



# PATIENT TRANSFERS

## Hospital Patient Transfers WITH OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS!

Patient Transfers are business, serious business for all patients involved; transferring hospitals, transport service, agent and – the patient. They hold the balance to patient care, place and time and business side of treatment. If a patient transfer is initiated and the ED/ EMS staff are unable to follow protocols it could result in not only the breaking of federal law but connectivity impact outcomes and costs. “Inter-hospital transfers can have negative financial (operational, and liability) implications for the patient, transferring and accepting facilities, and the health care system” (Academic Emergency Medicine: Inter-hospital Transfers from U.S. Emergency Departments; 2013). This article will explain:

- EMTALA and how it will affect your transfer process.
- The different types of transfers.
- How the transfer process and workflow can be made simpler, with less risk, using protocols.



In 2017, the United States saw 1,391,712 hospital transfers. Faster approved transfers lead to much better outcomes and more lives saved. Transfers can be necessitated by a multitude of reasons which include overcrowding, limited resources, lack of expertise, proper equipment for specific treatment specializations and more. A transfer can happen at any time during transport to the hospital or during the patient stay. There are times where an incoming EMS call is immediately deemed transfer necessary, referred to as a diversion. Other times, a patient could be within the middle of their hospital stay and require a treatment which is better suited for another hospital. Once the need for transfer is confirmed there are certain liabilities and protocols that must be followed.

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**EMTALA**, the federal law, requires the patient transferred from one hospital to another to be stabilized and treated. This can include forms that must be completed, pre-transfer stabilization and preparation, as well as communication between the EDs, the transporting staff and transfer centers. EMTALA includes its' own steps that must be followed during a transfer.

**1**

Transferring hospitals must provide all medical treatment within its capacity, which minimizes risk to patient health.

**2**

Receiving facility must accept the transfer and must have space available and qualified personnel to treat the patient.

**3**

Transferring hospital must send copies of all medical records. If the physician refuses or fails to assist, their name and address must be documented for the receiving facility.

**4**

Qualified personnel must accompany the patient during transfer. By law, the transferring physician has responsibility for selecting the most appropriate means of transportation.

Transfer centers were established in an attempt to better manage the transfer process. The simple fact is, their communication technologies do not allow team collaboration.

## HOW CAN A CONFIGURABLE MOBILE TELEMEDICINE APP HELP?

During a transfer, timing is one of the most crucial components to ensure effective patient treatment. Having inflexible protocols potentially restrict the ease of transferring a patient when needed. Every hospital, EMS and healthcare environment operate differently and have different needs, which is why a canned set of protocols will not work for everyone. - This is where GD solutions comes in. Whether it's an intra-hospital, inter-hospital or EMS transfer, GD solutions are configurable which give you the capabilities you need to ensure the patients best interests. With the robust security built into GD solutions, you will securely process documentation as well as utilize live streaming video, EMS and Specialist tracking, case workflow management with timestamping, and more. Proper Documentation can be used for audit purposes for workflow improvement and investigating the flaws in the patient transfer. All GD features help to not only achieve better patient outcomes but improve hospital benchmarks while initiating transfers.

Most healthcare facilities have patient transfer needs, either internal/external, from the field or not and with modern technology you can unite the people that will initiate and make a difference in your transfer effectiveness. GD's e-Bridge™ is the most configurable and comprehensive mobile telemedicine and patient transfer app, making it more efficient and easier to manage and track transfers. If you want to learn more about how GD can help your transfer process, contact us today!