Purpose:

Multiple agencies in La Plata County routinely respond together on calls for emergency medical service. These responses may be mutual aid, automatic aid or direct requests for higher a level service, such as en route intercepts. While each agency is committed to assisting with quality emergency medical services to its neighbors, we must also recognize the associated legal and ethical liabilities. For this reason, decisional authority must be defined. The following guidelines exist to provide optimal patient care while avoiding conflict during critical events.

Guidelines:

1. Upon request for additional medical resources the requested agency immediately becomes the lead agency for care of the affected patient(s). Direct patient care remains the responsibility of on-scene personnel until direct on-scene transfer of care occurs.
2. The lead agency when dispatched may make resource determinations prior to arrival (e.g. helicopter). This should be accomplished through direct, clear communications with on-scene personnel, when possible.
3. Upon arrival to the patient, lead agency personnel shall assume immediate medical authority. This includes all patient care decisions, as well as determining personnel and additional resources needs.
4. Transition of care to lead agency personnel shall begin as soon as reasonably possible upon arrival. This means a face to face with the medic or fire fighter in charge to the lead medic assuming care. This transition will be done with respect and professionalism.
5. Mode of transport, including transporting agency shall be at the discretion of the lead agency. Such decisions may be made prior to arrival based on available information.
6. Intercepts shall be completed at the earliest reasonable location and without undue delay. When the transition occurs on a roadway i.e. meeting en-route, the lead agency/medic will still make the determination for the mode of transportation i.e. which ambulance, helicopter etc…will be used.
7. To smooth transitions and avoid confusion, the first responding agency shall inform the patient and/or family—as soon as reasonably possible—that additional medical crews are responding and will assume responsibility for their care upon arrival.

Multiple Agency Response

8. If there is ever an issue on the above IT SHALL NOT BE BREECHED on the scene unless it is critical to the patients well being. The issue will be discussed and a determination made at a later time.

La Plata County EMS Protocols Version 2010.1.1