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**TO:** All Certified EMTs, MA Licensed Ambulance Services, EMS Training Providers  
**FROM:** Paul I. Dreyer, Ph.D., Bureau Director, DPH/Health Care Safety and Quality  
Abdullah Rehayem, Director, DPH/OEMS  
**RE:** EMS Response to Assisted Living Residences vs. Licensed Health Care Facilities, and Cancellation  
**DATE:** April 8, 2009

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We are aware that there is some confusion in the field about EMS response to assisted living residences. Specifically, we have heard that some EMTs are confused about whether the location they are responding to is an assisted living residence or a nursing home. Furthermore, we have heard some EMTs believe staff at an assisted living residence has the same authority to cancel EMS response to a resident as staff at a licensed health care facility such as a nursing home. This is not the case. **Only licensed health care facilities can cancel EMS that has been called for one of its patients, and assisted living residences are not licensed health care facilities.** What follows is a summary of the requirements for EMS response to these different settings.

- **Assisted living residences:** The Executive Office of Elder Affairs certifies assisting living residences, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 19D, §4 and 651 CMR 12.00. Assisted living residences are housing, not health care facilities.
  - When EMS responds to assisted living residences, response proceeds as if EMTs are responding to a patient in his or her private home. Staff of an assisted living residence cannot cancel EMS that has been called for a resident. It makes no difference whether the staff is a health care professional or not. If someone on scene at an EMS response to an assisted living residence asserts that the patient has a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, EMTs need to be sure it is a Comfort Care/DNR Verification Form and they need to look at the form to make sure it is current and valid.

- **Licensed health care facilities:** The Department's Division of Health Care Quality licenses hospitals and long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes and rest homes, under M.G.L. c. 111.
  - Licensed health care facilities may, under the authority of their licenses, cancel an EMS response (ALS or BLS), even after direct patient contact has been made by EMS, and assume full responsibility for the cancellation. EMTs so cancelled must document the cancellation by the licensed facility on their trip record or dispatch record. See DPH/OEMS Administrative Requirement 5-615, "Cancellation of ALS."
  - This cancellation can only be authorized by a physician or nurse.

If EMTs have any confusion about whether the building they have been called to for a patient is a licensed health care facility or an assisted living residence, they must ask a staff member. If they are not sure whether the person in a licensed health care facility who has cancelled them is a nurse, they must ask them.

For questions about licensed health care facilities, please contact Jill Mazzola, Assistant Director, DPH/Division of Health Care Quality, at 617-753-8100. For questions about assisted living residences, please contact Duamarius Stukes, Director of Housing & Assisted Living Programs, Executive Office of Elder Affairs at 617-222-7465. For questions about ambulance services and EMTs, please contact Silva Cameron, Policy and Regulatory Development Specialist, DPH/OEMS, at 617-753-7300.