



**Susquehanna Regional EMS Council, Inc**  
Serving: Broome, Tioga, and Chenango Counties

## **SREMSC Policy Statement**

*Supersedes/ Updates: NEW*

No. 2015-03

Date: 11/12/2015

Re: Hospital Diversion

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### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide support and guidance to EMS providers when determining patient destination.

### **References:**

- NYS DOH BEMS Policy Statement 06-01: *Emergency Patient Destinations and Hospital Diversion*

### **Terminology:**

- Open – the Emergency Department (ED) is operating under normal condition
- Limited Access – the ED is experiencing a temporary limited capacity and requesting ambulances divert patients to an alternate facility
- Closed – the ED is completely closed to all patients, usually due to a catastrophe that has rendered the ED inaccessible or unusable

### **Policy:**

#### Limited Access Requests

A hospital may notify the EMS system of a temporary limited capacity status and request ambulances divert patients to an alternate facility. A request to divert to another facility may be honored by EMS providers. A diversion request does not mean the hospital ED is closed, but usually means the current emergency patient load exceeds the Emergency Department's ability to treat additional patients promptly. Also note that if every ED in the region declares Limited Access status, EMS providers are directed to follow patient's preference / protocol.

#### Alerting the EMS System of Hospital Status

SREMSC will facilitate communication of hospital status within the EMS system.

#### EMS Provider Responsibilities

Consistent with state and local protocol, a patient in need of emergency medical care will be taken to the nearest appropriate health care facility capable of treating the illness, disability or injury of the patient. It is expected that the EMS provider will consult with a medical control physician should there be questions of protocol, policies, procedures and transport destinations.

This policy is not intended to supercede current MCI policies or New York State BLS Protocol.

A patient's choice of hospital or other facility should be complied with except for the following situations:

- The patient is experiencing an emergency medical condition that is covered by protocols requiring a specialized destination, for example (but not limited to): STEMI, stroke, trauma, etc. Should a patient refuse transport to a protocol-indicated destination, they should be made aware of the risks and benefits of that

decision, as well as the likelihood they will be transferred to the specialized destination hospital.

- If the patient request is to a hospital under Limited Access AND the patient accepts the request to be transported to an alternate facility.
  - When presenting the request to the patient to be transported to an alternate destination due to limited access at their preferred ED, the following script is suggested:
  - *“The Emergency Department you requested is very busy. Your wait may be unusually long. We suggest you consider \_\_\_\_\_, which has the capacity to care for you in a more timely manner.”*

Every use of this policy must be fully documented including the patient's request, the reasons for the alternate destination decision and any medical control consultation. When transporting to an ED on Limited Access status, EMS personnel should notify the hospital early. The EMS provider should indicate that they are aware of the ED's limited access status but are transporting due to patient demand or protocol.