

Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference

Pennsylvania

Medical Policy



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Comments to:

Keith Conover, M.D., FACEP

ASRC PA Medical Director

[kconover+@pitt.edu; 412-561-3413 (H)]

Effective Date: 1 December, 1994

- Purpose:**
1. To establish the curricula for the medical care components of ASRC training programs related to medical care in Pennsylvania.
 2. To establish the standard of care for medical treatment provided by ASRC personnel in Pennsylvania.
 3. To define the policies, procedures, and implementation of medical care by ASRC personnel in Pennsylvania.
 4. To establish and identify the authority for medical training and care for the ASRC in Pennsylvania.
- Scope:** All ASRC training programs with a first aid or medical component, ASRC-coordinated search and rescue operations in Pennsylvania, and operations in Pennsylvania coordinated by other agencies but in which ASRC personnel participate.
- Policy:**
1. All first aid and medical training conducted by the ASRC, for personnel who may respond to operations in Pennsylvania, shall utilize or be consistent with the information and materials developed by the Wilderness EMS Institute (WEMSI). These include, but are not limited to: the Wilderness EMT Curriculum and text, and the Wilderness EMS Protocols, available at the WEMSI Web site, <http://www.wemsi.org>, or from the Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania, 230 McKee Place, Suite 500, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-4904, wemsi+@pitt.edu, 412-578-3203.
 2. The standard of care for first aid and medical treatment during ASRC-coordinated search or rescue operations in Pennsylvania, or by ASRC personnel during operations in Pennsylvania coordinated by other agencies, shall be that established by WEMSI. This standard of care is as described in WEMSI material, covering both basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) care.
 3. The delivery of medical care during search or rescue operations coordinated by the ASRC shall use personnel accredited by WEMSI, following the protocols, procedures, and standards of practice established by WEMSI.
 4. ASRC ICs and ARs who are coordinating search or rescue operations, or coordinating ASRC participation in a search or rescue operation in Pennsylvania, shall, when communications permit, shall arrange for medical oversight of backcountry medical care by WEMSI-accredited Wilderness Command Physicians (WCPs), via either on-scene response of a WCP, radio contact with a

WCP, or a telephone link. As part of the initial ASRC response, ASRC ICs and ARs shall contact the WEMSI Medical Command Center at Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh's Transfer and Communication Center (Mercy TACC), at:

1-800-232-5921 or **1-412-232-5678**

and arrange for a WEMSI-accredited Wilderness Command Physician to be available for consultation.

5. WEMSI accredited medical personnel shall render appropriate medical care to patients of ASRC coordinated search rescue operations in Pennsylvania, according to the patient's needs and the accreditation level of the provider. All such care shall be directed by WEMSI Wilderness Command Physicians via Medical Communication (as defined in the WEMSI Operations Manual) if possible, and according to the WEMSI Wilderness EMS Protocols and WEMSI Standing Orders if patient-specific physician medical control is not available.

6. During ASRC-coordinated search or rescue operations in Pennsylvania, WEMSI accredited medical personnel shall have authority in patient care issues and follow WEMSI Wilderness EMS protocols for any patient care that is not in an ambulance nor within 30 minutes evacuation of an ambulance (estimate made by the highest-certification ASRC member at the patient's location), regardless of local EMS protocols, procedures and scope of practice.

In the event that ASRC medical personnel are following WEMSI protocols in caring for a patient in the backcountry, those protocols shall supersede local EMS protocols until the patient physically enters an ambulance; at that time, local EMS protocols shall have precedence, but ASRC medical personnel should generally accompany the patient to the hospital and assist and coordinate with local EMS personnel (see the WEMSI Protocols for more on this subject).

In the event of question or conflict, local EMS personnel or physicians will be directed to contact any WEMSI accredited Wilderness Command physician for verification of WEMSI personnel, procedures, and authority. ASRC personnel are authorized to defer medical care to non-ASRC WEMSI-accredited personnel if no WEMSI-accredited ASRC members are present.

7. All medical care shall be documented according to WEMSI procedures on WEMSI Patient Record Forms and Pennsylvania EMS Reports utilizing the ASRC's Pennsylvania EMS agency number, SR003. These reports shall be forwarded to the ASRC/PA ALS Coordinator. Prior to filing the reports with the appropriate agencies, the rendered care shall be reviewed by a QI committee, consisting of, at a minimum, the ASRC Pennsylvania ALS Coordinator (appointed by the ASRC Pennsylvania Medical Director), the ASRC Pennsylvania Medical Director, and the ASRC Medical Officer. Deviations from appropriate standards of care shall be referred to the ASRC-Pennsylvania and WEMSI Medical Directors, via the ASRC-Pennsylvania ALS Coordinator, for consultation and addressed further, as appropriate.

Authority: 1. This policy and all that is covered by it, shall be under the authority of the ASRC Pennsylvania Medical Director. All care rendered by WEMSI accredited medical personnel during ASRC coordinated search or rescue operations in Pennsylvania, or when ASRC personnel are acting under the coordination of another agency, shall be according to the medical practice license of the Wilderness Command Physician in the case of patient-specific physician contact, or the WEMSI Medical Director in the case of protocol or standing order use. Note that this medical care is **not** legally considered EMS in Pennsylvania.

2. The ASRC Pennsylvania Medical Director shall be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the ASRC Board of Directors. He or she shall meet the following requirements:


a. upon appointment, be licensed to practice medicine as a Medical Doctor or Doctor of Osteopathy in Pennsylvania;

b. upon appointment, or within six months of appointment, meet and thereafter maintain, all requirements with his or her home state for the provision of routine prehospital medical command;

c. upon appointment, or within six months of appointment, meet, and thereafter maintain, all requirements for accreditation by WEMSI as a Wilderness Command Physician; and

d. upon appointment, or within six months of appointment meet the ASRC Field Team Member standards and thereafter maintain FTM certification.

NOTE: Exceptions to requirement (b) above may be granted by the ASRC Board of Directors in the event that the ASRC Pennsylvania Medical Director possesses all other qualifications for the post, and has previous or present prehospital or emergency experience, but whose current practice does not accommodate compliance with the requirements for obtaining or maintaining medical command privileges in Pennsylvania. Such exceptions must be endorsed by the WEMSI Medical Director.

 4/14/97

Keith Conover, M.D., FACEP
ASRC PA Medical Director Date

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Keith Conover, M.D., FACEP
WEMSI Medical Director Date