

SUBJECT: **PERINATAL PATIENT DESTINATION**

**PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines for transporting perinatal patients to the most accessible facility appropriate to their needs.

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. Perinatal – For the purpose of this policy, “perinatal” refers to patients who are at least 20 weeks pregnant.
2. Perinatal Center – For the purpose of this policy, “perinatal center” refers to a general acute care hospital with a basic emergency department permit and obstetrical service. This terminology is not intended to indicate the absence or presence of a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).
3. EDAP – Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics.
4. PMC – Pediatric Medical Center.  
PTC – Pediatric Trauma Center.

**PRINCIPLES:**

1. Perinatal patients should be transported to the most accessible facility appropriate to their needs. This determination will be made by the base hospital physician or Mobile Intensive Care Nurse (MICN) after consideration of the guidelines established in this policy. Final authority for patient destination rests with the base hospital handling the call.
2. If delivery occurs prior to arrival at a hospital, the mother and the newborn should be transported to the same facility.
3. BLS units shall call for an ALS unit or transport perinatal patients to the most accessible perinatal center as outlined in Reference No. 808, Base Hospital Contact and Transport Criteria.
4. In all cases, the health and well being of the patient is the overriding consideration in determining patient destination. Factors to be considered include: severity and stability of the patient’s illness or injury; current status of the pediatric receiving facility; anticipated transport time; and request by the patient, family, guardian or physician.

**POLICY:**

- I. The following perinatal patients should be transported to the most accessible perinatal center:

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APPROVED:   
Director, EMS Agency

  
Medical Director, EMS Agency

- A. Patients who appear to be in active labor, whether or not delivery appears imminent.
  - B. Patients whose chief complaint appears to be related to the pregnancy. Patients who appear to be having perinatal complications.
  - C. Injured patients who do not meet trauma criteria or guidelines.
- II. Perinatal patients who have delivered prior to arriving at a health facility should be transported to the most accessible perinatal center which is also an EDAP (consider a perinatal center with a NICU).
- III. Perinatal patients meeting trauma criteria and/or guidelines should be transported to a trauma center.
- IV. Perinatal patients for whom transportation to a perinatal center would exceed 20 minutes should be transported to a receiving facility which is also an EDAP.
- V. The following perinatal patients should be transported to the most accessible receiving facility:
- A. Patients in acute respiratory distress.
  - B. Patients in full arrest.
  - C. Patients whose chief complaint is clearly not related to the pregnancy.
- VI. Consideration may be given by the base hospital to:
- A. Direct patients who are equal to or less than 34 weeks pregnant, whose chief complaint appears to be related to the pregnancy, to a perinatal receiving facility with a NICU, regardless of service area considerations/rules.
  - B. Honor patient destination requests for those patients who have made previous arrangements for obstetrical care at a given hospital. This consideration should be based on the following:
    - 1. If the condition of the patient permits such transport.
    - 2. Transportation to the requested obstetrical facility would not exceed 20 minutes and would not unreasonably remove the ALS unit from its area of primary response.

**CROSS REFERENCES:****Prehospital Care Policy Manual:**Reference No. 502, **Patient Destination**Reference No. 506, **Trauma Triage**Reference No. 510, **Pediatric Patient Destination**Reference No. 808, **Base Hospital Contact and Transport Criteria**