



PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY
HEALTH SERVICES COUNCIL

Your Voice In EMS

RECOMMENDATION FOR CONSIDERATION

Board Meeting Date: June 21, 2023

Subject: Removal of Patient Abandonment Reference in Statewide Treatment Protocol

VTR#: 0623-03

Committee/Task Force: BOARD OF DIRECTORS/MAC

Recommended Goal

Recommended Policy Change

Other:

Recommendation:

The Department should remove any reference to “patient abandonment” in the current or subsequent draft(s) of any EMS statewide treatment protocol.

Rationale [Background]:

BLS Protocol #201 [Draft: May 27, 2023] contains the following reference to patient abandonment:

*“Once a provider-patient relationship has been established, the EMS providers have a responsibility to the patient until appropriate transfer of care or appropriate disposition according to protocol. **Failure to appropriately transfer care and/or ensure appropriate disposition of patient shall be considered patient abandonment.**”*

The council opposes any reference to “patient abandonment” in a statewide treatment protocol and recommends its removal in the current and any subsequent statewide protocol document. Furthermore, the Council believes the algorithm that was added to BLS Protocol #201 negates the need for such a reference by providing clear expectations regarding acceptable patient dispositions subsequent to the establishment of a patient-provider relationship.

The statewide treatment protocols are intended to provide guidance and standing orders related to clinical patient care. The inclusion of references to patient abandonment will only serve to increase exposure for providers and agencies to potential civil litigation.

Medical Review [Concerns]:

On June 8, 2023, during a protocol update workshop, the PEHSC Medical Advisory Committee conducted a formal unanimous vote to recommend removal of any references to patient abandonment in the current or subsequent statewide treatment protocols.

Fiscal Concerns:

None.

Educational Concerns:

The Department’s expectations for acceptable patient dispositions should be contained in the protocol update education module. Additionally, the module should reinforce what differentiates a person from a patient, and the point at which the patient-provider relationship is established.

Plan of Implementation:

1. Remove all references to patient abandonment in the draft BLS Protocol #201.
2. Include education on differentiating a person from a patient and at what point the patient-provider relationship is established.
3. Ensure that no reference to patient abandonment appear in any current or subsequent statewide protocol.

The PEHSC Committee/Task Force offers consultation to the Department in regard to the content of this Vote to Recommend (VTR) and its attached documents. The PEHSC Committee/Task Force specifically offers staff or member support to participate in Department deliberations regarding this recommendation in an effort to convey committee/task force discussions.

Board Meeting Comments/Concerns:

The Board of Directors made this official recommendation at the June meeting to concur with the MAC’s opposition to any abandonment reference in the protocols.



June 21, 2023

Signed: _____
President

Date _____

For PEHSC Use Only – PA Department of Health Response

Accept:____ Table:____ Modify:____ Reject:____

Comments:

Date of Department Response:_____