

POLICY # 156: NURSE-STAFFED CRITICAL CARE TRANSPORT

I. PURPOSE

- A. To outline and define the minimum requirements for nurse-staffed inter-facility transport units, also known as nurse-staffed critical care transports.

II. SCOPE

- A. This policy does not apply when an Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport provider in an inter-facility patient transport utilizes Registered Nurses (RN) employed by a healthcare facility.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Critical care transport (CCT): an ambulance inter-facility transport of a patient who may require skills or treatment modalities that exceed the paramedic scope of practice but do not exceed the scope of practice of an RN. A CCT may be utilized for either an emergent or a non-emergent inter-facility transport.

IV. POLICY

- A. An authorized and approved ALS ambulance transport service(s) may utilize RNs in addition to the ALS support team to provide ALS inter-facility transports.
- B. Requests for CCT program approval must be made in writing, thirty days (30) days prior to the anticipated service start date to the County of San Luis Obispo Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMS Agency) Division Director. The request will include the following:
 - 1. Identification of the proposed CCT unit
 - 2. Documentation of qualifications for the Physician Director (Curriculum Vitae and copy of current medical license)
 - 3. Documentation of qualifications of the Nursing Coordinator (resume and copy of current license & certifications)
 - 4. List of qualifications and certification requirements for RN personnel
 - 5. CCT medical procedures and protocols
 - 6. Proposed equipment and supply list for each CCT unit
 - 7. CCT Operations manual
 - 8. Quality Improvement plan
- C. The EMS Agency will notify the applicant in writing within ten (10) working days of application submittal if any further documentation is needed. The applicant will be notified in writing within thirty (30) days of receipt of complete application package about either the approval or denial of the application.

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- D. The provider will have a full or part-time Physician Director qualified by training and experience along with recent practice in emergency or critical care medicine. The EMS Agency Medical Director must approve the candidate for Physician Director. Duties will include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. Approve and sign all medical protocols to be followed by the CCT RNs
 2. Ensure compliance with EMTALA and COBRA laws, and
 3. Ensure that quality assurance outcome audits are being conducted.
- E. The provider will have a full or part-time RN who serves as the Nursing Coordinator who is qualified by training and/or experience along with recent emergency or critical care nursing. Duties will include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. Approve and sign all nursing procedures to be followed by the RNs at the ALS level.
 2. Provide or assure on-going training of all medical personnel involved in CCT transfers.
 3. Conduct CCT patient care audits regularly.
- F. The ALS ambulance transport provider responsible for the CCT units will develop and maintain an operation manual containing the following:
1. Outline and description of the CCT RN orientation program.
 2. Description and process for contacting the Physician Director, CCT coordinator and/or Field Supervisor when needed during a patient transport.
 3. Copies of associated forms for inter-facility transfer paperwork.
 4. Description of the procedures to be followed for changes in destination, due to unforeseen changes in the patient's condition or other unexpected circumstances.
 5. Ambulance inventory lists
 6. Statement of responsibility of the sending physician for the patient during transfer and in accordance with EMTALA and COBRA laws.
- V. PROCEDURE
- A. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
1. The Physician Director and Nursing Coordinator will be responsible for assuring the completion of monthly quality improvement (QI) audits.
 2. Patient transport record reviews will be performed monthly and will be based on pre-established criteria approved by the EMS Agency Medical Director.
 3. Periodic staff conferences on audit outcomes will be held in order to improve and revise protocols.
 4. Records of all QI activities will be kept by the provider and be made available for inspection or audit by the EMS Agency.

B. PROGRAM REVIEW

1. Periodic on-site audits of records may be performed by either the EMS Agency or the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department to ensure policy compliance.
2. Non-compliance with this policy may cause suspension or revocation of a CCT program by the EMS Agency.

VI. AUTHORITY

- Title 22, Division 2.5
- Sections 1797.178, 1798.170, and 1798.172 of the California Health and Safety Code