**OKAMA AND STRETCHER VANS**

The Oklahoma Ambulance Association, OKAMA has worked for many years to reasonably and effectively control the use and expansion of Stretcher Vans and Stretcher Van providers. OKAMA will continue to be at the table and resist any efforts that will

* Put vulnerable Oklahomans at unreasonable risk,
* Cause Oklahomans or their families unnecessary expense,
* Jeopardize the financial viability of our Oklahoma EMS suppliers/providers.

**Putting Oklahomans at Risk**

OKAMA believes and has experience that Stretcher Vans will be used to transport patients that should be transported by medically trained professionals in ambulances. These patients, when transported in Stretcher Vans are being denied qualified medical assessment and monitoring. If urgent medical care is needed, that care is delayed. This risk becomes multiplied if you consider allowing Stretcher Vans to transport long distances or in remote areas of Oklahoma.

OKAMA has been a strong voice in opposition to allowing Stretcher Van operations beyond Oklahoma County and Tulsa County.

**Causing Oklahomans Unnecessary Out-of-Pocket Expense.**

OKAMA has multiple examples of patients being transported by Stretcher Van when ambulance transport was appropriate and eligible for reimbursement by Medicare, Medicaid or another third party source. Since Stretcher Van transportation is not reimbursable, the causes the patient, the patient’s family or the healthcare facility to pay the transportation expense. Most patients and their families are not aware of their exposure to this practice.

Example: An elderly patient in a chronic state of immobility, unable to walk and unable to sit (as in a wheelchair) is being discharged from a facility to return to a nursing home facility. The charge by SV is $250 and the base charge for the area ambulance is $350.

This patient easily qualifies for transport by ambulance under Medicare and Medicaid standards.

 Patient/Family Covered by

Responsibility Medicare/Medicaid

Patient with MCR/MCD $ 0 $ 350

Patient with Medicaid only $ 0 $ 350

Patient With Mediare only $ 70 $ 280

Patient transported by SV $ 250 $ 0

OKAMA believes there are too many transports that would qualify for ambulance coverage under Medicare, Medicaid and other Insurance. This results in patients and their families unnecessary expenditure of funds needed for other care.

**Jeopardizing Financial Resources of EMS Providers**

OKAMA has strong evidence that if Stretcher Vans are available in all of Oklahoma, Medicare, Medicaid and other Payers will discontinue paying for Non-Emergency transports where Advanced Care is not required.

OKAMA Members and other EMS suppliers/providers, the majority of which are the sole provider of EMS and Medical Transportation for their community are required to provide Emergency response and transportation regardless of the patient’s ability to pay. EMS experiences needed patient transports to uninsured and underinsured with no ability to be paid for the service they provide. Depending on the area they serve, this may be as little as 10% but as much as 35-30% of their transports. Most subsidized EMS is receiving the maximum allowed under ad valorem statutes. Being paid for Non-Emergency transports is critical to most.

SV are rarely, if ever, available 24 hours per day. EMS/Ambulance services would be called on (required) to do the transports regardless of no chance of third party pay. SV are not required to take transports if the patient has no ability to pay. SV require payment or guarantee in advance of the transport.

**OKAMA has strongly opposed any expansion of Stretcher Van service or operational area**. We do this to protect Oklahoma EMS. OKAMA has worked for over 15 years to repel repeated and frequent efforts of Stretcher Van operators to expand services they are allowed.