



Representing Pre-Hospital Care Providers

POSITION STATEMENT ON STRETCHER VAN TRANSPORTATION

May 7, 2004

Issue:

Transportation service providers in Michigan, using what are commonly called stretcher vans, are illegally providing transportation to persons that must be moved by stretcher. These services are licensed under the Limousine Act and not the Public Health Code.

Section 20924 (1) of Part 209 of the Public Health Code clearly states "Except as provided in subsection (2), a person shall not furnish, operate, conduct, maintain, advertise, or otherwise be engaged or profess to be engaged in the business or service of the transportation of patients in this state unless the person uses an ambulance licensed under this part." Subsection (2) exempts an ambulance operated by an agency of the United States. Part 209 clearly defines a nonemergency patient as "an individual who is transported by stretcher, isolette, cot, or litter...". This provision was added to Part 209 in 1990.

The Department of Community Health issued a cease and desist order to a transportation service provider that was transporting patients in violation of Part 209 of the Public Health Code. The transportation service provider has requested a declaratory ruling from the Department.

The Director of MDCH has requested an opinion from the Emergency Medical Services Coordination Committee regarding whether the Public Health Code, MCL 333.20901 *et seq*, applies to a limousine service, licensed under the Limousine Transportation Act, that provides nonemergency transportation to individuals by stretcher.

MAAS Position:

The Michigan Association of Ambulance Services opposes the use of stretcher vans to transport patients and believes the law is clear in stating this prohibition. MAAS was instrumental in this language being added to the law in 1990 for the protection of patients requiring transport by stretcher.

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Background:

MAAS supports the current law and we believe it is dangerous to the public and is not in the best interest of the patients being transported if a licensed ambulance is not used . Actual experience from across the nation makes it clear that patients are put at risk every day in transport vehicles not staffed or equipped to meet their medical needs. Every patient who needs to be in a stretcher during transport must have a medically trained EMT to attend to his or her medical health and safety needs. Stretchers cannot be handled safely by one person. State licensed EMTs are specially trained in patient handling, stretcher operation, and patient movement.

There is ambulance service and there is wheel chair transportation. Ambulances and wheel chair vans are very different. It is a misguided public policy to blur the distinction between medical care provided by ambulance services and transportation for people in wheel chairs.

Stretcher bound patients require medical observation and handling by licensed EMTs in a vehicle which is equipped with patient monitoring and management equipment. Stretcher vans are an unsafe mode of transportation for these patients, instead of a safe, regulated ambulance service. Licensed ambulances are required to meet Federal KKK specifications, including stretcher attachment, crashes, and rollovers while the Limousine Transportation Act only requires an annual mechanical inspection. To allow use of stretcher vans will create a financial incentive to inappropriately place patients who need proper medical care and handling into a non-medical service at great potential risk to patient health.

Board Action:

Approved May 7, 2004.