

Policy and Procedures

Title: DNR Order / Field Determination of Death

Date issued / last revision: December 9, 2003

Date effective: Immediately

DNR Order / Field Determination of Death

Statement:

It is the intent of Cooperstown Medical Transport (CMT), Inc. to provide the highest level of care to all patients. It is also the intent to honor a patient's wishes.

Purpose:

This policy is to provide a review of standard guidelines as outlined by the American Heart Association (AHA) and the NYS Dept. of Health.

Scope:

This policy applies to all health care providers of CMT.

Policy:

1. All calls determined or suspected to be a cardiac arrest will have ALS (Advanced Life Support).
2. A Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order is defined as a document where the patient's wishes are previously known. The DNR must be a NYS Dept. of Health form with a physician's signature:
 - a. Resuscitative efforts that are usually included under a DNR order:
 - i. No chest compressions
 - ii. No defibrillation
 - iii. No endotracheal intubation
 - iv. No rescue breathing
 - b. A DNR order does not apply to a patient that has a pulse and is breathing. All appropriate care must be provided to a patient until the time of apnea or loss of a pulse.
3. Obvious Death is defined as a patient who is pulseless, non-breathing, and has one or more of the following conditions. (Refer to AAREMS Protocol, *Termination of Resuscitation*);
 - a. Decapitation
 - b. Decomposition
 - c. Incineration of the torso and/or head
 - d. Visible exposure, destruction, and/or separation of vital internal organs (brain, spinal cord, liver, heart, or lungs)
 - e. Rigor or livor mortis (without contributing environmental factors)
 - f. Major trauma resulting in cardiac arrest with a known down time of greater than 30 minutes with no initiated CPR
 - g. Severe injuries obviously incompatible with life
 - h. Submersion in water greater than or equal to 24 hours

4. Medical Control is a resource that can/will be used if there is any questions or concerns.
5. All patients with absent vital signs shall be treated with resuscitative measures unless;
 - a. EMS personnel are presented with a valid NYS Dept of Health DNR form prior to initiation of care which consists of;
 - i. The patient's name and signature
 - ii. The patient's physician's name and signature
 - iii. The patient's wishes are clearly defined
 - b. Patient meets obvious death criteria
6. Resuscitation attempts may need to be initiated if:
 - a. The patient is conscious, alert, and orientated and states he/she wishes resuscitative measures in the event that they become necessary.
 - b. The validity of the DNR order is in question.
 - c. If a family member requests that resuscitative measures should be taken and you have reason to believe this would be the desire of the patient.
7. Resuscitation attempts may be discontinued under the following circumstances (Refer to AAREMS Protocol, *Termination of Resuscitation*):
 - a. Upon presentation of a valid DNR order
 - i. Must contact Medical Control
 - b. When EMS personnel are exhausted and cannot continue efforts.
 - c. When Medical Control directs discontinuation of efforts.
8. Documentation on a PCR should include:
 - a. All criteria used not to initiate resuscitate efforts.
 - b. If efforts were initiated, all care provided as well as criteria to discontinue efforts, to include Medical Control's location and physician's name (signature preferred).