



## Indiana Emergency Medical Services for Children

### Interfacility Transfer Guidelines/Memorandums of Understanding

#### Background

Indiana EMSC is a federal state partnership program designed to reduce pediatric morbidity and mortality as a result of severe injury and illness. IEMSC is housed within the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Indiana EMSC seeks to provide support for injury prevention efforts, ensure all children within the state have timely access to appropriate emergency medical care, provide support and pediatric educational opportunities for pre-hospital and healthcare providers, and represent the unique needs of children within the EMS community throughout the state. Indiana has 1,577,629 children between the ages of 0 – 17 years of age, comprising 25% of its population. In 2006 the Institute of Medicine published "Growing Pains," reporting that, although, pediatric patients comprise 27% of emergency visits; many hospitals and EMS agencies are not well equipped to handle pediatric patients. IEMSC seeks to reduce gaps in care provided to children across the state.

#### National Program Initiatives

National State Program initiatives include ensuring that hospitals have written interfacility transfer guidelines for pediatric patients to provide timely transfer to pediatric or tertiary referral centers when medically necessary. These initiatives include performance measure 76, included in the Healthy People initiatives, reviews the percentage of hospitals in the state/territory that possess written interfacility transfer guidelines which cover pediatric patients including pre-defined components of transfer. These components must include: (1) a process for selection of facility and transfer service; (2) planning for the transfer of the patient's medical records, belongings, and signed consent for transfer; and (3) directions for the guardians to the referral institution. Performance measure 77, included in the Healthy People initiatives, reviews the percent of hospitals in the state/territory that have written interfacility transfer agreements which cover pediatric patients. National goals for Performance measures 76 and 77 include 90% compliance nationwide by the year 2011, which are in line with the Healthy People initiatives.

#### What are Interfacility Agreements and Why Do They Matter?

Interfacility agreements serve as a standard operating procedure set between Hospital A (the transferring hospital) and Hospital B (the receiving hospital). Interfacility agreements act to maximize patient outcomes by providing appropriate assessment and interventions through the use of qualified pediatric emergency care providers within a timely manner. These agreements function to clarify the duties for transfer between transferring and receiving hospital staff and transport team members, ensure a seamless transition for the patient and family members traveling outside of their local communities, and offer a standardized seamless operating procedure set for nursing staff.

Not all hospitals are fully equipped to care for ill children. A 2003 nationwide ED survey reviewing pediatric equipment availability demonstrated that only 6% of EDs had the required equipment and supply list as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics/American College of Emergency Physician guidelines. In 2009, the Journal of Hospital Medicine published a study conducted in Michigan reviewing patterns of transfer for pediatric critically ill and injured children in association with resource utilization and clinical outcomes. Survey data revealed mortality and resource utilization was much higher among children undergoing inter-hospital transfer to ICU after initial hospitalization compared to those transferred directly from ED to pediatric intensive care units within urban care centers.

#### Indiana Hospital Survey Data

Indiana EMSC surveyed 93 hospitals within the years 2009 – 10, and received an 80% response rate. Indiana 2009 – 10 EMS and hospital survey data revealed 29% of Indiana hospitals have interfacility transfer guidelines inclusive of pre-defined components of transfer for pediatric patients across the state. Indiana 2009 – 10 EMS and hospital survey data revealed 41% of Indiana hospitals have interfacility transfer guidelines which include pediatric patients across the state.

***If you would like more information regarding interfacility transfer guidelines or would like sample versions of guidelines or memorandums of understanding, please email Stephanie Fahner at [sastout@iupui.edu](mailto:sastout@iupui.edu).***

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