




STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Joe Manchin III
Governor

Patsy A. Hardy, FACHE, MSN, MBA
Cabinet Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: All WV Licensed EMS Agencies
All Regional Medical Command Centers

FROM: William D. Rose, MD, FACEP 
Interim State EMS Medical Director

DATE: December 28, 2009

RE: **Aeromedical provider utilization**

Since the adoption of the West Virginia Emergency Medical Services Act of 1996, the West Virginia Office of EMS has strived to ensure the provision of emergency medical services within the State meets the minimum standards as established by the Bureau for Public Health. The procedures utilized to establish compliance with these requirements include the licensure of EMS agencies operating in West Virginia and the certification of personnel providing these services. These procedures are in place to ensure that services provided are in accordance with all applicable rules, regulations, policies, and protocols.

Historically, West Virginia EMS providers and the regional Medical Commands have utilized aeromedical resources regardless of West Virginia licensure. This practice was permitted due to the lack of availability of WV licensed providers in certain areas of the state. While this condition continues to exist in some areas, the vast majority of the state now has WV licensed aeromedical providers available within a reasonable distance. Thus, a change of policy is being implemented regarding the utilization of unlicensed aeromedical agencies within West Virginia.

West Virginia Code mandates that decisions regarding the care and transportation of patients shall be the responsibility of the EMS line officer *under the direction of medical command*. This statute is the reason *all* requests for scene

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utilization of aeromedical resources are required to be authorized by the appropriate regional Medical Command. Failure to abide by this policy is just reason for disciplinary action upon a provider's certification.

At the recent Medical Policy and Care Committee meeting held on December 4, 2009, the issue of unlicensed aeromedical agencies providing services in West Virginia was reviewed. This committee concluded that in order to ensure that medical care provided to the citizens of WV meet our standards, it was imperative that WV licensed providers be utilized whenever possible. As a result, the following policy was developed to assist the Medical Command centers in authorization of scene aeromedical responses.

Effective 12:01 a.m., January 1, 2010, the following policy will be utilized by all regional Medical Commands:

"Upon receiving a request for aeromedical assistance at the scene of an EMS incident in the State of WV, the regional Medical Command shall first determine the appropriateness of the request, and if determined to be medically appropriate, the Medical Command shall coordinate dispatch of the closest ***WV licensed aeromedical provider***. If the difference between the nearest ***WV licensed aeromedical provider's base*** and a ***non-licensed*** aeromedical provider's base is greater than ten (10) miles, the regional Medical Command may utilize the ***non-licensed*** aeromedical provider."

At the current time, the only ***WV licensed aeromedical providers*** are HealthNet Aeromedical Services and Air Evac Lifeteam.

This policy is intended to ensure that the care and service provided to sick and injured patients meet the standards as established by the West Virginia State Trauma and Emergency Medical System.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Deron Wilkes by e-mail (deron.e.wilkes@wv.gov) or by telephone (304-558-3956).

Thank you for assistance as we take steps to ensure the very best care is made available to the citizens of West Virginia.

cc: Chris Curtis, Acting Commissioner, Bureau for Public Health
Regional Medical Directors
STEMS staff
WV EMS TSN staff