

Patients with Special Healthcare Needs

Standard:

This standard is established to provide quality patient care and EMS services to patients with special health care needs. It is also important for EMS providers to understand the need to communicate with the patients, family and caregivers regarding health care needs and devices that EMS may not have experience with.

Purpose

Medical technology, changes in the health care industry, and increased home health capabilities have created an increasing special population of patients that interface with the EMS system. It is important for EMS to understand and provide quality care to patients with special health care needs.

Application:

1. Emergencies involving special needs patients may involve equipment (e.g. LVAD or vagus nerve stimulation device, etc.) that is unfamiliar to the provider. To familiarize themselves with the equipment providers may:
 - ask the family, caregiver or patient for any documentation or specific information regarding the condition and/or device;
 - utilize Just in Time Training aides/information regarding devices where available;
 - contact the patient's primary care physician or OLMC for assistance with specific conditions or devices or for advice regarding appropriate treatment and/or transport specific to the patients condition.
2. Transportation will be to the hospital appropriate for the specific condition of the patient. In some cases this may involve bypassing the closest facility for a more distant yet more medically appropriate destination.