

PTO crew questions ED-ED job and saves a life

Dear Member,

A PTO crew recently queried a booking that required them to transport a patient from ED to ED. The job was clearly and appropriately out of the scope for a PTO crew as obs were required at the destination, and it was going to a higher level of care. Not only is this job subject to an HSU ban, it is against HealthShare's own written policy.

The crew pointed out that they do not have the training to take obs of patients (or much training at all really). HealthShare responded by suggesting the crew ask the booking hospital to write down some obs that could be handed over at the destination. This is yet another example of reckless corner cutting from an organisation that is displaying a professional disregard for patient safety and comfort.

The above process of PTOs querying the job led to a 30-minute delay of picking up the patient at the booking hospital. During that delay, the patient was subject to an adverse medical event and required further urgent treatment at the emergency department of the booking hospital. If this delay – which allowed the patient to remain at the booking hospital – hadn't occurred, this medical event could have taken place in the back of the vehicle. The PTO crew should be commended for their intervention and saving a life.

The crew wrote an email through their chain of command asking for a review into what could have been a catastrophic system failure.

HUB management have indicated that their internal processes are not to blame because there was nothing medically documented that would have caused concern. They altogether avoided answering the question of who was to be blamed if the patient was transported against policy.

Therefore, a policy of good luck as opposed to good management would seem to be an underpinning foundation in dealing with patients who have a potential of becoming more high-acuity during transportation.

What's worse is that HealthShare are now reviewing the tone of the email sent from an obviously frustrated PTO seeking an investigation. This is an organisation that has lost interest in patient safety and is actively looking into those staff who are brave enough speak out on behalf of patients.

Continue to protect your patients no matter what the perceived consequences. If a member is stood down for questioning HealthShare's approach in these situations it will be met by an immediate industrial action of all HealthShare unionised PTOs.

As the PTO crew said in their email to management, 'We are not transporting parcels'.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD