



The EMIHS section is keenly aware our clinicians are experiencing significant challenges during the patient turnover process at local Emergency Departments (ED). We are also aware of confusion regarding the application of an outdated Alert Status System and the occasional tension between our clinicians and some hospital staff, particularly during peak demand. **We thank you for your professionalism and commitment to our patients despite these circumstances.**

MCFRS remains focused on patient-centered medicine. And, while we acknowledge our limited ability to address most aspects of the patient throughput process at our EDs, we will leverage every opportunity within our influence to improve it.

EMIHS staff members are actively working on solutions to the above-referenced issues and will be sharing several initiatives and resources intended to improve and streamline our role in the patient turnover process. In the meantime, the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) is evaluating the current Alert Status System and is working with hospital administrators across the State to develop new diversion guidelines.

In the interim, our belief is **you are the final arbiter of patient destination** as you are best positioned to collaborate with the patient in determining the most appropriate destination. **We will support reasoned and reasonable decisions by our clinicians regarding hospital destination.**

Please keep in mind the following as it pertains to choosing a transport destination:

- Patient priority and specialty referral needs are always factored first.
- To the extent possible, the MCFRS is committed to honoring the wishes of our patients, even if their destination of choice is in an Alert Status<sup>1</sup>. Explain to your patient the potential ramifications (e.g. delayed care). Use available tools (*FirstWatch*, CHATS<sup>2</sup>, etc.) to help them (and you) make the best decision, one that is patient-centered and is in their best medical interests.

The first tool we are making available to you is the *FirstWatch Hospital Transport Status Dashboard (HTSD)*. The HTSD is a near real-time tool designed to assist you (and our patients) make educated and better decisions regarding patient destination. It provides you a snapshot of all transport units from MCFRS, Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, and American Medical Response units operating under contract with the District of Columbia (DC).

Please see the six (6) attached power point slides for simple instructions on how to access and use the HTSD.

Questions or comments regarding the HTSD should be directed to the MCFRS Quality Improvement Officer. All other questions may be directed to the EMIHS Section Chief.

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<sup>1</sup> M.I.E.M.S.S. Region V Alert Status System:

[https://www.miemss.org/home/Portals/0/Docs/Guidelines\\_Protocols/Reg5\\_YellowAlertPolicy\\_2005.pdf](https://www.miemss.org/home/Portals/0/Docs/Guidelines_Protocols/Reg5_YellowAlertPolicy_2005.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> CHATS – County Hospital Alert Tracking System