

**Air Ambulance and Critical Care Transport Resource Allocation  
Action Plan**

**September 17, 2015**

## INTRODUCTION

In September 2013, BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) contracted consultant Chris Nickerson to conduct a review of structures, processes, systems and outcomes related to resource allocation decisions of critical care and air ambulance resources.

As a result of Mr. Nickerson's recommendations, BCEHS has developed an Action Plan which is divided into the following five key streams of work:

- Governance
- Policy and decision-making
- Systems
- Outcomes
- Culture

Specific action items in each of these streams, as well as targeted timelines for completion, are outlined in the following pages. Accountability for monitoring progress on these initiatives rests with the BCEHS Senior Leadership Committee. BCEHS will provide periodic progress updates to the public on this Action Plan.

This update has been prepared as of September 17, 2015.

## GOVERNANCE

This action stream will clarify organizational and program mandates and goals, ensure accountability, provide more integrated structural alignment within the organization, and enhance business and operational planning.

Actions	Timeline
BCEHS will clarify the appropriate scope for its mandate for inter-facility transfers and critical care patient transport based on patient-centred objectives. BCEHS will undertake continuous quality improvement practices.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will develop operational and clinical indicators to measure performance of the air medical and critical care system.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS operational teams will be realigned under the unified leadership umbrella of the Chief Operating Officer. This structure will support the development of patient-centered goals and enable a common decision-making platform by bringing together the patient care operations components of the BC Patient Transfer Network (BCPTN), Patient Transport Coordination Centre (PTCC), and Critical Care programs.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will realign its governance structures to enable integrated and effective operational decision-making.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will review the framework for internal and external participation on stakeholder advisory committees to ensure appropriate alignment and representation.	<b>Complete</b>
Critical Care Transport Advisors will be integrated into the Emergency Transfer Physician team to enhance clinical expertise and medical oversight.	<b>Complete</b>
Aligning with the PHSA Service Plan which emphasizes patient-centered, high quality care, and with the Ministry of Health Strategic Agenda, BCEHS will develop an integrated operating plan. Individual business unit plans will subsequently be developed to align under this broader integrated plan.	<b>October 2015 (Revised)</b>

## POLICY and DECISION-MAKING

**This action stream will: better enable the sharing and integration of data across internal systems and programs; promote consistent, evidence-based resource allocation decisions through robust policies and procedures; and emphasize a single, integrated approach to the intake and management of patient transfer planning and transport.**

Actions	Timeline
BCEHS will conduct a demand and supply analysis for both provincial air and metro ground operations to ensure efficient and appropriate utilization of resources.	<b>Fall 2015 (Revised)</b>
BCEHS will continue to work with Health Authorities to obtain data about patient outcomes to better inform evidence-based decision-making within its operations.	<b>Ongoing</b>
BCEHS will adopt a new, single clinical acuity matrix across the organization based on the philosophy that patient transfers are arranged according to clinical needs.	<b>Complete</b>
Through a collaborative working committee, BCEHS will review and prioritize issues related to operational policy and procedure.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will review and update Standard Operating Procedures for the Dispatch Centre with input from Critical Care Programs, PTN, and Medical Programs.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will implement new, more detailed procedures to provide dispatchers with the correct processes for air transfer operations to remove inconsistency in decision-making. Supervisors will perform a gap analysis to uncover questions and decisions not currently covered by procedures and ensure any learnings are embedded in training and procedures going forward.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will develop a Chart of Calls which will help identify viable options for transport in the event of weather or other aviation-related safety or operational concerns. This Chart of Calls will focus on patient acuity, urgency, availability of resources, and local considerations, and will include developing a strategy for ongoing collaboration and communication with health regions around these kinds of issues. The implementation of this support tool will be in phases with remote communities with limited local support to manage complex patients' needs being completed first.	<b>July 2016 (Revised)</b>
BCEHS will develop and implement specific criteria for helicopter scene responses (non Auto-launch) for rural and remote regions.	<b>March 2016 (Delayed)</b>
BCEHS will undertake an evaluation of the Early Fixed Wing Activation program.	<b>March 2016 (Delayed)</b>
BCEHS will review its policy on requesting federal air resources.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS programs will collaborate on the development of an air medical and critical care transport accident/incident management plan informed by best practices.	<b>Began December 2013 – Ongoing</b>
BCEHS will implement a stronger communications and engagement campaign to ensure health authorities call the BC Patient Transfer Network (BCPTN) for all high acuity ("red," "yellow," and specialized services, i.e., neonatal, pediatrics, and perinatal) transfers.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will establish an integrated "Red Team" to manage all high acuity calls.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will expand its integrated intake and management process to "yellow" calls.	<b>November 2015</b>

## SYSTEMS

This action stream will enhance information management and information technology systems, improve operational communications and situational awareness, and ensure appropriate capacity, expertise, and training across the organization.

Actions	Timeline
BCEHS will implement a flight following program to ensure missions are proceeding without incident or delay. Flight followers will ensure that timings and status codes are accurate, crews have all the information they need, and that they are always accessible to provide support.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will review alignment of communication practices with the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS) accreditation standards.	<b>November 1, 2015 (Delayed)</b>
BCEHS will develop procedures to ensure that the appropriate information about critical care and infant transport paramedics and flight status is being collected and documented in the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will identify the necessary data points and functional requirements for effective management of air medical and critical care operations. Through a subsequent gap analysis, BCEHS will enhance existing – or implement new – systems as appropriate for operational support and program measurement.	<b>Fall 2015 (Delayed)</b>
BCEHS will identify and implement a call-taking technology solution for BCPTN which includes an interface with the CAD program. This new BCPTN/PTCC system will enable better tracking of the patient journey through the continuum of patient transport and will enhance continuity of care.	<b>November 2015</b>
BCEHS will implement standardized training requirements for critical care and air ambulance dispatchers and will continue to review and adjust PTCC training as required.	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>
BCEHS will enhance quality management and patient handler capacity and will implement new patient safety investigations processes, along with new BCPTN and Critical Care Quality Committees.	<b>Complete</b>

## OUTCOMES

This stream will reinforce a strong quality management program across the organization, and will continue to embed a safety management approach throughout all departments and operations.

Actions	Timeline
BCEHS will enhance quality-related processes by: refining committee structures to ensure cross-program inclusion in quality reviews; dedicating quality-focused resources to critical care programs; standardizing process and methodologies; and providing centralized strategic oversight.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will continue to refine its quality management program across the organization. Daily patient safety huddles and performance walls will be introduced for BCPTN. Rapid process improvement workshops (RPIWs) will focus on targeted areas of improvement and include cross-program participation and involvement.	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>
BCEHS will develop and introduce standardized audit processes within PTCC to study accuracy and efficiency and to enable subsequent practice improvements.	<b>September 2015</b>
Building on the dedicated air carrier audits completed in fiscal year 2013/14, BCEHS will complete Phase 2 audits with additional carriers.	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>
BCEHS will work with Workplace Health and WorkSafeBC to establish baseline health and safety requirements across program areas.	<b>December 2014 (for CCP)</b>

## CULTURE

This action stream will use external review and benchmarking to support a culture of best practice and improvement, and will enhance safe reporting and feedback processes to further promote an overall culture of quality and safety.

Actions	Timeline
BCEHS will implement organization-wide incident reporting and management policies. Data capture for these issues will be through the Patient Safety and Learning System (PSLS), which is used by all Health Authorities to capture patient safety related events or hazards.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will improve feedback to internal reporters of patient safety concerns based on PHSA-wide practices. This will be monitored through regular reports to the Board of BCEHS as well as the BCEHS Provincial Quality Council.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will explore opportunities to use PSLs as a broader capture tool for issues tracking.	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>
BCEHS will establish a Professional Standards and Conduct Office which will provide an avenue for any person (internal or external) to safely bring forward concerns about the conduct of an employee or the organization itself. The unit will ensure that all concerns receive consistent and appropriate follow-up, and that information on the outcome is provided back to the originator of the concern.	<b>Complete</b>
BCEHS will pursue accreditation through Accreditation Canada's QMentum process, which includes requirements for a robust quality and safety management system. (Note: BCEHS Survey in October 2015 specifically excludes air medical transport given pending update to Accreditation Canada's Emergency Medical Services standards. Expected update to standards in 2016 will include air medical transport.)	<b>October 2015</b>
BCEHS will participate in Accreditation Canada's National Standards Working Group for Medical Transport.	<b>Ongoing</b>
BCEHS will achieve the accreditation of its Critical Care Paramedic Training Program through the Canadian Medical Association.	<b>Complete</b>