SAMPLE - Emergency Treatment for Individuals at Off-Campus Dedicated Emergency Departments (DED) of the Hospital Policy

SUBJECT: Emergency Treatment for Individuals at Off-Campus Dedicated Emergency Departments (DED) of the Hospital Policy

NUMBER: 

EFFECTIVE DATE: 

SUPERCEDES SPP: ___________________ DATED: ___________________

APPROVED BY: 

(Signature)

DISTRIBUTION: 

Note: The policy could be expanded to include all hospital-owned off-campus facilities, whether or not they are determined by CMS to be "dedicated emergency departments of the hospital."

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for staff members to appropriately provide medical screening examinations and stabilizing treatments to individuals that come to an off-campus dedicated emergency department (ED) of the hospital and request an examination or treatment for medical condition.

To provide guidelines for direct contact between personnel at an off-campus dedicated ED of the hospital and emergency personnel at the main hospital campus, when necessary.

To provide guidelines for the safe movement of individuals from off-campus dedicated ED of the hospital to the main campus or appropriate location for a medical screening examination and stabilizing treatment, when necessary.

To provide guidelines on conducting an appropriate transfer to another facility, when indicated.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

If an individual comes to an off-campus dedicated emergency department of the hospital and a request is made on the individual’s behalf for examination or treatment of a medical condition, the personnel at the off-campus dedicated ED of the hospital will provide the individual with an appropriate medical screening examination and stabilization within the capability of the provider. If necessary, the individual will be appropriately moved to the main hospital campus for screening and stabilization, or an appropriate transfer to another facility will be conducted.

III. DEFINITIONS

Dedicated Emergency Department (ED):

Any department (including an ambulatory clinic not designated for emergency, but the patient comes in with an emergency requiring medical attention) or facility of the hospital, regardless of whether it is located on or off the main hospital campus, that meets at least one of the following requirements:
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- It is licensed by the state in which it is located under applicable state law as an emergency room or emergency department;
- It is held out to the public (by name, posted signs, advertising or other means) as a place that provides care for emergency medical conditions on an urgent basis without requiring a previously scheduled appointment; or
- During the calendar year immediately preceding the calendar year in which a determination under EMTALA is being made, based on a representative sample of patient visits that occurred during that calendar year, it provides at least one-third of all of its outpatient visits for the treatment of emergency medical conditions on an urgent basis without requiring a previously scheduled appointment.

The organization may list the departments/facilities that meet the definition of a dedicated ED.

Emergency Medical Condition:
A medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain, psychiatric disturbances and/or symptoms of substance abuse) such that the absence of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in:

- Placing the health of the individual (or, with respect to a pregnant woman, the health of the woman or her unborn child) in serious jeopardy;
- Serious impairment to bodily functions; or
- Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part, or, with respect to a pregnant woman who is having contractions:
  - That there is inadequate time to effect a safe transfer to another hospital before delivery; or
  - That transfer may pose a threat to the health or safety of the woman or the unborn child.

Medical screening exam:
As defined by EMTALA regulation, the process required to reach, with reasonable clinical confidence, the point at which it can be determined whether a medical emergency does or does not exist.

Move an individual:
Arranging for safe movement of the individual within the organization (e.g., from the off-campus dedicated ED of the hospital to the main campus of the hospital). This is not an EMTALA “transfer.”

Stabilizing treatment:
As defined in EMTALA regulation, such medical treatment as is necessary to ensure that the individual's condition is not likely to experience a material deterioration during or as a result of transfer of the individual.

Transfer an individual:
As defined by EMTALA regulation, the movement (including the discharge) of an individual outside a hospital’s facilities at the direction of any person employed by (or affiliated or associated, directly or indirectly, with) the hospital.
IV. PROCEDURE

A. If an individual comes to an off-campus dedicated ED of the hospital and a request is made on the individual's behalf for examination or treatment for a medical condition, or if based on the individual's appearance or behavior a prudent layperson observer would believe that the individual needs examination or treatment for a medical condition, the qualified medical personnel at the off-campus dedicated ED will provide the individual with an appropriate medical screening examination and any necessary stabilizing treatment to the extent of its capabilities and staff scope of practice. The capability of the hospital includes that of the hospital as a whole, not just the capability of the off-campus dedicated ED of the hospital.

B. The off-campus dedicated ED personnel will be permitted to contact the emergency physicians or other qualified emergency practitioners to obtain advice and direction regarding the handling of any emergencies, and to obtain prompt medical transport, by ambulance or other appropriate vehicle either to the main hospital campus or, if an appropriate transfer is being provided, to another accepting medical facility.

C. The qualified medical person may be able to complete the screening and provide any necessary stabilizing treatment at the off-campus dedicated ED, however, it may be appropriate for personnel to arrange safe movement of the individual to the main hospital campus for screening and stabilization if the movement would not significantly jeopardize the individual's health or life.

D. If the main hospital does not have the specialized capability or facilities required by the individual, or because the individual's condition is deteriorating so quickly that taking the time required to move the individual to the main hospital campus could place the life or health of the individual in significant jeopardy, personnel will assist in arranging an appropriate transfer.

E. Transfers to other organizations will be conducted according to the *Transfer of Individuals - Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) Policy* document.