





ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN

DATE: August 26, 2024

To: San Mateo County EMS System Receiving Hospitals
American Medical Response, San Mateo County
South San Francisco Fire Department
San Mateo County Prehospital Emergency Medical Services Group

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SUBJECT: Ambulance Patient Offload Time (APOT) Standard

Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Assembly Bill 40 (AB 40) on October 13, 2023. AB 40 mandates that each Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) set a standard to limit Ambulance Patient Offload Time (APOT) time within the EMS system. APOT is defined as the time period between when the ambulance arrives at the hospital emergency department bay and the physical transfer of patient care.

The San Mateo County EMS system APOT standard remains twenty (20) minutes or less, ninety (90) percent of the time.

The 20-minute APOT requirement was originally identified as a best-practice in the APOT reduction toolkit authored by the California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) and the California Hospital Association (CHA) in 2014¹ and was deployed at that time in San Mateo County after close consultation with both hospitals and EMS provider agencies. San Mateo County EMS receiving hospitals have in general consistently met or exceeded this longstanding target. Shared commitment, transparent information sharing and collaboration within our local EMS system has resulted in APOT performance that is amongst the best in California. Updated local APOT performance can be found at:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1ca390d253c6475ea9a65d337c018ece>

Amongst other requirements, AB 40 adds Section 1797.120.6 to the Health and Safety Code, mandating:

(a) A licensed general acute care hospital with an emergency department shall, by September 1, 2024, develop, in consultation with its emergency department staff, and its exclusive employee representatives, if any, an ambulance patient offload time reduction protocol that addresses all of the following factors:

(1) Notification of hospital administrators, nursing staff, medical staff, and ancillary services that the local EMS agency standard for ambulance patient offload time has been exceeded for one month.



(2) Mechanisms to improve hospital operations to reduce ambulance patient offload time, which may include, but are not limited to, activating the hospital's surge plan, transferring patients to other hospitals, suspending elective admissions, discharging patients, using alternative care sites, increasing supplies, improving triage and transfer systems, and adding additional staffing.

(3) Systems to improve general hospital coordination with the emergency department, including consults for emergency department patients.

(4) Direct operational changes designed to facilitate a rapid reduction in ambulance patient offload time to meet the local EMS agency standard adopted pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 1797.120.5.

(b) A licensed general acute care hospital with an emergency department shall file its ambulance patient offload time reduction protocol with the authority and shall annually report any revisions to its protocol.

Please note that the regulatory rulemaking process related to this new law led by EMSA remains delayed due to State budget challenges. Nevertheless, EMSA has requested that hospitals which would like to submit their information responsive to the requirements of AB40 send it to APOT@emsa.ca.gov. The San Mateo County EMS Agency requests that hospitals copy EMS@smcgov.org on their submissions to EMSA.