



Catherine B. Templeton, Director

Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment

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From: Edgar G. DesChamps, MD
S.C. Medical Control Physician
Chair of the EMS Medical Control Committee
DHEC Division of EMS and Trauma

RE: Interfacility Medications and EMT Administration of Nitroglycerin

To all,

The State EMS Medical Control Committee in its meetings over the last year has discussed two previous decisions by the Committee. We in the Committee felt it was necessary to reiterate our past decision and position on these two areas. Again these are not new decisions but a reiteration of what was previously decided but through time the positions may have become obscured.

First, the Medical Control Committee had posted an Interfacility Drug Protocol. This protocol has allowed both the sending facilities and the EMS agencies great flexibility to care for the citizens of South Carolina. However the intent of our decision was for Interfacility medications that were being previously administered by existing IV infusion. These medications are necessary among other things for continuity of care, for patient safety, or for patient comfort in the case of pain management. The intent was not to extend the Interfacility Drug Protocol to oral medications such as Methadone, for instance. Only infused medications already running are acceptable for EMS interfacility usage. Somehow this caveat was lost over time. In addition the Committee also approved the titration of such Interfacility medications in either direction (up or down) by the paramedics.

Secondly, there was a question as to what did the Committee meant when it approved EMTs (previously known as Basic EMTs) administering sublingual Nitroglycerin to chest pain patients. It has been universally accepted that this meant administering Nitroglycerin to patients who already had a Nitroglycerin prescription. It has not been universally known that the Committee had approved for EMTs to initiate Nitroglycerin whether or not the patient has been on it, utilizing the stock supply from EMS and acting under their medical control physician's orders.

If you have any questions on these two items, please direct those questions to the Division EMS Coordinator, Dr. Arnold Alier.

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