Destination & Diversion Guidelines

Purpose: To define the decision-making process regarding EMS destination.

1. **Transport Destination Decisions**
   A. In matters of imminent threat to life or limb, transport to the closest appropriate facility*.
   B. In matters which are not a threat to life or limb, the patient will be taken to the closest appropriate facility or facility of his/her choice, unless:
      a. The patient is a minor, or incompetent, the family or guardian may choose the destination facility.
      b. Transportation to the chosen facility removes the EMS vehicle from the service area for an extended time. Consult medical control and an alternative may be considered.
   C. No other individuals are permitted to determine destination of patient without prior approval of on-line medical control: (police, fire, bystander physician, etc.)

   ***Closest appropriate facility may be a facility capable of providing definitive care or, if definitive care is not readily available, resuscitative care for the patient's condition in consultation with on-line medical control or as defined by protocol.**

2. **Patient Diversions**
   A. Once the decision is made to transport a patient to a facility, the patient may be diverted to another facility if:
      a. On-line medical control requests diversion to another facility. The facility may not deny the individual access unless it does not have the staff or resources to accept the patient. Documentation of the reason for the diversion shall be included in the EMS patient care record.
      b. The patient experiences an imminent threat to life or clinical deterioration and, in the medical judgment of the EMS personnel, the patient may be transported to the closest appropriate facility. Documentation of the reason for the diversion shall be included in the EMS patient care record.
         1. Immediate on-line medical direction shall be established with the receiving facility.
         2. Contact with the initial receiving facility shall be made as quickly as possible to inform it of the diversion.
   B. Prehospital Considerations
      a. Patients requesting transport to a facility, which is currently on diversion, should be notified of that diversion and the fact that the appropriate resources to care for them are not currently

available at that institution. An alternative facility destination should be requested from the patient. If the patient persists in the request of the facility currently on diversion, contact medical control.

***Each facility has the authority to develop and administer written policies concerning the temporary closing of emergency departments. By statute, the medical control authority, based on needs of the EMS system, may determine the destination of the patient regardless of the diversion status (open or closed) of the local facilities.**