October 1, 2014

EMS Agencies and EMS Medical Directors,

The Bureau of EMS and Trauma System (Bureau) is keenly aware of the major impact that increasingly common drug and I.V. solutions shortages are having on EMS operations. We appreciate the efforts that many of you are making to identify methods to maximize patient safety and quality of care. We also thank you for continuing to apply due diligence in attempting to comply with the regulations governing the ALS Drug Box contents and par levels.

However, the Bureau acknowledges that there may be times when, for reasons beyond the control of the EMS agencies, hospitals, and medical directors, the shortages lead to an inability to obtain appropriate supplies of all required medications and solutions. In such cases, when all appropriate attempts to rectify the shortage have been made, we recognize that Fire Departments, EMS agencies, and Ambulance Services still have a duty to respond to requests for emergency medical care. In such cases, the need to respond may be the highest priority even when shortage-induced deficits have left the agency without a complete complement of all potentially-needed medications. In such cases, emergency response should continue while all appropriate measures are taken to resolve the medication shortages as quickly as possible.

This letter is in response to the constellation of shortage events present on or around the date of this communication and has a term of effect that ends on June 30, 2015. If necessary, a similar communication may be distributed at a later date. Also, in response to these shortages, the Bureau published GD-104-PHS-EMS: Drug Shortages which provides regulated entities with a methodology for notifying the Bureau when they are unable to obtain the required agents, including I.V.solutions.

Again, we are grateful for your diligent commitment to quality of care, patient safety, and regulatory compliance and hope, with you, that the disruptions of medication availability will soon be resolved by the various manufacturers and regulatory agencies involved. The Bureau of EMS and Trauma System will continue to monitor this situation closely and adapt to the real world situations as they evolve to assure the highest level of patient care in Arizona.

Sincerely,

Terry Mullins
Bureau Chief
Bureau of EMS & Trauma System

Bentley Bobrow, M.D.
Medical Director
Bureau of EMS & Trauma System


Health and Wellness for All Arizonans