



COUNTY OF MONTEREY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Date: January 16, 2024
To: Monterey County EMS Service Providers
From: Monterey County EMS Agency

Subject: EMS Interactions with Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Teams

The Behavioral Health Bureau of the County of Monterey's Health Department recently released information regarding their new and expanded Community Crisis Services offerings. As a part of this expansion, the Behavioral Health Bureau will provide Mobile Crisis Services utilizing a two-person team of mobile crisis responders that will provide in-person field response countywide. Coverage will include a countywide team available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and an additional team in the City of Salinas providing coverage 40 hours a week. Both teams are based in Salinas. While the Mobile Crisis teams may transport some patients, they do not provide transportation for patients needing hospitalization or on 5150 holds. Under these circumstances, the team will contact EMS for transport.

With the announcement of these service changes, the EMS Agency has received questions regarding operational and clinical considerations when EMS interacts with the Mobile Crisis teams. The EMS Agency anticipates three potential types of scenarios during which interactions might occur and intends the following to serve as guidance until such time as we can evaluate and implement any needed changes to Monterey County EMS System Policies and Protocols.

1. **The Mobile Crisis team requests an EMS response for transport.** In these instances, EMS should transport the patient to the hospital requested by the Mobile Crisis team. If the Mobile Crisis team does not identify a destination, the patient should be transported to the most appropriate facility as determined by Monterey County EMS System Policies and Protocols.
2. **EMS responders are dispatched or arrive at the scene at roughly the same time as the Mobile Crisis team.** EMS personnel should complete an appropriate assessment and physical exam. If EMS personnel determine that the patient does not have an emergency medical condition that necessitates transport and further evaluation in an Emergency Department, then EMS personnel should confer with the Mobile Crisis team regarding potential release of the patient to the Mobile Crisis team. If the Mobile Crisis team agrees to accept care of the patient, EMS may release the patient to the Mobile Crisis team. If the Mobile Crisis team does not feel comfortable accepting care of the patient, EMS should transport the patient to the hospital requested by the Mobile Crisis team. If the Mobile Crisis team does not identify a destination, the patient should be transported

to the most appropriate facility as determined by Monterey County EMS System Policies and Protocols.

3. **EMS responders identify a patient with needs that are potentially better serviced by the Mobile Crisis team.** After completing an appropriate assessment and physical exam, EMS personnel may request to have a Mobile Crisis team respond to the scene. When considering such a request, EMS personnel should take into account the patient's needs, the needs of the EMS system at the time, and the time for a Mobile Crisis team to arrive on scene. EMS personnel shall remain on scene with the patient until all three of the following have occurred: (1) The Mobile Crisis team arrives at the scene. (2) EMS personnel provide an in-person verbal handoff report to the Mobile Crisis team. (3) The Mobile Crisis team accepts transfer of care of the patient.

As always, if additional guidance is needed, EMS personnel may consult with a Base Hospital. In any of the above circumstances, if EMS personnel and the Mobile Crisis team disagree about whether the patient should be released to the Mobile Crisis team, EMS should transport the patient to either the requested facility or an appropriate facility as determined by Monterey County EMS System Policies and Protocols.

In each of the circumstances above, EMS personnel shall complete an electronic Prehospital Care Report (ePCR) in compliance with Monterey County EMS System Policy #6180 (Electronic Patient Care Records).

Please direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the EMS Agency at EMSAdmin@co.monterey.ca.us.