A Heavy Subject for EMS: Evolving Considerations for Bariatric Transport

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Bariatric Transport

- What is the bariatric patient
- What was our need
- What was our process
- What was our cost
- What are the benefits
- How this has changed our practice
- Why you should consider implementing a bariatric transport unit
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The need:

- 2 skilled NH in our PSA opened bariatric units over the last seven years
- Increase in bariatric (> 500 pounds) transports from 1 every 6 months to 3-5 every week
- Older stretchers rated to only 350 pounds
- No other services in county had specialized equipment for transport
- Local fire departments would no longer respond for “lifting help”
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The process and our requirements:
- Variable crew configurations
- Use existing equipment if possible
- Use “off the shelf” technology
- Integrate our process with nursing homes and the receiving facilities
- Maximize patient comfort and care
Nursing home and hospital considerations
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The time and cost:
- Three days work by shop mechanics
- Bariatric stretcher @ $6300
- Floor mounting hardware @ $800
- Loading ramps @ $1700
- Stretcher winch @ $800
- Transfer flat @ $350
- TOTAL COST @ $10,000 excluding labor
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The benefits:

- Better care and comfort for patient
- No need for extra personnel or agencies
- Better resource utilization
- Significant decrease in workman's compensation and injury rates
- Increase revenues due to specialized transport (only service in area with this capacity)
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Change in our practice:

- All new regular stretchers rated to 700 pounds
- All regular stretchers in front-line ALS units being converted to powered cots
- All floor mounts upgraded to accommodate increased stretcher capacities
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Why add dedicated bariatric transport

- CDC shows steady increase in national obesity rate over past 24 years
- In 1994, no state with obesity rate > 20%
- In 2008, 32 states with obesity rate > 25%, and 6 states with obesity rate > 30%
- JEMS article (2007) projected sales of bariatric stretchers to go from $29.6M in 2004 to @ $50M by 2012
Special thanks

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QUESTIONS