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To: All Hartford Hospital Sponsored Services and Providers

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Re: Cancelling Paramedic Response or Downgrading to BLS

We have been reviewing an increased number of patient care encounters through our collaboration with sponsored services in developing a more robust quality assurance process. One pattern which has emerged is a recurrent absence of paramedic care delivery in cases where paramedic care appears to have been indicated. The following clarifies expectations regarding the provision of paramedic care by Hartford Hospital sponsored EMS services and individual providers:

In cases where a paramedic has been dispatched per EMD guidelines, providers functioning at the BLS or AEMT level may only cancel a responding paramedic for:

- Traumatic injuries distal to the knee or elbow with a reported pain score of <5 or
- Requests determined to be unfounded /no patient located

If a paramedic was not initially dispatched, BLS/AEMT providers should request a paramedic response as soon as possible upon identifying a condition where ALS care appears indicated.

If a BLS/AEMT ambulance is ready to transport but the paramedic has not arrived on scene, in most cases transport should be initiated without delay and an intercept attempted while enroute to the hospital.

Whenever a paramedic-equipped ambulance responds to any EMS request, the paramedic provider is responsible for assessing whether ALS is indicated. This includes requests assigned a BLS response through EMD.

Paramedic downgrade to BLS care should only occur when no ALS care or diagnostics (e.g. 12 lead) are indicated (per the EMS Patient Care Guidelines) and the paramedic provider has a reasonable belief no deterioration in patient condition will occur enroute. An overview of some conditions where ALS care is mandated is contained within the "Transfer of Adult Care from Paramedic to Basic Life Support" regional guideline. Some additional examples of complaints where ALS care is indicated but has sometimes been overlooked include:

Abdominal pain

Alcohol withdrawal symptoms

Non-traumatic chest pain regardless of location, character or reproducibility

Moderate to severe pain in any anatomic location

Nausea/Vomiting

Profound weakness

If the paramedic provider determines BLS-only care is indicated, he or she must document his or her assessment findings and rationale in the EMS patient record.