

NORTHERN VIRGINIA EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DIVERSION/SPECIAL ADVISORY POLICY



Approved by the Northern Virginia EMS Council

There are times when emergency departments or hospitals have a shortage of resources that renders them temporarily unable to care for additional patients. During those times, it may be in the patient's best interest to be transported to another hospital. The final determination of the patient's destination must rest with the **provider** caring for the patient and the online medical control **physician**. Patients determined to be unstable by an EMS provider should be transported to the closest, most appropriate hospital, regardless of the hospital's special advisory status.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions reflect the status fields in the current Virginia Healthcare Alerting & Status System (VHASS)

VHASS Status Category	Definition
OPEN	Indicates unrestricted access to EMS agencies. The facility is available to receive all inbound ambulance traffic.
SPECIAL ADVISORY	The facility recommends against transport to the facility due to clinical infrastructure required to appropriately care for patients being temporarily unavailable.
CLOSED	Hospital unable to accept patients due to closure of business operations or experiencing events dangerous to life safety (e.g., fire, active shooter, loss of power). Closed status is used in situations where the facility is physically inaccessible or entering the facility may endanger the life of patients or others.

PROCEDURE

A hospital must go on special advisory PRIOR to an ambulance calling in with patient information. The process for a Northern Virginia hospital to go on special advisory would be as follows:

- 1) The hospital ED and administration make an internal decision to declare re-route.
- 2) The hospital representative should contact the "home" 911 Center for their EMS system to ensure prompt notification to field personnel.
- 3) Updates should occur every two hours or shift change, whichever occurs first.
- 4) Based upon local procedure, the 911 Center will indicate if the special advisory diversion can be currently accepted, or the 911 Center will forward the information to the person in their organization with the authority to make the decision. If EMS cannot honor the request due to weather, call volume, major incidents in progress, etc., then the 911 Center will notify the hospital when the request may be honored.
- 5) The hospital representative inputs the information into the Virginia Healthcare Alerting & Status System (VHASS). EMS can access VHASS via a login. EMS Officers who need access may request it at <https://my.vhha.com/s/login>.
- 6) The special advisory is canceled at the end of the specified time frame unless extended by the hospital.
- 7) Regardless of special advisory status, medical control will continue to be provided by the emergency department. The emergency department will accept decisions made by EMS personnel in the field to override the special advisory status due to the medical condition of the patient. Questionable decisions shall be referred to the quality assurance process for review.



**NORTHERN VIRGINIA
QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT FOR
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT SPECIAL ADVISORY ISSUES**

Incident Number

Date

Ambulance/Medic Unit

Patient Name

Communications RN Name

Hospital

Accepting RN Name

Name of Person Submitting Report

Charge MD Name

Arrival to Triage Time

Witness Name (If Applicable)

If applicable, indicate below the original destination hospital and the hospital to which the patient was diverted. Additionally, indicate each hospital's status at the time of diversion.

Original Hospital Destination

ED Special Advisory

ED Closed

Final Hospital Destination

ED Special Advisory

ED Closed

Please describe the events in detail (using the back of the sheet if necessary). Be sure to include a brief summary of the patient's condition. You may also attach a separate sheet.

When you have completed this form, please attach a photocopy of your Patient Care Report, including any relevant documents, and forward it to the appropriate EMS or Hospital ED Supervisor.

Confidential: Prepared for review by EMS Agency and Hospital Supervisors functioning primarily to review adequacy or quality of professional services.
Privileged under Va. CodeAnn. 8.01.581.17 NOT PART OF MEDICAL RECORD

Reviewed and approved by NVEMS BOD 02/15/2024.