



# Stanislaus County

## Emergency Medical Services Agency

POLICY NO. 580.11

Title: Ambulance Interfacility Transfer

REVIEW DATE: 04/01/2025

EFFECTIVE DATE: 05/10/2023

APPROVAL SIGNATURES ON FILE AT EMS AGENCY OFFICE

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### AMBULANCE INTERFACILITY TRANSFER POLICY

#### I. AUTHORITY

In accordance with Section 1798.172 of Division 2.5 of the Health and Safety Code, the local EMS agency shall establish guidelines and standards for completion and operation of formal transfer agreements between hospitals with varying levels of care in the jurisdiction of the local EMS agency consistent with Sections 1317 to 1317.9a, inclusive, and Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 1798).

#### II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Agency" means Stanislaus County Emergency Medical Services Agency
- B. "Authorized Patient Transport Provider" means an Agency approved ambulance provider that has the capability to provide service in the jurisdiction in which the hospital is located.
- C. "EMTALA" means the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (*DHHS/CMS 42 CFR Part 489*)
- D. Disaster Control Facility (DCF) - a facility approved by the Agency that, in the event of a multi-casualty incident (MCI), will assume the primary responsibility for patient dispersal decisions.
- E. "Interfacility transfer" means the transfer of a patient by an ambulance from a hospital emergency department or a hospital inpatient area hereafter referred to as "facility", to any other facility for the purpose of evaluation or treatment at a higher level of care.
- F. "Transfer" means the movement of a patient, determined to be a medical or trauma patient that has received a Medical Screen Exam (MSE), from a hospital's facilities at the direction of any person employed by or affiliated with the hospital. This includes transfers to another facility for diagnostic testing.

#### III. PURPOSE

To ensure that all transfers that occur within the region are conducted in compliance with Federal EMTALA regulations. To serve as a treatment standard for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)s, Paramedic, and Critical Care Transport (CCT) in transferring patients between acute care hospitals and other facilities.

#### IV. POLICY

##### A. Direct Admission Transfers

1. The transferring hospital shall comply with all EMTALA documentation and destination requirements prior to the transfer of the patient to another facility.
2. The destination of patients being transferred from an Acute Care Facility shall not be directed by the DCF regardless of MCI or System Saturation status.
3. An Agency approved Interfacility Transfer Form shall be completed for each patient being transported on all transfers.

B. A patient is to be transferred in a vehicle that is staffed by qualified trained personnel and that contains life support equipment appropriate to the patient's condition. During transfers, pre-hospital personnel will follow SCEMSA policies, and use only those medications and procedures for which they are trained and authorized by SCEMSA policy are and within their own scope of practice.

C. It may be necessary for additional specialized personnel to be arranged by the transferring hospital to accompany the patient whenever appropriate. These personnel staffing options are as follows:

1. Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)/Physician Transport.
  - a. The physician accompanying the patient will provide/direct medical treatment.
2. EMT/Transferring Hospital Registered Nurse (RN) Transport:
  - a. The transferring hospital shall provide written orders for patient care to the registered nurse accompanying the patient. Medical direction during transport may be provided by the transferring or receiving physician via telephone or radio.
3. EMT/RN (CCT) Transport:
  - a. The transferring hospital shall provide written orders for patient care to the registered nurse accompanying the patient. Medical direction during transport may be provided by either the transferring or receiving physician, or the provider medical director.
4. Paramedic Transport:
  - a. The transferring hospital shall provide written orders for patient care. The transferring physician/hospital should be familiar with the Stanislaus County EMS Agency policy 256.00 "Emergency Medical Technician – Paramedic scope of practice".
5. EMT Transport:
  - a. The transferring hospital should provide written orders for patient care. The transferring physician/hospital should be familiar with the Stanislaus County EMS Agency policy 236.00 "EMT Scope of Practice".

## V. PROCEDURE

- A. Direct voice contact between transferring physician and receiving physician shall be made and agreement regarding all aspects of the transfer shall be reached prior to transfer.
- B. The transferring facility shall make the necessary arrangements for the transfer (including accompanying personnel where appropriate) in compliance with the agreement reached between the transferring physician and receiving physician.
- C. The transferring facility will call the authorized patient transport provider, or call center, and arrange for appropriate transportation. If warranted by his or her condition, the patient shall be accompanied by appropriate medical personnel. The transferring facility is obliged to provide appropriate personnel if the patient's treatment needs are beyond the scope of practice of the transport personnel.
- D. The following medical records shall accompany the patient:
  - 1. A summary of care received prior to the transfer.
  - 2. Copies of all current pertinent medical records including laboratory data, current physician's and nursing notes.
  - 3. Copies/originals of all pertinent x-rays, sonograms, CT scans, ECGs, and other diagnostic tests.
  - 4. Copies of pre-hospital care forms including paramedic run reports and Emergency Department records where applicable.
- E. If transport originates from a licensed medical facility, a verbal report on the patient by a Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), Physician Assistant (PA) or Physician (MD) shall be made to the transport crew prior to transport.
- F. Written orders shall be provided to the transport personnel, as appropriate, on the transfer sheet and signed by the transferring physician. If the written orders vary from the Stanislaus County EMS Agency treatment policies, the written orders must be within the medical personnel approved local scope of practice.
- G. The transferring facility personnel shall utilize an Agency approved Interfacility Transfer Form, with checklist and transfer orders, to ensure that the patient has been appropriately prepared for transport. This Transfer form shall accompany the patient, and the receiving facility shall review and complete the form when the patient arrives and forward a copy of the completed form and the Patient Care Report, with arrival time, to the EMS Agency.
- H. Hospitals should execute and maintain transfer agreement(s) with other health facilities that offer a higher level of accepted specialty care services. Hospitals with transfer agreements should have a written policy that clearly establishes internal administrative and professional patient transfer responsibilities.
- I. During any transfer, if the patient's condition deteriorates and requires treatment not covered by physician order, or Stanislaus County EMS Agency scope of practice and treatment protocols, the transferring ambulance shall immediately divert to the closest receiving hospital. Ambulance personnel shall notify all involved hospitals of their diversion and the patient's status as soon as possible.