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The Ohio Board of Emergency Medical Services (“EMS Board”) issues the following statement:

Regarding EMS Provider Pre-Hospital Transport of Patients with
Pre-Existing Medical Devices or Drug Administrations
January 2004

This statement is an attempt to provide general information about the above issue facing EMS providers. It should not be treated as legal advice or medical direction. For direct advice regarding a particular scenario, please consult with your medical director and legal counsel. Although the following statement represents the EMS Board’s general position on the above issue, this statement in no way precludes the EMS Board from taking disciplinary action in a particular case if necessary. Any potential complaints brought before the EMS Board will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Introduction:

The Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Medical Services, has developed a defined scope of practice for EMS providers. It is maintained in matrix form and available on-line as a reference for public access. This scope of practice addresses all levels of EMS providers and has been approved by the EMS Board. Updates to the scope of practice are made as necessary and after approval by the EMS Board.

From time to time, EMS providers are confronted on-scene with patients with preexisting medical situations not included or addressed in their respective EMS Board approved scope of practice. Specifically, patients with pre-existing medical devices and drug administrations requiring pre-hospital EMS service are becoming more commonplace. The intent of this position paper is to address the EMS provider’s approach to that pre-hospital patient with a pre-existing physician-ordered medical device or drug administration (“MDDA”) not covered in the provider’s scope of practice.

Discussion:

In general, the EMS provider should maintain the pre-existing MDDA and transport the patient to the appropriate facility. There is no expectation that the EMS provider will initiate, adjust, or discontinue the pre-existing MDDA. This implies that the EMS provider will maintain and continue care so that the patient can be transported.

The EMS provider is expected to follow local protocols regarding the overall evaluation, treatment, and transportation of this type of pre-hospital patient requiring EMS service. It applies to EMS provider situations where alternative transportation and care is not available or practical (pre-hospital or “911 scene response”). It implies that the most appropriate and available level of EMS provider will respond to the request for prehospital EMS service. It also implies that the patient requires the pre-existing MDDA and it is not feasible or appropriate to transport the patient without the pre-existing MDDA.

Mission Statement

“To promote quality and professionalism in the hiring, training, education, and delivery of fire and Emergency Medical Services with equal consideration given to all diverse populations and constituents.”

The number and type of pre-existing MDDAs currently or potentially encountered by the EMS provider in the community setting is extensive and may change frequently. The intent of this position paper is not to provide an inclusive list of pre-existing MDDAs. However, as a guideline for the EMS provider, current pre-existing MDDAs may include ventilatory adjuncts (CPAP, BiPAP), continuous or intermittent IV medication infusions (analgesics, antibiotics, chemotherapeutic agents, vasopressors, cardiac drugs), and nontraditional out-of-hospital drug infusion routes (subcutaneous infusaports, central venous access lines, direct subcutaneous infusions, self-contained implanted pumps).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the EMS provider confronted with a pre-hospital patient with a preexisting physician-ordered medical device or drug administration not covered in the EMS provider's respective scope of practice should provide usual care and transportation while maintaining the pre-existing MDDA, if applicable. Concerns or questions regarding realtime events associated with a pre-existing MDDA should be directed to the relevant Medical Control Physician. Concerns or questions regarding previous, recurrent, or future pre-hospital transportations with a pre-existing MDDA should be directed to the appropriate EMS Medical Director and legal counsel.