



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT



MEMORANDUM

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TO: Distribution

August 25, 2008

FROM: Ross Elliott
Director

SUBJECT: BEHAVIORAL/PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCIES

The Emergency Psychiatric Assessment Center (EPAC) at Kern Medical Center is experiencing capacity issues and is sometimes overwhelmed. Guidelines have been collaboratively developed by a working group of stakeholders to address this situation. As a result of the group's efforts, law enforcement personnel are being instructed to follow a structured decision process regarding potential 5150 patients, at Attachment A. The method by which law enforcement communicates with hospital personnel will be with a form that ambulance personnel are expected to deliver with the patient, at Attachment B.

At the scene of a behavioral emergency, law enforcement may hand-off to the transporting paramedic or EMT, a completed document that alerts the receiving emergency department of a potential 5150 hold. This document is named Notification of Potential Involuntary Psychiatric Needs. Your staff will need to ensure this document is handed over to the receiving emergency department. The Notification of Potential Involuntary Psychiatric Needs document does not invoke a 5150 hold by law enforcement but will alert receiving emergency departments of potential psychiatric issues.

Historically, Kern Medical Center has been the hospital destination choice by paramedics and EMTs for patients needing psychiatric assessment/treatment. But, not all patients with behavioral or psychiatric symptoms need to be transported to KMC. There is no change to the Ambulance Destination Policy as a result of studying this issue. However, it is appropriate to remind and reinforce the existing Ambulance Destination Policy. First and foremost, patients with a medical condition and potential psychiatric issues (including a 5150 hold) shall be transported to the closest most appropriate emergency department to address the medical condition. These medical conditions include: life-threatening or potentially life-threatening illnesses or injuries, self-inflicted injuries, overdoses, abnormal vitals signs, abnormal blood glucose levels, potential alcohol poisoning, sexual assault, suspected substance abuse, and complaints of pain.

Ambulances should not be used to transport 5150 patients that do not have a medical condition. Absent a medical condition, the only time an ambulance should be used for such pre-hospital transport is when law enforcement directs that restraints be used. The restraints create a medical condition. An attendant is required to perform medical monitoring while the patient is restrained in the supine or semi-Fowler's position. Chemical restraints shall only be used if so directed by a paramedic base hospital order or written physician's order.

The study group identified other actions to enhance local mental health care. Additional psychiatric inpatient beds have been added by Good Samaritan Hospital and Crestwood Behavioral Health Center. The EPAC will be moved out of Kern Medical Center's emergency department to the Mary K. Shell Center. This will not impact prehospital ambulance destinations but may be new sites of origin or destination for inter-facility transfers.

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Behavioral emergencies and 5150 holds will be added to the Department's continuous quality improvement indicators to collect data. Please advise your staff of these aforementioned policy reinforcements and enhancements to our local healthcare system.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact EMS Coordinator Tony Pallitto at (661) 868-5218 or by email at pallittot@co.kern.ca.us .

Distribution:

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Roy Cox, Mercy Air

CC: Kern County 5150 Working Group

ATTACHMENTS

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ATTACHMENT A

**KERN COUNTY PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION – 5150
TRANSPORTS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

June 20, 2008

1. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES OR URGENT MEDICAL NEEDS WITH POTENTIAL 5150 CONCERNS

Individuals with medical emergencies (an emergent potentially life-threatening illness or injury) or urgent medical needs (requires immediate medical attention) **willing to accept medical treatment** shall be transported to the closest most appropriate hospital for the treatment of their medical needs. No hold pursuant to section 5150 shall be initiated.

a. Law Enforcement Will:

- i. Notify MET of the potential 5150 through the law enforcement's Comm-Center. Notify on-site EMS personnel of the potential 5150 involuntary or voluntary psychiatric needs through a modification of the "Law Enforcement Notice to Hospital of Potential Psychiatric Needs" form that law enforcement (both BPD and KCSO) use.
- ii. Law enforcement will complete the form and give to on-site EMS personnel who will in turn deliver to hospital staff.
- iii. Law enforcement will not select or direct the hospital destination for EMS.
- iv. The justification for a medical concern is based on current law enforcement procedures determining when EMS shall be called.

b. EMS Staff Will:

- i. Transport to the closest most appropriate hospital in accordance with Kern County EMS Department Ambulance Destination Policies and Procedures.
- ii. Notify hospital staff of potential 5150 concerns by delivering the "Law Enforcement Notice to Hospital of Potential Psychiatric Needs" form that law enforcement (both BPD and KCSO) completed and provided. - *see 1.a.ii above*
- iii. EMS shall not be used to transport 5150 individuals if there is not a medical condition unless the 5150 patient requires physical or chemical restraint.

c. Hospital Staff Will:

- i. Upon completion of medical treatment/clearance if hospital staff believe that the individual is in need of mental health treatment hospital staff will:
 1. **Voluntary:** If the individual is willing to agree to mental health treatment, then hospital social services will coordinate with available community resources to secure such services.
 2. **Involuntary:** If the individual is NOT willing to agree to mental health services and appears to be a danger to self, others or gravely disabled due to a mental disorder, then hospital social services will contact local law enforcement for a MET response.
- ii. Upon completion of medical treatment/clearance if hospital staff are unclear if the individual is in need of mental health treatment hospital staff may request a MET consultation and/or response by contacting the Comm-Center of the agency indicated on the "Law Enforcement Notice to Hospital of Potential Psychiatric Needs" form.

ATTACHMENT A

d. MET Staff Will:

- i. When requested to respond to a Greater Bakersfield hospital request to evaluate an individual for a 5150 MET will:
 1. Respond within 4 hours or less between 8:00 AM and 12:00 AM.
 2. Respond by 10:00 AM for all calls received between 12:00 AM and 8:00 AM.
 3. Provide a 5150 evaluation
 4. If a 5150 is written, MET will arrange transportation to one of the designated psychiatric facilities: Crestwood, GSH or KMC, based on bed availability.
 5. If a 5150 is not written MET will consult or coordinate with hospital staff regarding discharge plans based on the individual's needs and available resources.

2. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES OR URGENT MEDICAL NEEDS, A 5150 HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND THE INDIVIDUAL IS TRANSPORTED TO A NON-DESIGNATED FACILITY

Individuals with medical emergencies (an emergent potentially life-threatening illness or injury) or urgent medical needs (requires immediate medical attention) **NOT willing to accept medical treatment**, shall be transported to the closest most appropriate hospital for the treatment of their medical needs. A hold pursuant to section 5150 shall be initiated.

a. Law Enforcement Will:

- i. Write a 5150
- ii. Notify MET of the potential 5150 through the law enforcement's Comm-Center.
- iii. Law enforcement will not select or direct the hospital destination for EMS.
- iv. Provide the "5150 hold" to the hospital staff.
- v. Complete the "Law Enforcement Notice Hold on Patient" form at the hospital.

b. EMS Staff Will:

- i. Transport to the closest most appropriate hospital in accordance with Kern County EMS Department Ambulance Destination Policies and Procedures..
- ii. EMS shall not be used to transport 5150 individuals if there is not a medical condition unless the 5150 patient requires physical or chemical restraint.

c. Hospital and MET Staff Will:

- i. If the medical treatment/clearance is completed within 24 hours, the hospital staff will contact MET, and MET will transport the individual to one of the designated facilities for a "5151" assessment for involuntary mental health treatment.
- ii. If the medical treatment/clearance is not completed within 24 hours, the hospital staff will contact MET, and MET will assess the individual to determine if a new "5150" needs to be written on the individual.

3. FIELD MOBILE EVALUATION TEAM (MET) RESPONSES

- a. KCMH MET shall be utilized to provide crisis intervention and field assessments prior to writing a 5150.

4. CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT (CSU) UTILIZATION

- a. Individuals who are willing to be treated on a voluntary basis shall be taken to the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) as an alternative to writing a 5150.

This Document is NOT a 5150 Hold

Law Enforcement/MET Notification of Potential Psychiatric Needs
(Voluntary or Involuntary)

Date: _____

Time: _____

Patient Name: _____

Reasons patient may have involuntary psychiatric needs:

Officer/MET Staff completing this form:

(Name) _____ Badge# _____ Case# _____

(Signature) _____ Agency _____

_____ Law enforcement/MET provided this form to EMS (initial)

_____ EMS provided this form to hospital: _____
Hospital

INSTRUCTIONS

After the patient has been medically cleared or attempts to leave AMA, if the patient cannot safely be released from the hospital because in the opinion of the treating physician or psychologist with medical staff privileges, the person as a result of a mental disorder presents a danger to himself or herself, or others, or is gravely disabled (unable to provide for basic personal needs for food, clothing, OR shelter), the patient should be assessed for a 5150 hold. For all hospitals other than Kern Medical Center, request evaluation by MET by calling Bakersfield Police Department's Communications Center at 326-3811.