



6 - Emergency Department Telephone Advice

(Adopted, April 2001, Reaffirmed 10/2011)

The public often views the emergency department as a source of medical information.

It is recognized that despite the inadequacies in the appropriate evaluation of patients via a telephone, the expectations of the public continue to exist in regards to the availability of medical information from the emergency department via telephone.

It is the recommendation of the American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians that emergency physician does not provide routine medical advice via the telephone.

When hospitals decide to provide telephone medical advice, the American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians recommends to its members the following:

1. Individuals describing potential life or limb threatening emergencies should be instructed to call 9 -1-1 or seek emergency care.
2. Hospitals that choose to serve as a medical advice line should ensure the following:
 - a. Individuals providing the service should receive training specific to the service provided.
 - b. Individuals providing the service should be covered with appropriate malpractice insurance
 - c. Assessment and treatment should follow algorithms that conform to recognized practice standards of emergency medicine.
 - d. Complete documentation of each call.
 - e. A CQI process should be in place.
3. Emergency Departments should have formalized procedures on how medical advice via the telephone is provided.