



A DIVISION OF
HEALTH CARE SERVICES
AGENCY

San Joaquin County

Emergency Medical Services Agency



<http://www.sigov.org/ems>

Mailing Address
PO Box 220
French Camp, CA 95231

Health Care Services Complex
Benton Hall
500 W. Hospital Rd.
French Camp, CA 95231

Phone Number
(209) 468-6818

Policy Memorandum No. 2018-01

DATE: January 9, 2018

TO: All EMS System Participating Organizations and Personnel

FROM: Richard N. Buys, M.D., Medical Director
Dan Burch, EMS Administrator

SUBJ: Response to Flu and Influenza like Illness (ILI) Epidemic

California is currently experiencing a statewide flu and ILI epidemic resulting in a marked increase in patients seeking care in emergency departments. This epidemic is exacerbating the existing problem with ambulance patient offload delays at hospitals in San Joaquin County. In the past week the EMS system has experienced 15 ambulances delayed at one hospital unable to transfer patient care to emergency department staff and return to service in the 911 system. Fortunately, through the intervention of the EMS Agency Duty Officer and the actions of American Medical Response this 15 ambulance hospital cluster did not result in the failure of the EMS system.

The San Joaquin County EMS Agency is requesting hospital administration at each receiving hospital to take immediate steps addressing the increase in emergency department demand to lessen ambulance patient offload delays with a special emphasis on preventing ambulance clusters from occurring. An individual ambulance patient offload delay results in suboptimal patient care that places a single patient waiting to be seen in the emergency department at risk. Ambulance hospital clusters are more insidious as these clusters threaten the safety of the entire community by depriving multiple patients outside of the hospital of prehospital emergency medical care personnel and ambulance transport. All hospitals are encouraged to monitor ambulance offload times and proactively implement their medical surge plans and seek the necessary waivers and permissions from the California Department of Public Licensing and Certification to accommodate the demand for service.

In order to increase the availability for ambulance transport within the EMS system all emergency ambulance providers including American Medical Response, Manteca District Ambulance, Escalon Ambulance, and the Ripon Consolidated Fire District are authorized to staff and use basic life support ambulances to respond to: 1) Emergency requests for service classified by the Valley Regional Emergency Communication Center through the Medical Priority Dispatch System as Protocol 26 Sick Person Alpha and Omega; and 2) Any emergency request for service if no advanced life support ambulance is immediately available for assignment.

Questions regarding this policy memorandum may be directed to Rick Jones, EMS Analyst, email: rjones@sigov.org. This policy memorandum expires on February 28, 2018, unless cancelled or superseded on an earlier date.

cc: Howard Backer, M.D., Director, EMS Authority