



DT: 1.14.2020

TO: ALL JOCO EMS SYSTEM PROVIDERS

RE: Transport Destination for Patients with Substance Abuse/Psychiatric Emergencies

Psychiatric patients or those who are suffering from substance abuse issues often require transport to a hospital by EMS for the required medical screening process prior to placement in an inpatient, outpatient, rehab, or other environment.

It is important that all EMS Providers understand that **ALL HOSPITALS in our EMS System** (except St. Luke's Community/Microhospitals due to staffing model) are capable of handling these psychiatric/substance abuse patients in need of medical clearance.

We should NOT be transporting all of these patients to only Advent Health/Shawnee Mission or the University Of Kansas Medical Center. While those hospitals both have inpatient psychiatric facilities they are frequently at capacity and we are not aware of their inpatient psych capacity/capabilities at time of transport.


EMS Providers should transport these patients to their hospital of choice when they have decision-making capacity and if there is no preference, the closest appropriate hospital ED is fully capable of clearing these patients and must accept them. It is NOT acceptable for a hospital to disclose over the Biocom that "they are on psych diversion" (which doesn't exist) OR to "divert for no psych beds". Medical screening can still occur and they are obligated to provide.

All hospital Emergency Departments that take federal money (Medicare/Medicaid) are required by law to provide medical screening/clearance of these patients when they present regardless of their bed capacity.

Please make appropriate transport destination decisions and do not default to transporting all psychiatric/substance abuse patients to only Advent or University of Kansas Medical Center unless there is a compelling reason to do so (ex. pre-existing relationship, patient choice, under arrest and law enforcement requests etc.).

As always, feel free to email or call with any questions/concerns.

Respectfully,



Ryan Jacobsen MD, FAEMS, FACEP
JOCO EMS System Medical Director