

## Guidelines for Hospital Switchboards



**CritiCall Ontario** is a 24/7 emergency referral and consultation service for acute care hospital-based physicians in Ontario hospitals caring for urgent or emergent patients that require specialized or higher level care. Hospital switchboards are key partners in ensuring page requests from CritiCall Ontario are facilitated as quickly as possible.

**CritiCall Ontario strives to respond expeditiously to all incoming emergent calls and relies on hospital switchboard staff to assist in several ways.**

### **CritiCall Ontario process:**

- CritiCall Ontario will use the Provincial Hospital Resource System inventory to determine the closest most appropriate hospital specialist or defined referral hospital for tertiary services to provide a consultation
- Contact the hospital switchboard to request a page to the on-call specialist physician to call **1-800-668-4357**, and document name of the physician
- Relay if the patient's status is 'Life or Limb' so that hospital switchboard can page accordingly

**Note: The Ministry of Health (MOH) Life or Limb Policy applies when a patient is life or limb threatened and therapeutic options exist, which are needed within 4 hours**

- Facilitate a physician-to-physician telephone consultation so the physicians can work together to make clinical decisions about the patient's care

### **Hospital process when responding to a request for a specialist:**

- **Paging specialist** to call CritiCall Ontario at **1-800-668-4357** and indicating whether the call is related to a Life or Limb patient
- **Having an established paging process** in place that differentiates **Life or Limb pages** from urgent pages (e.g., Add \*999 after the callback number to indicate Life or Limb)

**Note: The MOH Life or Limb policy requires hospitals to implement a process for paging physicians that will identify a provisional Life or Limb cases separately from other pages and informs physicians to contact CritiCall Ontario directly (pg. 10)**

### **Hospital process when responding to a request for Moderate Surge:**

Taking the steps below when contacted by CritiCall Ontario for a Critical Care Moderate Surge Response in effect for your region:

- Notify your Hospital CEO/Delegate that a region-wide surge response is in effect
- Provide them with CritiCall Ontario teleconference details
- Notify the critical care team (Medical and Nursing Director) and ask them to complete the [Partner Hospital Reporting Template](#) prior to joining the conference

### **Additional Details:**

- All calls initiated and received by CritiCall Ontario are time stamped
- This data is shared with hospitals, Ontario Health, Emergency Medical Services, Critical Care Services Ontario and the MOH to inform performance measurement and resource management. (e.g., the time of the call to switchboard is documented as the time the physician is paged and used to evaluate system responsiveness.)
- If the physician does not respond to 1-800-668-4357, CritiCall Ontario will contact the hospital switchboard to request a second page according to the chart below:

| <b>Case Type</b>      | <b>Time to 2<sup>nd</sup> Page</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Trauma/Stroke         | 5 -7 minutes                       |
| Life or Limb Declared | 10 minutes                         |
| Urgent/Emergent       | 15 minutes                         |

- If there is no response to the second page, CritiCall Ontario may request alternate contact numbers for the physician prior to contacting the next most appropriate hospital and specialist.

### **For More Information**

If you have any questions regarding CritiCall Ontario or our processes in contacting hospital switchboards, please contact the CritiCall Ontario Client Relations & Education Team. Further information is available on our website at [www.criticall.org](http://www.criticall.org)