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Last Approved 2/29/2024  
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Next Review 2/28/2027

Owner Katie Love: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED  
Area (Category) Medical Staff  
Applicability Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian

## Emergency Department – Guidelines for Triage of Trauma Patients

COPY

HOAG2018-0004818

### BACKGROUND

42 U.S.C. § 1395dd, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) is an act of the United States Congress, passed in 1986 as part of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). It requires hospital Emergency Departments that accept payments from Medicare to provide an appropriate medical screening examination (MSE) to anyone seeking treatment for a medical condition, regardless of citizenship, legal status, or ability to pay. Participating hospitals may not transfer or discharge patients needing emergency treatment except with the informed consent or stabilization of the patient or when his/her condition requires transfer to a hospital better equipped to administer the treatment.

An emergency medical condition (EMC) is defined as "a condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that the absence of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in placing the individual's health [or the health of an unborn child] in serious jeopardy, serious impairment to bodily functions, or serious dysfunction of bodily organs."

### STATEMENT

Practicing within the context of Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian ("Hoag") core values of excellence, respect, integrity, patient centeredness and community benefit ensures the provision of respect for each person, accountability, commitment to quality, opportunities to serve each other and a sense of

community among all persons.

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to establish guidelines for providing an appropriate transfer to another facility of an individual with an emergency medical condition ("EMC"), who requests or requires a transfer for further medical care and follow-up to a receiving facility as required by EMTALA and all Federal regulations and interpretive guidelines promulgated thereunder.

This policy has the further purpose of recognizing and establishing a process by which appropriate patients may be transferred to a Trauma Center in accordance with Federal, State, and Local regulations and guidelines.

## 2. SCOPE and APPLICATION

This policy applies to medical staff members practicing at Hoag Hospital.

## 3. AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL

All medical staff members.

## 4. POLICY

- A. Patients deemed to have trauma indicators during the triage screening process are fast-tracked for a rapid evaluation by an emergency physician.
1. Trauma indicators are those listed in Orange County EMS Policy #310.30.
    - a. <https://ohealthinfo.com/sites/hca/files/2021-10/310.30%20Trauma%20Triage.pdf>
  2. For quick reference, trauma indicators can also be found on the Orange County EMS Trauma Triage Algorithm Policy #310.31
    - a. <https://www.ohealthinfo.com/sites/healthcare/files/2023-10/310.31%20Trauma%20Triage%20algorithm%2010-2023.pdf>
- B. A fast tracked rapid evaluation is performed by an emergency physician.
- C. When the Emergency Physician calls an on-call specialist, the following applies:
- I. The emergency physician determines whether the on-call physician must physically assess the patient.
    - On-call physicians will respond to all STAT calls within 15 minutes and will be physically present within 30 minutes upon request.<sup>1</sup>
    - If an on-call physician is unable to respond in a timely manner, it is his/her responsibility to find an alternative physician to respond as requested.
    - Physician groups for trauma patients will include, but not be limited to, general surgery, neurosurgery, orthopedics, vascular surgery, thoracic surgery, urology, plastic surgery, maxillofacial/ENT surgery, intensivists.

- II. A hospitalist or general surgeon will always be the admitting physician for multi-system trauma patients admitted to Hoag.
- D. The emergency physician is the primary decision-maker and has the option to use the Medical Staff Leadership Chain of Command to assist in the resolution of any dispute.
- E. An appropriate transfer to another medical facility is a transfer that occurs with the patients informed consent or a when a physician certifies that the potential benefits to the patient outweigh the risks.
  - I. If, in the opinion of the treating emergency physician, the benefits of immediate transfer to a trauma center outweigh the risks to the patient, and following Federal, State, and local regulations, the patient should be expeditiously transferred to the most appropriate trauma center after care has been discussed and agreement reached between the transferring and receiving physicians. This would include but not be limited to patients meeting the criteria listed in 1.1.
  - II. If it is the opinion of the treating emergency physician (with appropriate consultation as needed) that the benefits to the patient outweigh the risks, patients meeting the criteria listed in 1.1 can be kept at Hoag for treatment.
  - III. Hoag Hospital provides treatment within its capacity that minimizes the risks to the patient's health and, in the case of a woman in labor, the health of the unborn child; and,
  - IV. The receiving facility has available space, qualified personnel for the treatment of the patient and has agreed to accept transfer of the patient and to provide appropriate medical care; and,
  - V. Hoag Hospital sends to the receiving facility all medical records (or copies thereof), related to the emergency medical condition for which the patient has presented as available at the time of transfer; and,
  - VI. The transfer is effected through qualified personnel and transportation equipment as required, including the use of necessary and medically appropriate life support measures during transfer. Per OCEMS policy 310.20, the transferring (not receiving) physician will determine appropriate level of care transport.

## 5. REFERENCES:

42 U.S.C. § 1395dd - the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA), passed in 1986 as part of the [Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act](#) (COBRA)

Medical Staff Bylaws, Rules and Regulations

Hoag Policy and Procedure "EMTALA Compliance"

Orange County EMS Agency Policy/Procedure #310.30

Orange County EMS Agency Policy/Proecdure #310. 31

Orange County EMS Agency Policy/Procedure #310.20

<sup>1</sup>Article III, Section 3.2, Rules and Regulations of the Medical Staff, effective 06.2018

**6. Review and/or input for this procedure was given by the following:**

Emergency Department Leadership approval February 2024

**Title and version of IFU:** n/a

## All Revision Dates

2/29/2024, 3/24/2022, 12/1/2016

## Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
SVP Approval	Marcy Brown: VP SR CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER	2/29/2024
Chief of Staff Approval	Matthew Hunt: Medical Doctor	2/29/2024
Exec. Director, Enterprise Medical Staff Services Approval	Katie Love: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED	2/29/2024
Policy Management Approval	Kimberlee Rosa: VP CHIEF COMPLIANCE INTEGRITY INCL OFFICR	2/29/2024
Owner Approval	Katie Love: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED	2/29/2024

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## Applicability

Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian

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## History

**Edited by Rosenberg, Jenael: CLINICAL NURSE III** on 2/28/2024, 6:41PM EST

updated trauma guidelines to include link so guidelines are always up to date; deleted irvine sending all trauma patients to newport; referenced policy 310.20 transferring md determines level

of transport not receiving

**Draft saved by Love, Katie: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED** on 2/28/2024, 9:08PM EST

**Edited by Love, Katie: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED** on 2/28/2024, 9:11PM EST

Emergency Department Leadership revised to provide link to trauma guidelines to assure currency. Medical Staff added the option for a hospitalist to be the admitting physician if a multi-system trauma patient is admitted to Hoag.

**Last Approved by Love, Katie: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED** on 2/28/2024, 9:11PM EST

**Draft saved by Rosa, Kimberlee: VP CHIEF COMPLIANCE INTEGRITY INCL OFFICR** on 2/29/2024, 12:42PM EST

**Edited by Rosa, Kimberlee: VP CHIEF COMPLIANCE INTEGRITY INCL OFFICR** on 2/29/2024, 12:43PM EST

Formatting changes. Assigned Medical Staff Services approval workflow. Added authorized personnel to state this applies to medical staff members.

**Last Approved by Love, Katie: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED** on 2/29/2024, 1:49PM EST

**Last Approved by Rosa, Kimberlee: VP CHIEF COMPLIANCE INTEGRITY INCL OFFICR** on 2/29/2024, 1:50PM EST

**Last Approved by Love, Katie: EXEC DIR ENTRPR MED STAFF SERVICES & CRED** on 2/29/2024, 1:51PM EST

**Last Approved by Hunt, Matthew: Medical Doctor** on 2/29/2024, 6:05PM EST

**Last Approved by Brown, Marcy: VP SR CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER** on 2/29/2024, 6:15PM EST

**Activated** on 2/29/2024, 6:15PM EST