

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to EMS personnel on determining the appropriate destination for medical patients.

**AUTHORITY:**

Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220, 1798, and 1798.170

**DEFINITIONS:**

- A. "Base Hospital" and "Disaster Control Facility (DCF)" means San Joaquin General Hospital which is responsible for directing the prehospital care system in accordance with the policies and procedures of the SJCEMSA.
- B. "Non-traumatic Life Threatening Condition" means a medical patient with an unmanageable airway compromised by swelling or obstruction, or uncontrolled bleeding, or rapidly deteriorating vital signs.
- C. "Primary Stroke Center" or "PSC" means a receiving hospital designated as a PSC by the SJCEMSA or designated as a PSC by another local EMS agency and recognized by the SJCEMSA.
- D. "Receiving Hospital" means a licensed general acute care hospital with a permit for basic or comprehensive emergency services.
- E. "ROSC" means the return of spontaneous circulation following cardiac arrest.
- F. "SJCEMSA" means the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency, which is the designated local emergency medical services agency for San Joaquin County.
- G. "STEMI Receiving Center" or "SRC" means a licensed acute care hospital with the capability to perform PCI which has satisfied the requirements for designation as set forth by the SJCEMSA or designated by another local EMS agency and recognized by SJCEMSA.

**POLICY:**

- I. Prehospital personnel shall assess all patients and offer ambulance transportation to any patient needing medical care and provide ambulance transportation to any patient requesting transport to a receiving hospital with implicit or implied consent.
- II. Medical patients shall be transported to a receiving hospital based on the following priorities:
  - A. Multi-casualty incident – destination as coordinated with DCF.

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Effective: April 1, 2020  
Supersedes: November 1, 2018

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- B. Cardiac arrest – closest receiving hospital.
- C. Acute STEMI or sustained ROSC – closest STEMI receiving center.
- D. Sustained ventricular tachycardia with a pulse – closest STEMI receiving center.
- E. Acute stroke:
  - 1. Patients with last known well time of less than 4 hours or RACE Score greater than or equal to 5 transport to closest PSC.
  - 2. All other patients transport to PSC of their choice or if no choice transport to closest PSC.
- F. Non-traumatic life threatening condition – closest receiving hospital or base hospital direction.
- G. Active labor with complications – closest hospital with labor and delivery (L&D) service.
- H. Active labor without complications – patient choice of receiving hospital with labor and delivery services.
- I. Non-emergent condition – patient choice.
- J. No preference specified – closest receiving hospital.

III. Parameters affecting transport destinations for medical patients:

- A. Acute ST Elevated Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) Patient Considerations:
  - 1. Patients with an acute STEMI shall be transported to a designated STEMI Receiving Center (SRC) by-passing all other receiving hospitals.
  - 2. The following receiving hospitals are designated or recognized as SRCs for the San Joaquin County EMS System:
    - a. Dameron Hospital.
    - b. St. Joseph's Medical Center.
    - c. Doctors Medical Center
    - d. Memorial Medical Center.
  - 3. The travel distance between Dameron Hospital and St. Joseph's Medical Center is determined to be inconsequential. If a STEMI patient expresses a preference the patient may be transported to either SRC in Stockton. The same patient preference applies to the choice between Doctors Medical Center and Memorial Medical Center.
- B. The following receiving hospitals are designated or recognized as a Primary Stroke Center (PSC) by the SJCEMSA:
  - 1. Adventist Lodi Memorial Hospital.
  - 2. Dameron Hospital.

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3. Doctors Hospital of Manteca.
  4. Kaiser Hospital Manteca.
  5. San Joaquin General Hospital.
  6. St. Joseph's Medical Center.
  7. Sutter-Tracy Community Hospital.
  8. Doctors Medical Center, Modesto.
  9. Kaiser Medical Center, Modesto.
  10. Memorial Medical Center, Modesto.
- C. Active Labor Considerations:
1. Active labor without complications is deemed to be a non-emergent condition. These patients may be taken to the receiving hospital with labor and delivery services (L&D) of their choice, as listed in subparagraph C. 3.
  2. Active labor with complications (prolapsed cord, breech presentation) shall be transported to the closest receiving hospital with L&D services.
  3. The following is a list of receiving hospitals with L&D services in San Joaquin County and in areas immediately adjacent to San Joaquin County:
    - a. Doctors Hospital of Manteca.
    - b. Adventist Lodi Memorial Hospital.
    - c. San Joaquin General Hospital.
    - d. St. Joseph's Medical Center.
    - e. Sutter-Tracy Community Hospital.
    - f. Kaiser Medical Center, Modesto.
    - g. Doctors Medical Center, Modesto.
    - h. Memorial Medical Center, Modesto.
    - i. Kaiser Medical Center, South Sacramento.
- D. Non-Emergent Medical Patient Destination Considerations:
1. In a non-emergent situation, as determined by prehospital care personnel on scene or following base hospital consultation, the patient may be transported to the receiving hospital of their choice in San Joaquin County, Stanislaus County, or Sacramento County.
  2. If the patient is unable or unwilling to express a choice, defer to the wishes of the patient's private physician and/or family. In the absence of such direction, patients should be transported to the closest receiving hospital.
  3. Whenever possible ambulance personnel should determine where

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the patient normally receives medical care and encourage the patient to return to that hospital.

4. Prehospital care personnel should only provide the patient and/or family with the available destination options and should not endorse a receiving facility or otherwise provide their personal opinion on the quality or merits of any receiving hospital.
5. If the patient is a member of a health plan with a preferred hospital, an attempt should be made to transport the patient to a participating or preferred receiving hospital.
6. If the countywide system status management ambulance availability is less than seven (7) ambulances, non-emergent medical destinations may be limited to receiving hospitals in San Joaquin County.
7. Ambulance personnel are not required to contact and should not contact the base hospital for permission to transport a non-emergent patient to a receiving hospital in San Joaquin County, Stanislaus County, or Sacramento County.

IV. Medical Multi-Casualty Incidents:

- A. During an MCI the DCF may expand patient destinations to any receiving hospital within OES Region IV with initial preference being hospitals located in San Joaquin County, Stanislaus County, and Sacramento County.

V. Receiving Hospital Facility Status:

- A. Patients shall not be transported to a receiving hospital with a facility status of diversion.
- B. Patients shall not be transported to a receiving hospital with a facility status of internal disaster/closed.
- C. Specialty Services:
  1. If a receiving hospital posts a facility status advising that a specialty service is unavailable, patients requiring such specialty service should be transported to another receiving hospital offering that specialty service.
  2. Specialty services include:
    - a. Computerized tomography (CT);
    - b. Primary Stroke Center services.
    - c. STEMI Center services.
    - d. Labor and delivery services.

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