

STATE OF ARIZONA • EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AND TRAUMA SYSTEM

Criteria for Behavioral Health Situation Ambulance Transports

Background

Questions and complaints about behavioral health transports have led to the development of this guidance document. The intent of this document is to inform providers of how the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System (Bureau) will use criteria identified below and event-specific information to determine when a transport qualifies as a “behavioral health situation such as drugs, alcohol and mental health related crisis.”

Process

If the Bureau decides to open a behavioral health situation transport investigation based on an informal complaint against a CON holder, the assigned investigator will inform the CON holder that an informal investigation has been opened, state the nature of the allegations made, specify the statute/rule involved, and identify what records are being requested.

If, as a result of the investigation, the investigator concludes that a transport met the criteria identified below, the investigator will recommend that the complaint be non-substantiated. If the investigator cannot determine that a transport met these criteria or that event-specific information does not establish that the transport qualifies as a “behavioral health situation such as drugs, alcohol and mental health related crisis,” the investigator may recommend that the complaint be substantiated.

Once the investigative case file is complete, the Investigations Section Chief will route the file to the Bureau Chief for final review and decision. As with all informal complaints related to ambulance service, if the complainant disagrees with the Bureau’s decision, the complainant may make a formal complaint to the Bureau. In such a situation, the Bureau is not obligated to further investigate such a formal complaint if the Bureau is not presented with significant additional information or if the Bureau determines that no change in the outcome of the investigation would result.

The Bureau has identified transport criteria that clearly support the transport of a patient by an ambulance provider with a CON limited to transports related to “behavioral health situations such as drugs, alcohol, and mental health related crises.” The Bureau recognizes that other situations may qualify as “behavioral health situations such as drugs, alcohol, and mental health related crises,” and will evaluate these situations on a case-by-case basis. These criteria or situations pertain only to the analysis of the behavioral health situation of the patient being transported. Obviously, all other CON statutory and regulatory requirements apply.

Behavioral Health Situation Transport Criteria

In order for an ambulance transport to definitely be considered a “behavioral health situation such as drugs, alcohol, and mental health related crises,” one of the following situations must occur:

- The transport originates from a licensed behavioral health facility or from the psychiatric services unit of a licensed hospital; OR

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- The transport terminates at a licensed behavioral health facility or the psychiatric services unit of a licensed hospital; OR
- A health professional responsible for diagnosing, receiving, or treating the patient determines that the patient's condition warrants (or warranted) a behavioral health transport due to one of the following: a sudden behavioral health condition, episode, or behavior; an unanticipated behavioral health condition, episode, or behavior; or a potentially dangerous behavioral health condition, episode, or behavior. In this case, the health professional must document this determination through an attestation in an ADHS approved manner.

Attestation

The attestation must contain the following:

- **Statement:** "I attest that I am a health professional responsible for diagnosing, receiving, or treating this patient. I have determined that the patient's sudden behavioral health condition, episode, or behavior; or an unanticipated behavioral health condition, episode, or behavior; or a potentially dangerous behavioral health condition, episode, or behavior warrants (or warranted) a behavioral health transport."
- Printed name and signature of the health professional.
- Date of signature (no more than 72 hours before or after the time of the transport).

If this attestation is a component of the patient's electronic patient care report (e-PCR), the signature may be electronic. Attestations may also be received by facsimile. The attestation must be maintained by the ambulance service who shall provide the Bureau with access to the document with reasonable, prior notification and with copies upon request.