

Position Statement
Hospital and EMS Health Information Exchange
GETAC Medical Directors Committee

February 9, 2012

Operating under the delegated authority of their EMS Medical Director, prehospital providers are a direct extension of that physician in the field. This is the same as other physicians referring patients. Therefore, patients treated by EMS should be considered the patient of the EMS Medical Director being referred to a hospital.

The Texas Medical Practices Act Rule 197 defines duties of an EMS Medical Director to “...develop, implement, and revise protocols governing prehospital care and medical aspects of patient triage, transport, transfer, dispatch, extrication, rescue, and radio-telephone-telemetry communication by the EMS; direct an effective system audit and quality assurance program; determine standards and objectives for all medically related aspects of operation of the EMS including the inspection, evaluation, and approval of the system's performance specifications; function as the primary liaison between the EMS administration and the local medical community, ascertaining and being responsive to the needs of each; as well as establish criteria for selection of a patient's destination.”

Beyond the physician to physician model, this exchange of health information is allowed by Texas State Health and Safety Code 241.153. Subsection C. This portion of the code allows hospitals to share information with EMS services for the purposes of quality improvement, medical audit, and competency assurance without written authorization from the patient.

As referral physicians, EMS Medical Directors have the right to expect that appropriate information from the receiving specialists/hospital regarding patient diagnosis, outcomes, discharge summary, and critical Quality Improvement metrics will be shared with them. The time has come that the EMS and hospital information exchange be seamless taking advantage of these relationships, improving the continuity of care as well as the quality of service to our communities.