

STRAC

System Notification

Priority: **Normal**

Date: **Friday, February 1, 2013**

To: For immediate release to all Hospital ERs, Stroke, Cardiac and Trauma coordinators, EMS agency Supervisor and Field Personnel

From: Eric Epley, Executive Director

Issue:

Hospital Executive Leadership Protocol (HELP Group)

The STRAC Executive Committee has been discussing several sentinel events in our regional trauma/emergency healthcare system over the past 3 months. Unfortunately negative scenarios can and will occur occasionally and they usually fall outside the parameters of normal operating procedure. An example would be the inability to get a patient in a rural ER with a time-dependent pathology transferred to a tertiary facility in San Antonio in a timely manner. All hospitals are under pressure right now due to Influenza-like Illness (ILI), and critical care beds are at a premium. The first contact with a San Antonio facility may deny the inter-facility transfer and assume the patient will be accepted at another hospital in San Antonio. However, the first facility is unaware what the next hospital in San Antonio might say. The lack of situational awareness after denial of a transfer request can result in the referring facility feeling forced to transfer the patient hundreds of miles to other metropolitan areas of the state. The STRAC Executive Committee has determined that this is an opportunity for improvement.

The Executive Committee hospital representatives want to ensure that no patients are transferred outside of San Antonio (except patients that specifically request the transfer).

STRAC has created a process called **HELP. The Hospital Executive Leadership Protocol.** The HELP group can be activated by MEDCOM (800-247-6428, #2) if/when a patient has become stranded in a transferring hospital. The HELP process will put senior leaders from Baptist, Christus, Methodist, SAMMC and UH in a conference bridge so that an appropriate resolution to the problem can be found. **STRAC encourages transferring facilities to utilize their normal referral/transfer processes to the fullest extent.** However, if the San Antonio area hospitals are uniformly denying the patient in transfer, the referring facility can simply call MEDCOM and the HELP group will be notified and will take measures to resolve the issue to ensure the patient isn't flown or ground-transported outside of San Antonio.

Questions or concerns should be directed to Eric Epley, Executive Director, STRAC 210-233-5832 or email at eric.epley@strac.org.