

Medical Scene Calls and Ornge Response – Update

Recently, Ornge Medical Directors delivered an online presentation for select areas of Bruce County Paramedic Services and Grey County Paramedic Services explaining the current approach to medical scene calls and provincial standards. Based on some recent commentary on social media and a communication distributed through SWORBHP, it is apparent that there is some confusion around this. The purpose of this memo is to provide some added clarity around the underlying issues and the standards themselves.

Key points:

- Ornge supports air response for direct transport of STEMI patients to PCI under the current provisions of the provincial Basic Life Support Patient Care Standards (BLS-PCS). Unfortunately it is not possible to meet the STEMI specific time criteria listed within the relevant Standards within the BLS-PCS in all areas of the province due to distances and local logistics.
- The BLS-PCS Chest Pain (Non-Traumatic) Standard STEMI Hospital Bypass Protocol requires the patient must be able to reach the PCI centre less than 60 minutes after patient contact. If it is anticipated that this time criteria can be met through the use of an air ambulance, then land based paramedics should request an air ambulance. Unfortunately in many areas of Ontario, based upon launch and flight times to and from scene, this STEMI specific time criteria cannot be met. In these situations, paramedics are to follow the BLS-PCS Transport Standard and the patient should be transported to the closest or most appropriate hospital capable of providing the medical care apparently required by the patient.
- When specific Air Ambulance Utilization Standard operational guidelines are met and a time savings can be realized through the use of an air ambulance, paramedics should follow the AAUS within the BLS-PCS and request an air ambulance.
- If an air ambulance is requested and responding per the AAUS and the land paramedics have completed their scene protocols and the patient is in the ambulance, then the land ambulance will proceed to the closest local hospital with an emergency department. Unlike with trauma patients, “auto-accept” agreements which allow for a modified scene response to a lead trauma hospital (LTH) are not in place for all medical scene call indications listed within the AAUS (which also includes shock, altered LOC and respiratory distress). In these situations, emergency physicians must arrange for a receiving facility and an accepting physician and Ornge is available to transport these patients as inter-facility transports.

For further information or questions, please contact the Director of Paramedic Operations Justin Pyke jpyke@ornge.ca