

POSITION PAPER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMS PHYSICIANS

PATIENT NONTRANSPORT

National Association of EMS Physicians/American
College of Emergency Physicians Joint Position Paper

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) believe that each emergency medical services (EMS) system should develop medically directed protocols regarding patients who are assessed in the out-of-hospital setting and not transported. A significant number of requests for EMS response result in patient nontransport. ACEP and NAEMSP acknowledge that nontransport may occur either

at the request of the patient or at the initiation of EMS personnel. Patient nontransport should occur only in the presence of online physician medical direction or detailed offline protocols. Appropriate educational programs targeting EMS personnel, physicians, and the public should be in place before implementation of this policy.

Key elements of these protocols should be to:

- Address the importance of appropriate documentation.
- Address patient consent/refusal issues, including EMTALA applicability, where appropriate.
- Address minors who refuse transport.
- Develop appropriate patient educational materials to be given to all patients who are not transported.
- Ensure that decisions are medically directed and follow established protocols rather than being financially motivated.
- Address appropriate patient disposition, including treat and release, or referral to private or non-EMS vehicle.
- Integrate continuous quality improvement programs to evaluate outcomes of patients who are not transported.

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