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**MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

DATE: November 4, 2021

TO: EMERGENCY RECEIVING CENTERS
AMBULANCE PROVIDERS
911 PROVIDERS
HOSPITAL CEOs

SUBJECT: MANDATORY 2 HOUR DIVERSION FOR EXTENDED APOTs

Orange County EMS (OCEMS) is aware of, and has been closely monitoring, the persistent increase in Ambulance Patient Offload Times (APOTs) documented over the last 2 to 3 months. In this regard, some hospitals have not initiated diversion status even though they are holding several ambulance crews or paramedics within their emergency departments for prolonged periods. This is not sustainable and intervention is now necessary.

Effective immediately, hospitals holding ambulance crews or paramedics within their emergency departments for longer than 60 minutes can be reported to OCEMS. The APOT for such institutions will be obtained from the EMS APOT/Diversion Dashboard (<https://www.ochcahealthinfo.com/about-hca/medical-health-services/emergency-medical-services/ems-system-reports/ems-core-measures>). If the APOT for that hospital is greater than 60 minutes, OCEMS will place the hospital on diversion for 2 hours using the ReddiNet. This may be repeated if the situation remains unchanged.

We are aware this policy will increase diversion hours but, at this time, it seems justifiable to protect patient safety and access to expeditious emergency care. We will continue monitoring the status of both APOTs and diversion hours. If it seems in the best interests of patient care, the mandatory 2-hour diversion time may be increased.

Carl H. Schultz, MD
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