



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### Emergency Medical Services Agency

POLICY #560

#### TITLE: Critical Care Transportation Ambulance Authorization

APPROVED: ON-FILE

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ON-FILE

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#### Critical Care Transportation Ambulance Authorization

**Authority:** Merced County Code Sections 9.44.010 – 9.44.200 and California Health and Safety Code Sections 1797.220 – 1797.226.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy shall be to establish the requirements for nurse-staffed inter-facility transport units, also known as nurse-staffed Critical Care Transport Ambulance (CCTA) and to establish standards for operation, program approval and licensure of CCTA programs based or operating within Merced County.

**Definitions:** *Agency* - means the Merced County Emergency Medical Services Agency within the Merced County Department of Public Health.

*CCTA* — means a Critical Care Transportation Ambulance, which, for the purpose of this policy, shall be an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance staffed, equipped and utilized for the purpose of providing interfacility transport of a patient who may require skills or treatment modalities that exceed the paramedic scope of practice but do not exceed the scope of practice of an RN. A CCTA may be required for either a non-emergency or emergency interfacility transport. Physicians, Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCPs) or other personnel may be added to the CCT team as necessary, to meet the mission statement and scope of medical services provided by such a service.

*Promptly Available* — means a fully staffed and equipped CCTA capable of responding to immediate requests for CCT service within ninety (90) minutes of the time of request.

*Interfacility Transfer* - shall mean the transfer of a patient from a hospital emergency department or hospital inpatient area, hereafter referred to as "facility," to any acute care facility.

**Policy:** General Provisions

1. All CCTA programs based or operating within Merced County shall be licensed by the Agency prior to initiating CCTA services originating from within Merced County, and said operations shall be restricted as contained herein. Program applications submitted for approval shall meet the minimum standards as established by Merced

County Code Section 9.44.010 – 9.44-200 and this policy. CCTA providers shall not be approved for service until such time as a formal contract for service has been executed with the County of Merced.

2. CCTA operations, as delineated in Merced County Code Section 9.44 et. seq., are ALS ambulances and shall be subject to the same operational restrictions as an ALS ambulance operation relative to the application of Merced County ambulance exclusivity authority.
3. The CCTA provider shall develop a written mission statement that defines the scope of care to be provided by the service. This statement shall also include the criteria establishing which patients are eligible for CCTA transfers.
4. All patient care resources, including personnel and equipment necessary to the program's mission must be available in the transport vehicle while transporting a patient. This includes all ALS medications and equipment currently required by the Agency along with additional medications and equipment as required to fulfill the mission statement and treatment protocols of the CCTA provider.
5. There shall be an educational program and/or printed information made available to the medical professional community regarding services offered through CCT transport as well as the specific patient criteria.
6. CCTA providers shall develop and maintain treatment protocols, separate and distinct from the Agency's treatment protocols, which are consistent with the provider's mission statement and scope of services.
7. CCTA providers, licensed to operate within Merced County, shall be promptly available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to requests for service.

CCTA Program Medical Director

1. All CCTA providers shall have a formal relationship with a CCTA Program Medical Director either as an employee of the provider or under a contractual arrangement.
2. The Medical Director(s) shall be licensed and authorized to practice medicine in California. He or she must have board certification or substantial experience in emergency or acute critical care and be approved by the EMS Agency Medical Director. Additionally, the EMS Agency reserves the right to allow the CCTA Provider to temporarily contract with specialty physicians for consultation and training purposes if no Medical Director with the above qualifications is available. The provider shall submit a copy of these contracts to the Agency upon application for CCTA program approval, or whenever a proposed change occurs with the provider's Medical Director.
3. The CCTA provider shall submit to the EMS Agency, and maintain a record of the Medical Director's educational experience and/or board certifications. The CCTA provider shall, if applicable, maintain records of the educational experience and/or

board certifications of the specialty physician consultants and make same available for review by the Agency.

4. The Medical Director shall be responsible for the following program areas:
  - A. Development and implementation of the program mission statement and patient treatment protocols.
  - B. Personnel training program approval.
  - C. Quality improvement / medical oversight and quality assurance outcome audits are conducted for the CCTA program and all medical personnel associated with the program medical personnel associated with the program, and;
  - D. Approval of all CCTA provider policies involving patient care, equipment and medications and patient communications.

#### CCTA Personnel Standards

1. The CCTA provider shall submit proposed requirements for Physician or RN personnel to the EMS Agency Medical Director for review and approval. Minimum CCTA personnel configuration shall be as follows:
  - A. One (1) physician or registered nurse with a minimum of two (2) years of experience in a critical care or emergency department setting.
  - B. One (1) Merced County accredited paramedic, and;
  - C. One (1) EMT-1 driver.
2. The CCTA provider, with their Medical Director, shall develop and implement a comprehensive personnel training program. This program will address initial training as well as regular competency evaluation and continuing education. The CQI committee findings shall drive the training program.

#### Quality Improvement

1. The CCTA provider shall establish and maintain an individual in the position of Clinical Care Supervisor. The provider will establish the minimum education and clinical experience of the Clinical Care Supervisor, along with a detailed job description. This individual shall be responsible for coordinating the quality improvement program for the provider.
2. The CCTA provider shall establish a formal continuous quality improvement (CQI) policy and committee, in collaboration with the EMS Agency. This policy shall clearly specify the following, at a minimum:
  - A. List of quality indicators to be used.

- B. Make-up of the CQI committee.
- C. Frequency of meetings.
- D. Methods used to obtain loop closure.
- E. A description of the process for implementing corrective action, to include both operational and personnel issues.
- F. Confidentiality issues.

Field Operations

- 1. CCTAs may be used to respond to 911 calls, at the provider's discretion. When responding to 911 calls, the CCTA crew may utilize Merced County ALS protocols and / or CCTA protocols at the CCTA nurse's discretion.