Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the appropriate equipment and personnel related to the transport of patients on ventilators.

Background: With the increasing number of ambulance transports from one medical facility to another Iowa EMS Alliance Ambulances are faced with transports that require a patient to be on a ventilator. In some instances patients will be transported in one of our ambulances for a long period of time while on a ventilator. In most cases our volume and rate controlled ventilators carried in each ambulance should be adequate for transport. There are certain situations where a patient requires special ventilator settings that we are not able to provide with our current ventilators. These situations, while rare, will require the use of more sophisticated ventilators and many times we will need to be accompanied by a Respiratory Therapist during the transport. Most of these situations will occur with hospital to hospital transfers or transfers of patients out of Iowa Health-Des Moines to rehab facilities.

Procedures:
The attached flow chart will be used when we are notified that we will be transporting a patient on a ventilator.

SEE ATTACHMENT

There may be cases where consultation will need to occur with a physician prior to transport if the ambulance ventilator is used. Additional sedation may be needed if the decision is made to transport a patient on a rate and volume ventilator when they have been utilizing a ventilator in an assist type mode.
The Critical Care Paramedics who are assigned on a routine basis to the hospital ambulance will be trained in the use of the advanced ventilators for situations where a Respiratory Therapist is not available to accompany the crew on the transport. In these situations, an additional crew member should be considered for the transport.

The responsibility for deciding who will be able to use the Ventilators and their proficiency in use of the ventilators will be the responsibility of West Des Moines EMS/Iowa EMS Alliance and approved by the Alliance Medical Director.

When a Respiratory Therapist accompanies the ambulance crew on a call, they will handle any ventilator or airway issues that may need attention during transport. The responsibility of managing the patient’s overall medical condition and treatment is the responsibility of the Paramedic. The Iowa EMS Alliance protocols will be followed for all patient care.