

**EMS System Operations**  
**Triage to Appropriate Facility****Date: 07/01/2023**  
**Policy #4130****I. Purpose:**

A. To establish guidelines for the transportation of patients by ambulance from the scene of a medical emergency to the most appropriate receiving facility.

**II. Authority:**

A. California Health and Safety Code – Division 2.5: Emergency Medical Services, Section 1798.

**III. Policy:**

A. Patients should be transported from the scene of the emergency to the most accessible and appropriate hospital having a permit for Basic or Comprehensive emergency medical care, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 5, staffed, equipped, and prepared to administer care appropriate to the needs of the patient.

**B. Obstetric Patients:**

1. Any patient that has a reported pregnancy, or recent positive pregnancy test, should be transported to a hospital with OB services, if they have an OB related complaint. These include: nausea or vomiting; abdominal or back pain; pelvic pain, discharge or bleeding; and traumatic bodily injury. If it is unclear if the chief complaint is OB related, base hospital should be contacted for disposition clarification.
2. OB patients should be transported to the nearest hospital if there is:
  - a. Immediate threat to life or limb, especially threats to airway, breathing or circulation in the pregnant patient
  - b. Anticipated complications are present in an imminent or actively occurring delivery (ex: significant hemorrhage is noted, and OB center is 30 minutes away)
3. If there is any uncertainty about the appropriate hospital disposition for a pregnant patient, Base Hospital contact should be made as soon as possible to consult with a Base Hospital Physician for guidance and hospital determination.
4. Hemodynamically stable, laboring patients with no evidence of complications can transport directly to hospitals with OB services.

C. Specialty center candidates (ex: STEMI, trauma, stroke, pediatrics, burn, etc.) who meet county criteria will be transported to the most appropriate specialty center.

D. Transport to other than the most accessible and appropriate facility will be authorized under the following conditions:

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1. If it is in the best interest of the patient, based on the medical judgment of the Base Hospital Physician
2. If the patient meets the “competency” requirement established by Imperial County EMS Agency Policy and is over 18 years of age, an emancipated minor, a minor who is married, a minor who is in the military, and the facility of preference is not beyond a “reasonable” distance from the scene of the incident.
  - a. A “reasonable” distance is based on the length of time the transporting ambulance will be out of its service area and the availability of “back-up” ambulance service.
- E. In the event the patient’s request is unreasonable and the patient is unwavering in that request, consultation with a Base Hospital shall occur. The patient should be presented with alternatives for obtaining care/transportation or modification of services offered.
- F. EMS personnel shall ensure documentation includes the following:
  1. An accurate patient history and assessment
  2. A description of the patient which clearly indicates his/her decision-making capacity
  3. Why the patient selected an alternate receiving facility
  4. A statement that the patient understands the risks/consequences of his/her decision
  5. Alternatives presented to the patient
  6. The results of the consultation with the Base Hospital.
- G. In cases of diversion, disposition location will be determined per Diversion Policy.

APPROVED:

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