CONTRA COSTA
HEALTH SERVICES

EMS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY #: 21
EFFECT DATE: 12/01/06

SUBJECT: PHYSICIAN ON SCENE

APPROVED BY:

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I. PURPOSE

To provide direction for field personnel and physicians on prehospital emergency medical responses.

II. POLICY

Paramedics function by law under physician contact, however, most physicians are unfamiliar with the paramedic scope of practice, skills, drugs, equipment, and EMS protocols. Most physicians do not have the time to accompany paramedics and their patients to a Receiving Hospital. For this reason, Base Hospital physicians assume medical control through input into EMS protocols and through voice contact.

If a physician at the scene wishes to direct paramedic care, s/he should be shown the card issued by the State of California entitled Note to Physician on Involvement with EMT-IIs & EMT-Ps (paramedic).

The Endorsed Alternatives for Physician Involvement printed on the back of the card are:

"After identifying yourself by name as a physician licensed in the State of California, and, if requested, showing proof of identity, you may choose to do one of the following:

A) Offer your assistance with another pair of eyes, hands, or suggestions, but let the life support team remain under base hospital control; or,

B) Request to talk to the base station physician and directly offer your medical advice and assistance; or,

C) Take responsibility for the care given by the life support team and physically accompany the patient until the patient arrives at a hospital and responsibility is assumed by the receiving physician. In addition, you must sign for all instructions given in accordance with local policy and procedure. (Whenever possible, remain in contact with the base station physician.)"

Even if a physician chooses option #3 listed on the card, in Contra Costa County, the paramedic must still maintain Base Hospital control through voice contact.