licensed health care facility that maintains and operates a Basic Emergency Department. Closest shall be understood to mean falling within the shortest transport distance from the point of initial patient contact.
2. It is recognized that in many cases the closest hospital, as measured by geographic distance, is not necessarily the hospital that can be accessed in the shortest time period. It is essential that paramedics take the following transportation factors into consideration when determining hospital destination:
 - a. Time of day and day of week
 - b. Current traffic patterns which may cause delay of transport

- B. Patient Preference: Patients who are alert and oriented, or a family member/surrogate present on scene, or has a private physician request, may be transported to a hospital of choice, only if the patient has a non-life threatening emergency situation that is not likely to deteriorate during transport.

III. Procedure

- A. In the absence of decisive factors to the contrary, the ambulance shall transport emergency patients to the most appropriate emergency facility equipped, staffed and prepared to administer care consistent to the needs of the patients.
- B. In most cases, patients shall be transported to the closest licensed medical facility for medical evaluation and stabilization with the following exceptions:

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1. Trauma patients are transported directly to a trauma center in accordance with Policy 6050 *Trauma Patient Transport and Hospital Destination*
 2. STEMI patients are transported directly to a STEMI center in accordance with Policy 1600 *STEMI Identification and Hospital Destination*
- C. Excluding trauma and STEMI exception, Base Hospital direction for patient destination other than the closest licensed medical facility requires Base Physician approval prior to transport.
- D. In a non-life threatening emergency situation, the patient may be taken to the receiving hospital of his/her preference.
1. In the case of the patient who is unable to determine this, the hospital designated by the private physician and/or the patient's family member/surrogate will be utilized.
 2. If the requested receiving hospital is outside of the provider's service area, the provider will ensure the service area has adequate emergency coverage during the transport/return time.
 3. Transport may be completed to an out-of-area hospital if that hospital is within a thirty (30) minute transport time. These include:

St. Louise Regional Hospital
9400 No Name Uno
Gilroy, CA 95020

Watsonville Community Hospital
75 Neilson Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Natividad Medical Center
1441 Constitution Blvd.
Salinas, CA 93906

Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital
450 East Romie Lane
Salinas, CA 93901
- E. In a life threatening situation, the patient will be transported to closest the "most accessible emergency medical facility, staffed and prepared to administer care appropriate to the needs of the patient". (Ref. Section 1105(c), Title 13, California Administrative Code, i.e., Ambulance Regulations.)
- F. In the event the EMS system is at status zero, meaning all ambulances are responding to emergencies, all emergency patients shall then be transported to Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital.

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- G. Patients transported by air ambulance shall be transported to the facilities as outlined in the Air Medical Services Policy # 1060.
 - H. Patients transported from multiple casualty incidents shall be transported to the facilities as outlined in the MCI Plan.

IV. Pediatric

A. Critically Ill or Injured Child

1. Paramedics will transport critically ill or injured children to the closest most appropriate medical facility. Ground transports of the critically ill or injured child will be limited to those cases when distances or delays are critical factors to a patient's outcome.
2. For the critically ill or injured child, an EDAP/PICU/Trauma Center/Burn Center is the most appropriate receiving facility. In San Benito County, the transport mode of choice to an EDAP or PICU/Trauma Center/Burn Center is by utilizing a medical helicopter. EMS personnel will follow Policy #1060 when requesting a medical helicopter response.
3. Consider contacting the Base Physician for advice and direction as the situation warrants.

B. Non-Critical Child

1. All children entering the EMS system who require ambulance transport, but are not critically ill or injured, will be transported to the closest most appropriate medical facility. Requests by family or persons legally responsible for the child for transport to a more distant EDAP or a non-EDAP hospital will be honored. In these cases where the requested receiving medical facility is not one of the facilities listed in III. PROCEDURE, C., 1-4 above, a medical helicopter will be utilized. EMS personnel will follow Policy #1060 when requesting a medical helicopter response.

V. Dispute Resolution:

- A. In any dispute, the Base Hospital Physician, in direct voice contact with the paramedic, will make the final decision as to whether the patient is in immediate life threat, and whether or not the patient is to be transported to the closest most appropriate medical facility or to the hospital which the patient or family or primary care physician wishes. The paramedics may not override the decision of the Base Hospital Physician once the decision has been made.