



County of Erie

CHRIS COLLINS
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

TO: Hospitals and Prehospital Care Providers

FROM: Anthony J. Billittier, IV, MD, Commissioner
Erie County Department of Health

Gregory Skibitsky, Commissioner
Erie County Department of Emergency Services

DATE: June 14, 2011

SUBJECT: Revised Hospital Diversion Policy

At the May 2011 meeting of the Western Region Medical Advisory Committee (WREMAC) the Diversion Policy was revised. The new policy (attached) eliminates the Delay and Diversion Status. Hospitals will only be identified as either OPEN or CLOSED. CLOSED is limited to any natural or manmade disaster and/or event that leads to the activation of the facility's internal disaster plan and mandates immediate notification of the NYS Department of Health by the hospital.

With this change, M.E.R.S. Control will only poll hospitals once each day via telephone when they obtain the hospital surveillance data to update any information. By default, hospitals will be listed as OPEN unless they specify that they are currently CLOSED. Hospitals may contact M.E.R.S. Control at any other time to provide updated information for this system. The information is also available to prehospital care providers simply by contacting M.E.R.S. Control and requesting the data. Additionally, the information is posted on the Web at <http://eces.erie.gov>. In the event that a hospital declares a CLOSED status, the area Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) and ambulance services will be notified by M.E.R.S. Control.

M.E.R.S. Control will accept and disseminate information that is specific to the ability of ambulances to access a facility (e.g., the driveway is blocked by flooding and ambulances are to deliver patients through the front entrance). Hospitals may also identify specific issues related to available services if their administrator or designee supplies that

information in writing along with an estimate of how long services will be affected (e.g., CT not available until [date]). When MERS Control is aware of these situations, the updated information will be displayed on the webpage, and ambulances transporting to the particular facility will be notified.

This evolution of the system will be referred to as the **Hospital Information System**. Please review this with your emergency department staff and prehospital care providers. If you have any questions, please contact John Adolf at the Erie County E.M.S. Office at 716 681-6070.

This change will take effect on Saturday, June 18, 2011.

Cc W.E.R.E.M.S. Council
W.R.E.M.A.C.
M.E.R.S. Control

Western Regional Emergency Medical Advisory Committee

Title: Diversion Policy	Effective Date: May 2011 Page: 1 of 1
Policy #2011-1 SUPERCEDES POLICY 1999-3	Revised:

Policy:	<p>EMS agencies are not obligated to honor a hospital's request to divert to a different Emergency Department. Hospitals may refuse ambulance traffic to its Emergency Department ONLY when the facility must declare the Emergency Department CLOSED per New York State Department of Health regulations. A hospital that has declared its Emergency Department is CLOSED does not see any patients from the general public or from EMS. In the event the Emergency Department is CLOSED, the patient should be transported to the closest appropriate receiving facility based on the patient's condition.</p> <p>Reasons for CLOSED status are limited to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Any natural or manmade disaster and/or event that leads to the activation of the facility's internal disaster plan and mandates immediate notification of the NYS Department of Health.</p> <p>Heavy Emergency Department volume and/or lack of in-hospital beds alone are not considered reasons to declare the Emergency Department CLOSED.</p> <p>The reporting of hospital Emergency Department status is based upon local system needs and is not required by the WREMAC</p>
Procedure:	<p>If a facility wishes to declare the Emergency Department CLOSED, the following steps will be implemented:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Declaration of Internal Disaster and implementation of hospital's disaster plan 2. Immediate contact of NYS DOH by CEO or designee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. During normal business hours contact the NYSDOH Hospital Unit at 716-847-4357 b. Outside normal business hours, contact the NYSDOH duty officer at 866-881-2809 3. Immediate contact of local and regional EMS dispatch centers <p>As soon as feasible, the facility should advise the DOH of the expected timeline to re-open the Emergency Department. This information will then be shared with the local and regional EMS systems.</p>
Reference:	Western Regional Emergency Medical Advisory Committee Minutes, May, 2011 – Diversion Subcommittee Report