



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

COVID-19: TIERED EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Introduction:

This document offers guidance for licensed ambulance services in the development and utilization of tiered emergency response. “Tiered Emergency Response” shall refer to the assignment of Mississippi certified EMS personnel and resources based on patient acuity. Tiered response may be utilized by Mississippi licensed ambulance services facing staffing issues during the COVID-19 pandemic after receiving approval from the Bureau of EMS/State EMS Medical Director.

Approval Process

To receive approval Mississippi licensed ambulance services must submit a written request signed by the chief executive officer (or equivalent) of the ambulance service and off-line medical director attesting to the desire to provide tiered emergency response and a copy of the tiered response protocols approved by the off-line medical director. Protocols shall allow for the following:

- Mississippi certified Paramedics, AEMTs or EMTs to respond to emergency calls, care for patients experiencing emergency conditions, transport patients experiencing emergency conditions, and transfer the care of patients experiencing emergency conditions to providers in the clinical setting

Tiered emergency response protocols shall include the following minimum elements:

- Condition-specific protocols for each of the following levels of care:
 - EMT
 - AEMT (If employed or volunteer with the licensed ambulance service)
 - Paramedic
- Dispatch services for the purpose of prioritizing calls and assigning the proper level of care for response
 - Services which do not possess dispatch services capable of prioritizing calls and assigning proper level of care may partner with a third-party vendor for dispatch resources to meet this requirement
 - All emergency calls must be screened at dispatch and assigned the most appropriate level of care response
 - Dispatch services shall be approved by the off-line medical director, who shall attest via the letter of application to the Bureau of EMS that dispatch services provide for the prioritization of calls and assigning of appropriate level care
- On-line medical control to provide guidance to field crews as needed during operations
- A minimum of one (1) paramedic sprint vehicle for every five (5) tiered response units in the event advanced life support proves necessary
 - If paramedic level of care is warranted and initiated in the field the paramedic must continue care until the patient(s) are delivered to definitive care

Services utilizing tiered emergency response shall provide performance improvement data requested from the Bureau of EMS relevant to tiered emergency response.

Specific Guidelines

- 1. The provisions of this guideline shall be incorporated into standard operations and condition-specific protocols approved by the off-line medical director**
- 2. Specific to tiered emergency response:**
 - a. Dispatch assigns priority and appropriate level of care based on acuity**
 - i. Ambulance dispatched**
 - ii. When a BLS or AEMT unit is dispatched, the paramedic sprint unit shall be on standby**

- 1. The paramedic sprint unit may be requested by dispatch, other first medical contact on scene, or initial ambulance dispatched to the call**
- 2. The paramedic sprint unit shall rendezvous with the initial ambulance crew dispatched to the scene, if patient condition worsens and/or warrants paramedic level care**
 - a. If paramedic level care is warranted and initiated the paramedic shall continue care until the patient(s) are delivered to definitive care**

Systems of Care Considerations

EMS operators shall follow prescribed destination guidelines and ensure systems of care patients are transported to the most appropriate hospital (as per guidelines). Hospital selection along these lines may warrant use of advanced life support (paramedic level) due to substantial transport times and a lack of immediate access to paramedic sprint back-up. Approval of tiered response does not constitute a waiver of system of care destination guidelines. Off-line medical directors shall ensure patients who meet systems of care criteria receive the appropriate level of care and ensure appropriate level care during transport to the most appropriate hospital (as per guidelines).