

Inter-facility Transfer Agreements and Guidelines

Inter-facility Transfer Agreements: Written contracts between a referring facility (e.g., community hospital) and a specialized pediatric center or facility with a higher level of care and the appropriate resources to provide needed care required by the child. The agreements must formalize arrangements for consultation and transport of a pediatric patient to the higher-level care facility. Inter-facility agreements do not have to specify transfers of pediatric patients only. An agreement that applies to all patients or patients of all ages would suffice, as long as it is not written only for adults.

Inter-facility Transfer Guidelines: Hospital-to-hospital, including out of State/Territory, guidelines that outline procedural and administrative policies for transferring critically ill patients to facilities that provide specialized pediatric care, or pediatric services not available at the referring facility. Inter-facility guidelines do not have to specify transfers of pediatric patients only. A guideline that applies to all patients or patients of all ages would suffice, as long as it is not written only for adults.

In addition, hospitals may have one document that comprises both the inter-facility transfer guideline and agreement. This is acceptable as long as the document meets the definitions for pediatric inter-facility transfer agreements and guidelines (i.e., the document contains all components of transfer).

All hospitals in the State/Territory should have guidelines to transfer to a facility capable of providing pediatric services not available at the referring facility. If a facility cannot provide a particular type of care (e.g., burn care), then it also should have transfer guidelines in place. Also, note that being in compliance with EMTALA does not constitute having inter-facility transfer guidelines.

Inter-facility transfer guidelines that cover pediatric patients and that include the following components of transfer:

- Defined process for initiation of transfer, including the roles and responsibilities of the referring facility and referral center (including responsibilities for requesting transfer and communication).
- Process for selecting the appropriate care facility.
- Process for selecting the appropriately staffed transport service to match the patient's acuity level (level of care required by patient, equipment needed in transport, etc.).
- Process for patient transfer (including obtaining informed consent).
- Plan for transfer of patient medical record.
- Plan for transfer of copy of signed transport consent.
- Plan for transfer of personal belongings of the patient.
- Plan for provision of directions and referral institution information to family.