



# SRNA POSITION STATEMENT

## CLIENT CARE DURING EMERGENCY TRANSPORT

*Competent, caring nursing for the people of Saskatchewan*

The Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association believes that safe, quality care is the right of an individual in an emergency transport<sup>1</sup> situation. The SRNA recognizes that registered nurses (RNs)<sup>2</sup> in the province of Saskatchewan are regularly called upon to provide patient care during emergency transport. The SRNA endorses the philosophy of collaborative care and believes that the RN has the knowledge, skill and judgment<sup>3</sup> to provide client care during emergency transport and is an appropriate member of the transport team.

Prompt intervention and skilled care in an emergency situation can facilitate client survival, optimize client safety<sup>4</sup> and reduce long-term and/or irreversible complications. To this effect, the mix of health care providers who accompany the client during transport should be based upon the condition of the client and expected needs. Correspondingly, the achievement of client outcomes during emergency transport are optimized when health care providers possess the appropriate knowledge, skill and expertise to enable them to meet the client's needs. When the client's condition is unstable or condition complex, the presence of a RN or physician is required. Agency orientation, policies and procedures should exist to support this practice.

The roles and responsibilities of each provider group at both ends of the transport destination, must be clearly articulated to promote and support collaborative practice and coordination of care. Furthermore, appropriate resources (e.g. safety devices, restraints) must be available during emergency transport to facilitate the provision of care and ensure client safety.

When it is an expectation of employment that a RN accompany clients during emergency transport, appropriate education and orientation specific to the type of emergency transport and nursing care is necessary. This would include not only certification in advanced life support, special nursing procedures and transfer of medical functions<sup>5</sup>, but protocols, and adequate orientation to the appropriate use of equipment and supplies. For specialty transport teams (e.g. neonatal), an additional level of education is required to meet the unique needs of these populations.

The provision of registered nursing care during emergency transportation is guided by the scope of practice of the RN, standards and competencies<sup>6,7</sup>, agency policies and best practices<sup>8</sup>. As in any client care situation, the RN who does not feel competent in providing nursing services

---

required or anticipated during emergency transport, has the professional obligation to decline the provision of care<sup>8</sup> and collaborate with others to ensure that a health care provider with the required expertise accompanies the client<sup>9</sup>.

## BACKGROUND

Emergency transportation of clients is a reality in the provision of health care in Saskatchewan. This reality is compounded by the large geographical area and rural and remote populations. For the purposes of this position statement, emergency transport refers to the transport of clients requiring emergent medical care. It can also refer to the movement of clients requiring emergent care that is unavailable in their own communities (e.g. diagnostic tests). Transportation may take the form of air and road transport, involving ambulance, taxis and private vehicles. Accordingly, there are a wide range of scenarios that currently exist in Saskatchewan with regard to patient care during emergency transport. Historically, RNs have been involved in a variety of emergency transport scenarios within the province and across Canada. The employer and the RN have a shared responsibility to ensure the RN is prepared to undertake patient care safely during emergency transport. Employer educational and orientation programs for RNs must address the diversity of modes of transport and provide guidance by way of policies and

procedures to facilitate optimal client care and ensure patient safety.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Emergency transport* refers to the transport between facilities of clients requiring emergent medical care. It can also refer to the movement of clients requiring emergent care that is unavailable in their own communities (e.g. diagnostic tests).

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this document *RN* refers to both registered nurses (RNs) and registered nurse(nurse practitioners) [RN(NPs)].

<sup>3</sup> (SRNA, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> (Suserud, 2003)

<sup>5</sup> (SRNA, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> (SRNA, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> (SRNA, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> (Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association, 2006; British Association for Immediate Care, 2006; CNA & University of Toronto, 2004; Health Canada First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, 2002; Suserud & Bruce, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> (CNA, 2002).

## REFERENCES

Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association.

(2006). *Role of the Registered Nurse in pre-hospital environment.*

Retrieved June 17, 2006, from

<http://www.astna.org/position-papers/HOSPENV.htm>

---

**Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association**

2066 Retallack Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 7X5

(306) 359-4200 • Toll Free 1-800-667-9945 • FAX (306) 525-0849

Email: [info@srna.org](mailto:info@srna.org) • Website: <http://www.srna.org>

---

British Association for Immediate Care. (2006). *Registered Nurses specializing in pre-hospital care*. Retrieved June 17, 2006, from <http://www.basics.org.uk/nurse.html>

Canadian Nurses Association & University of Toronto. (2004). *Nurses and client safety: A discussion paper*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from [http://www.cna-nurses.ca/cna/documents/pdf/publications/client\\_safety\\_discussion\\_paper\\_e.pdf](http://www.cna-nurses.ca/cna/documents/pdf/publications/client_safety_discussion_paper_e.pdf)

Canadian Nurses Association. (2002). *Code of ethics for Registered Nurse*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Health Canada First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. (2002). *Emergency medical transportation guidelines for nurses in primary care*. Retrieved June 17, 2006, from [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/alt\\_formats/fnihb-dgspni/pdf/pubs/nursing-infirm/2002\\_transport-guide\\_e.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/alt_formats/fnihb-dgspni/pdf/pubs/nursing-infirm/2002_transport-guide_e.pdf)

Johnson, K. (2006). Ground critical care transport. A lifesaving intervention. *Critical Care Nurse*, 26 (1). Retrieved July 5, 2006, from CINAHL database.

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. (2006). *Standards and foundation competencies for the practice of registered nursing*. Effective March 1, 2007. Regina, SK: Author.

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. (2004). *The RN scope of practice*. Regina, SK: Author.

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. (2003). *Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioner) RN(NP) standards and core competencies*. Regina, SK: Author.

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. (1993). *The registered nurse scope of practice: Special nursing procedures and nursing procedures by transfer of medical functions 1993*. Regina, SK: Author.

Suserud, B. & Bruce, K. (2003). Ambulance nursing: Part three. *Emergency Nurse*, 11(2). Retrieved July 5, 2006, from Nursing and Allied Health Collection: Basic database.

*Approved by SRNA Council  
November 2006*



**Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association**  
2066 Retallack Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 7X5  
(306) 359-4200  
Toll Free 1-800-667-9945  
FAX (306) 525-0849  
Email: [info@srna.org](mailto:info@srna.org)  
Website: <http://www.srna.org>