

# Southern Illinois Regional EMS System

## A-21 PETITIONING AN EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED PATIENT POLICY

EMS Providers should consider the mental health needs of a patient who appears emotionally or mentally incapacitated. This involves cases that the EMS provider has reasonable cause or evidence to suspect a patient may intentionally or unintentionally physically injure himself/herself or others, is unable to care for his/her own physical needs, or is in need of mental health treatment against his/her will.

This does not include a person whose mental processes have merely been weakened or impaired by reason of advanced years and the patient is under supervision of family or another healthcare provider, unless the family or healthcare provider has activated EMS for a specific behavioral emergency.

- Attempt to persuade the patient that there is a need for evaluation and compel him/her to be transported to the hospital.
- If persuasion is unsuccessful, contact Medical Control
  - Relay history and details of the event.
  - Clearly indicate your suspicions and/or evidence.
  - The Medical Control physician may want to discuss the patient's needs with the parties involved in the situation.
- The EMS crew will then follow the direction of the Medical Control physician in determining the disposition of the patient or termination of patient contact.
  - Another agency's or party's opinion should not influence the EMS provider's assistance to a mental health need.
- Under no circumstances does transport of the patient, whether voluntary or against his/her will, commit the patient to a hospital admission. It simply enables the EMS providers to transport a person suspected to be in need of mental health treatment.
- If a patient is combative or may harm self or others, call law enforcement for assistance and follow the Patient Restraint Policy.