

## When CritiCall Ontario Transfers Patients to the USA

If your hospital has an **emergent, urgent or critically ill patient** who requires care beyond your hospital's resources, call CritiCall at **1-800-668-HELP (4357)**.

### **Why call CritiCall:**

An experienced CritiCall Call Agent will put a hospital based-physician in touch with a specialist who:

- will provide a consultation (what steps to take with the patient); and/or
- will provide medical advice (how to manage the patient onsite); and/or
- has access to a select set of resources that may include OR, 24x7 access to imaging, interventional radiology, dialysis, catheter labs, specialty nursing, and a bed.

### **When to call CritiCall:**

CritiCall's primary role is to facilitate inter-facility transfer where there is imminent (within 24-hours) risk to life or limb and the sending facility lacks the necessary resources to manage the patient. CritiCall will facilitate all adult, paediatric, neonatal and perinatal emergencies.

Call CritiCall at 1-800-668-4357 to coordinate a physician-to-physician consultation and/or to seek medical advice regarding patient management or a potential patient transfer. The physician should not call other hospitals prior to calling CritiCall.

### **When does CritiCall refer to the United States?**

CritiCall will facilitate **emergent** out-of-province referrals if **a patient needs to be treated within 4 hours of assessment** and where an Ontario facility is not within reasonable access.

Any case considered **urgent (for consult or referral) but not emergent**, can only go to the United States if **PRIOR APPROVAL**, via application, is granted in writing from the Health System Accountability and Performance Division, Health Services Branch, Provider Payment Programs of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. If the specialist consultant indicates that the patient needs to be referred and after reasonable attempts to place in Ontario have failed, the patient can be referred to the United States through CritiCall.

### **What identification do patients and staff require for crossing the Ontario border?**

It is the sending hospital's responsibility to ensure the patient and staff (including physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists and anyone accompanying the patient) have the necessary travel documents.

A passport or an enhanced driver's licence is recommended. For more information about crossing the border with patients into the United States, contact the United States Department of Homeland Security or visit its website at: <http://www.dhs.gov/index.shtm>.

**Once it's determined the patient is to go to a hospital in the United States, what happens next?**

CritiCall will fax a patient-specific "Prior Approval Application for Full Payment of Insured Out-of-Country Health Services" form (MOHLTC Form 1442-84) to the sending physician for additional patient information. Once the forms are completed, and before the patient leaves the sending facility, the sending physician must fax the completed forms to CritiCall at 1-905-388-6377. It is important to note that **prior approval** on an urgent basis can only be obtained through CritiCall.

**When does the patient come back to Ontario?**

CritiCall will facilitate repatriation (bringing patients back to Ontario) of patients transferred out of province if CritiCall was involved with the initial transfer. Out-of-province repatriation will be initiated by CritiCall within 48 hours of patient transfer. CritiCall will contact the receiving hospital in the United States to assess status for a safe return to Ontario. When the patient is medically stable, CritiCall will conduct an assessment to determine what care the patient needs. The patient will be returned to the most appropriate facility located as close to the patient's home community as possible. The most appropriate Ontario hospital will be expected to admit within 48 hours of notification.

**What if a patient doesn't have OHIP coverage?**

If the patient **does not have a valid Ontario Health Card number or is from outside of Ontario, prior approval will not be given.** In this situation, the patient and his or her family should be informed that they will have to pay expenses out of pocket, through their own provincial health insurance or private health care insurance.

**If we send directly to the US without using CritiCall, is our hospital responsible for the costs?**

If your hospital sends directly across the border without CritiCall facilitation or prior approval from the MoHLTC, you may be responsible for payment (including transportation and medical costs).

CritiCall is not involved in collecting payment or billing. For more information, contact OHIP out-of-country services at 1-888-359-8807 or go to [www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca), select tab for 'OHIP out-of-country services'.