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SPECIALIZED MEDICAL SERVICES EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

DATE: August 13, 2025

TO: 911 Service Providers
IFT-ALS Service Providers
Base Hospital Coordinators
Non-OCEMS authorized Medical Directors

**SUBJECT: PROVISION OF DIRECT MEDICAL CARE BY NON-OCEMS PHYSICIANS TO
PATIENTS CALLING 911 AND CONCURRENTLY UNDER PARAMEDIC
CONTROL**

The Orange County EMS Agency needs to clarify the policies under which paramedics provide care to patients calling 911. Orange County paramedics provide medical care exclusively under the license of the EMS Medical Director. This is mandated by state regulations. The policies, procedures, and standing orders governing patient care flow directly from the EMS Medical Director to the paramedics. Any other physician, on scene or not, is not authorized in Orange County to give orders to paramedics involving direct patient care, including other agency medical directors.

OCEMS does have a policy where a physician on-scene can take responsibility for direct patient care by riding in the ambulance during transport. The physician can treat the patient with his or her own medications but cannot give orders to paramedics or use their medication.

Paramedics are not authorized to provide care instructed by an outside physician. Radio nurses (MICNs) and base hospital physicians are acting as extensions of the EMS Medical Director's authority and so may give orders to paramedics. Should an outside physician give orders to paramedics and should paramedics follow them, such practices will be considered violations of EMS policy. As such, OCEMS will not be able to support such activity should litigation ensue. Ensuring that only one medical authority exists in providing direct patient care for those individuals calling 911 is necessary to maximize patient safety.

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