



California
Department of
Health Services

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Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

December 20, 2006

AFL 06-33

TO: GENERAL ACUTE CARE HOSPITALS

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT OF AFL 04-28 - INCREASED PATIENT
ACCOMMODATIONS

Authority:

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, §70809 (a), (b), and (c)

This AFL supersedes and replaces AFL 04-28 in its entirety and eliminates the use of Attachments A and B of AFL 04-28.

Background:

On January 18, 2005 the Department of Health Services Licensing and Certification (DHS L&C) Program issued AFL 04-28 - Increased Patient Accommodations Due to Seasonal or Unexpected High Patient Influx.

AFL 04-28 referred to situations of temporary hospital overcrowding due to a disease outbreak or an unexpected event such as a mass casualty incident (generally related to a natural or human-caused disaster). These types of events may lead to a rapid influx or “surge” in patient volume requiring flexibility for increased patient accommodations. AFL 04-28 also indicated that approval for increased patient accommodations would be a temporary measure and would not be permitted as long-term solutions for chronic problems of hospital overcrowding.

Since AFL 04-28 was distributed, requests for temporary permission for increased patient accommodations have frequently been associated with situations unrelated to a disease outbreak or an unexpected event such as a disaster or mass casualty incident. DHS L&C recognizes that situations may occur that are important to report to L&C and constitute a valid medical emergency (such as Neonatal Intensive Care Unit flexibility needs). These situations fall within the challenges hospitals may experience in providing sufficient beds for ongoing, customary medical or business operations. They do not, however, fall under the intent of AFL 04-28, which addresses disease outbreak or unexpected events such as a disaster or mass casualty incident.

The frequency of requests L&C receives for increased patient accommodations that are non-disease or disaster related has caused L&C to further clarify the factors district offices will consider when reviewing requests for increased patient accommodations. Effective with this AFL, L&C will assess requests based on the worksheet included in AFL 06-33 Attachment A.

How to Submit a Request for Temporary Permission for Increased Patient Accommodations:

When a disease outbreak or an unexpected event such as a disaster or mass casualty incident occurs that requires increased patient accommodations, L&C should be contacted immediately with a request for advance approval for the increased accommodations. It is recognized that rapidly changing emergency conditions may affect requesting and receiving advance approval. However, hospitals should not make an assumption that the request will be approved until, at a minimum, it is verbally authorized by an L&C representative. L&C approval will be confirmed through a fax sent to the hospital, and a copy of the fax will be included in the hospital's file at the L&C district office.

During normal business hours (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) contact the local DHS L&C district office you customarily work with for your geographic location.

For after-hour requests, or if the local DHS L&C district office is non-operational due to an emergency/disaster, follow the process below:

For facilities outside Los Angeles County notify the:
State Office of Emergency Services Warning Center at (916) 845-8911
Ask that they notify the DHS duty officer

For facilities in Los Angeles County notify the:
Los Angeles County Operator at (213) 974-1234
Ask that they notify the on-call Health Facilities Inspection Division Supervisor

If you have questions about this AFL or the enclosed attachment, please call your local district office to discuss them.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by Kathleen Billingsley, R.N.

Kathleen Billingsley, R.N.
Deputy Director

Attachment

cc: California Hospital Association
Emergency Medical Services Authority

**AFL 06-33 Attachment A
DHS L&C
Temporary Permission for Increased Patient Accommodations
Request Review and Approval Sheet**

District office name:	Date of request:
Facility name: Address:	Facility phone no: Facility fax no: Contact person name:
Brief description of conditions causing the increased patient accommodations:	
Duration of request (give approximate number of days necessary):	
Accommodations requested:	

I. Request for Approval

A. Considerations for approving the increased patient accommodation request require one of the following (check appropriate box):

- (1) A disease outbreak (verifiable through sources such as the LEMSA, local Public Health Officer, DHS Division of Communicable Disease Control, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) is present in the community where the hospital is located or in a contiguous area(s) causing a rapid influx (surge) of patients to the hospital. Examples of this type of surge include: increased cases of seasonal influenza, onset of a SARS-type or other highly contagious virus requiring acute care, an epidemic/pandemic, a bioterrorism agent, or a declared public health emergency).

- (2) An emergency resulting in the need for increased patient accommodations has occurred in the community where the hospital is located or in a contiguous area(s) causing a rapid influx (surge) of patients to the hospital. Examples of this type of surge include: a natural or human-caused disaster, a crime incident or transportation accident resulting in numerous mass casualties, an emergency causing the evacuation of patients or diversions from another hospital (LEMSA diversion has been implemented).

B. Exhausting Available Alternatives:

The hospital must exhaust available alternatives before requesting an increased patient accommodation. Check boxes below that apply:

- Rescheduling non-emergent surgeries and diagnostic procedures.
 Transferring patients to other beds or discharge as appropriate.
 Setting up clinics for non-emergency cases (if possible).
 Requesting ambulance diversion from LEMSA, if appropriate.

C. Adequate Staff, Equipment and Space:

The hospital must make arrangements for adequate staffing, equipment and space for increased patient accommodation. Check boxes below that apply:

- A plan is in place for staff if the request is for use of alternate space.
 A plan is in place for equipment if the request is for use of alternate space.
 The proposed space for care of patients provides sufficient square footage to ensure access for safe care.

II. DHS L&C Action and Disposition:

- Permission granted from: _____ to _____
 Permission denied: briefly describe why request was denied in comments/conditions below:

Comments/conditions:

L&C DO staff signature: _____

Instructions L&C DO: Permission to increase patient accommodations will be time limited and dependent on the facts presented that substantiate a disease outbreak or an unexpected emergency event exits. Initial approval for increased patient accommodations may be given verbally, but a signed written approval must be distributed (faxed) to the hospital and filed in the hospital's facility folder.