

**COUNTY OF CHESTER
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Field Services Division

High Patient Volume Policy

DES Policy #400-8

07 March 2011

(Rev. from 7/15/08; 2/28/10; 2/28/11)

Policy: This policy is to ensure expedient access to emergency care twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. This policy establishes patient preference as a primary factor in determining patient destination.

This policy will provide a mechanism to:

- Allow patients to make an informed decision about hospital destination
- Identify the process for the communication of situations of high patient volume to ambulance services
- Build cooperation among hospitals and ambulance services during periods of high patient volume
- Identify the responsibilities of both hospital and EMS staff in this process

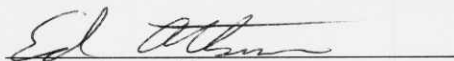
Procedures:

Mechanism

1. When a hospital determines, through their internal processes, that they are experiencing high patient volume that may affect their capability to provide timely care to patients entering the hospital through the emergency medical services system they will contact the Chester County 9-1-1 Center On-Duty Supervisor at 610-344-5100 and request a courtesy notification to the EMS agencies.
2. The 9-1-1 Telecommunicator will announce the hospital is on High Patient Volume (HPV) on the paging channel. EMS units may view hospital status on their MDC after being assigned to an incident. Patients en route to that facility at the time of the notification will proceed to their original destination.
3. The hospital will also make a courtesy notification, by telephone, to EMS agencies in their general catchment area, advising them of the situation.
4. Patients who express a transport preference to a facility that is experiencing a high patient volume will be advised that the facility may be unable to provide care in a timely fashion. The patient may then choose to be transported to another facility or they may choose to continue to be transported to their original preference destination. Should the patient

choose a second choice that is also experiencing high patient volume, the patient will be advised of that and given the opportunity to express their preference. If the patient has no preference, and they are considered stable by the ambulance crew, they may be transported to a hospital that is not currently experiencing high patient volume.

5. The hospitals are responsible for educating their staff on the policy.
6. The Field Services Division is responsible for educating the EMS services on the policy.
7. At no time will the Chester County 9-1-1 Center be required to make a decision regarding patient destination. The Chester County 9-1-1 Center will not be required to notify individual ambulance services that may be affected.
8. There will be no set time limit on any high patient volume notification. It will be the hospital's responsibility to advise the Chester County 9-1-1 Center On-Duty Supervisor when the notification should be terminated.
9. It is expected that hospital staff and EMS providers will interact with each other in a professional manner. Breaches of this understanding should be referred by hospital staff to their supervisors and by the EMS providers to their supervisor and the Deputy Director of Field Services, including specific time, date, and personnel involved.
10. If a hospital contacts the Chester County 9-1-1 Center On-Duty Supervisor and requests that their facility be put on Divert Status, the Supervisor will request specific information from the caller about the nature of the emergency, so that the appropriate resources to assist with the hospital's internal disaster operations and plan for the possible evacuation of the facility.
11. The Secretary of Health and PEMA shall be notified of all requests that a facility be placed on Divert Status.
12. This policy will be reviewed in February by the Deputy Director for Field Services in accordance with Policy 100-28.


Edward J. Atkins
Director