



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All MA Licensed Ambulance Services
CC: Regional EMS Councils
FROM: Louise Goyette, Director
RE: Implementation of Primary Stroke Centers and Point of Entry
DATE: February 22, 2005

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce that the Department has implemented a process for establishing primary stroke service in Massachusetts acute care hospitals. Hospitals that choose to seek designation from the Department to provide a primary stroke service must assure the Department that emergency diagnostic and therapeutic services are provided by a multidisciplinary team and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to patients presenting with symptoms of acute stroke. Almost all of the hospitals in the Commonwealth have applied to become primary stroke service hospitals. As of today, there are 42 hospitals that have been designated as primary stroke service hospitals.

Over the next several weeks, the Regional EMS Councils will be working on drafting point of entry plans to reflect the primary stroke hospital designations. The Regional EMS Councils will submit their draft point of entry plans to the Department for its review and approval. Once there is written Department approval of these plans, the Regional EMS Councils will notify the ambulance services in their region of the new point of entry plan. The EMS regulations, at 105 CMR 170.357, already require ambulance services to ensure that patients are delivered in accordance with point-of-entry plans that have been approved by the Department. Ambulance services will be responsible for training their EMTs to the new stroke point of entry requirements.

Finally, the Department has also established a new Administrative Requirement (A/R), in accordance with which ambulance services will be able, on a voluntary basis, to have their EMT-Intermediates and EMT-Basics use glucose monitoring devices to determine whether a patient presenting with signs and symptoms of altered mental status, or suspected of having an acute stroke, has high or low blood sugar levels causing their symptoms.

Enclosed please find the stroke point of entry guidelines, new stroke checklist, the new A/R for glucose monitoring at the Intermediate and Basic level, a current list of primary stroke service hospitals and training materials on the stroke point-of-entry for ambulance services and their EMTs, including a PowerPoint presentation, tests, answer sheets, evaluation forms and resource list. Please note that the current protocol for stroke in the Statewide Treatment Protocols, 3.11 Acute Stroke, is not changing. The full current set of the Statewide Treatment protocols is available on-line at the OEMS website, at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/oems/protocol/emsprot.htm>.