May 30, 2014

TO: ALS-Endorsed Providers

FROM: Dr. David Postelnek
Operational Medical Director

SUBJECT: Rapid 12-Lead ECG Performance

Recent system evaluation has indicated that 12-lead ECG acquisition is being unnecessarily delayed. Providers should not routinely move patients prior to obtaining the initial 12-lead ECG.

Patients should only be moved before obtaining a 12-lead ECG when it is unsafe to operate on the scene or the location is unsuitable. Rationale for moving a patient before obtaining a 12-lead ECG must be documented.

It is widely recognized that a properly acquired 12-lead ECG is vitally important to the patient’s prompt treatment and favorable outcome. Prompt 12-lead ECG acquisition and interpretation reduces "first medical contact to balloon times". Early recognition of STEMI greatly increases the patient’s chances of survival.

Initial 12-lead ECG’s should be obtained within ten (10) minutes of ALS arrival to any patient that could be experiencing an AMI. If transmission is indicated, the ECG should be transmitted immediately. Serial ECG’s should always be done and, if at any point the ECG meets transmission criteria, it should be immediately transmitted. A “Code STEMI” should be called in to the receiving facility whenever a STEMI is identified.

Q) Who should get a 12-lead?

A) Patients experiencing any of the following:

- Chest pain (typical or atypical)
- Epigastric pain
- Back, neck, jaw, or arm pain without chest pain
- Palpitations
- Syncope or near syncope
- Pulmonary edema
- Dyspnea on exertion
- Weakness
- Diaphoresis
- Feeling of anxiety or impending doom
Q) Should we transmit all 12-leads to the hospital?

A) No. Criteria for 12 lead transmissions are found in the Patient Care Manual under Directive D-22, “12 LEAD ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (ECG) TRANSMISSION.”

II. Indications

A. ECG’s Interpreted by the LP-15 to meet STEMI Criteria
B. ECG’s Interpreted by the ALS Provider to meet STEMI Criteria
C. ECG’s with significant ST depressions (2 mm or greater)
D. Abnormal ECGs in patients displaying signs/symptoms of AMI
E. Post cardiac arrest 12 lead ECG’s
F. Upon request of the receiving facility

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

I also wish to thank you for your continued cooperation and commitment to delivering quality patient care in Prince William County.