Purpose: The transfer of patients from healthcare facility to healthcare facility is a necessary function for the hospital transport service. There are several reasons that these transfers occur, including physician preference, specialty care, patient preference and the need for a second opinion. These transports take place 24 hours per day on an urgent and non-urgent basis.

This policy addresses the definitions of urgent and non-urgent and sets guidelines on when the transports can take place based on the patient’s condition.

Long Distance Transports: There are occasions when UnityPoint-Des Moines Hospitals need to transfer patients to outlying facilities and transport patients back in to UPH facilities. Transferring patients’ long distances at night creates several operational and safety challenges for ambulance services. The following guidelines will be used to determine if transport is going to take place.

Between the hours of 3AM and 6AM non-urgent transfers out of UPH facilities and to UPH facilities will take place from the following areas, (which are generally a 60 mile range give or take a few miles) Osceola, Newton, Marshalltown, Pella, Ames, Knoxville, Oskaloosa, Grinnell, Boone, Jefferson, Guthrie Center, Panora, Greenfield, Nevada, Winterset and Perry. Any transfers that don’t meet the above criteria should be completed at 6AM when a new crew is starting their shift. **THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO PEDIATRIC AND NEONATAL TRANSPORTS or serious critical patient transfers from referring hospitals that the referring hospital is not capable of completing. (i.e. Airvo or vented patients)**
Any exception to these guidelines will be determined by the shift supervisor in consultation with the Medical Control Physician and transport team. There will be times when extenuating circumstances are present that transports will take place outside of this policy.

**All patient transports by ambulance from Blank Children’s Hospital will be completed by the UnityPoint-Des Moines Ambulance Service. Any variations to this policy must first be approved by the requesting party.**

**Urgent vs. Non-urgent transfers:** The definition of urgent vs. non-urgent ultimately lies with the Medical Control Physician. Below is a guide to help define these two types of transfers.

**Urgent:** An urgent transfer is one that the patient’s medical condition is such that a delay in transfer of the patient will be a detriment to the patient’s condition. It is assumed that if the patient is transferred, the receiving hospital will evaluate and start treatment when the patient arrives.

**Examples:** Transplant patient going to a transplant center, burn patients, CVA patients, injuries requiring a specialty center for treatment. Etc.

**Non-urgent:** A non-urgent transfer is one that the patient is being transferred to another facility for the purpose of evaluation or care but a delay in transfer will not be detrimental to the patient’s condition.

**Examples:** Transfers for second opinions, patient’s being transferred for surgery or tests that will not be performed until the next day, etc.

**Transports Greater Than 2.5 Hours Each Way:** There may be occasions where a long-distance transport is requested during the overnight hours. Examples would be Kansas City, Rochester, Sioux City, Dubuque and Davenport. These transfers can occur up to 11PM each day. Any transfer greater than 2.5 hours one way between the hours of 11PM and 6AM will require supervisor approval and most likely will not be completed until 6AM.

**Out of State Transfers:** The EMS Supervisor should be notified of any out of state transfers 24 hours prior if possible. (the exception would be transfers to Omaha) UnityPoint Care Managers should be included in all scheduling and coordination of out of state transfers. Out of state transfers normally require insurance certification through the EMS Billing Office and at times require additional forms to be filled out to ensure proper payment. Depending on the location, time may be needed to secure additional supplies and find the appropriate staffing or in some cases additional staffing to complete the transport. Urgent out of state transports will be completed as soon as they can be done safely with appropriate crew members.