FISHER COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

Administration: Emergency Medical Services/Nursing/ED	Policy # ED-Diversion01
Subject: Bypass and Diversion	Reviewed/Revised: 10/2026
Written: 2000 Revision History: 2/05, 8/08, 4/14, 7/20	Approved by Medical Staff: Date: 10/21/26
	Approved by Governing Board: Date: 10/20/26

PURPOSE:

To guide EMS bypass and temporary emergency department diversion while supporting safe patient care and compliance with regional EMS protocols and EMTALA.

EMS BYPASS:

1. EMS may bypass the hospital when the patient requests another destination or when the patient's needs exceed the hospital's capabilities, consistent with regional EMS protocols.
2. EMS will consult medical control when required by protocol, including when a patient refuses the recommended destination. The patient will be informed of relevant risks, and refusal will be documented.
3. EMS will coordinate the destination and receiving-facility notification according to applicable protocols. Hospital personnel will document any bypassing decision in which they participate.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DIVERSION:

4. Temporary ambulance diversion may be requested when extraordinary staffing, capacity, equipment, utility, or disaster conditions prevent the ED from safely receiving additional patients.
5. The ED provider and charge nurse will assess the need for diversion, notify administration, and coordinate with EMS dispatch and regional partners under applicable protocols.
6. Diversion status will be reassessed regularly, ended as soon as safe operations resume, and communicated to affected EMS partners.
7. The hospital will document the reasons for diversion, authorization, notifications, and start and end times.

PATIENT CARE AND QUALITY REVIEW:

Diversion does not eliminate EMTALA obligations. Individuals presenting to the ED will receive an appropriate medical screening examination and stabilizing care or transfer as required by EMTALA. Relevant bypass and diversion events will be reviewed through the Trauma/Quality Improvement process.

REFERENCES

EMTALA, 42 CFR § 489.24; applicable regional EMS/trauma destination and diversion protocols; applicable Texas requirements.