DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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RC-2002-003

DATE: March 18, 2003

SUBJECT: Diastat form of Rectal Diazepam

TO: Regional EMS Council Directors
Regional EMS Medical Directors

FROM: Douglas F. Kupas, MD
Commonwealth Emergency Medical Director
Emergency Medical Services Office
(717) 787-8741

THRU: Margaret E. Trimble
Director

The EMS Office has received several requests from regions related to the use of Diastat® (rectal gel form of diazepam) in EMS patient care. Diazepam is included on the current list of approved ALS medications, and may be carried by authorized EMS providers for use as defined within the regional treatment protocols. The particular form of diazepam that is used in Diastat® is acceptable for EMS use, but regional medical advisory committees and ALS ambulance services should be aware of several facts related to this form of diazepam.

- Diastat® may only be administered rectally, therefore injectable diazepam must still be carried. Since the rectal route accounts for the minority of diazepam doses, stocking Diastat® is unlikely to "conserve" the stock of injectable diazepam, and it is more likely to expire without being used.
- Although Diastat® enters the plasma quickly when given rectally, its plasma concentrations are still substantially lower than an equivalent intravenous dose.
- Diastat® comes in 5 dosage strengths, but the administration sets are not calibrated to allow for the administration of a partial dose. In order to accommodate the appropriate dose for all patients, several packs would need to be carried.
- There has never been a direct comparison of the absorption rate for diazepam gel versus standard injectable diazepam when both are given rectally. It is not clear if there is any absorption benefit to either of these products.
- Approximate retail costs of each product are:

Diastat®	2.5, 5, 10, 15, or 20 mg	2 doses per package	$150-180
diazepam	10 mg/2ml vial	1 vial	$ 0 .95
diazepam	10 mg prefilled	1 syringe	$ 1 .98

Diastat® is acceptable as a form of rectal diazepam for use by EMS providers if it is permitted by the regional EMS treatment protocols. For the reasons listed above, generic injectable diazepam continues to have many benefits over Diastat® for EMS use.