March 18, 2015

RE: Long Spine Boards and Spinal Motion Restriction (SMR)

All MONOC EMS Receiving Emergency Departments and EMS Colleagues:

MONOC continues to evaluate best medical evidence and best practices in the prehospital setting to provide the most up to date patient care. Around the world, the utilization of Long Spine Boards (LSBs) is gradually being discontinued. Many EMS systems and states such as Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Kansas have eliminated its use except during extrication. Other regions within New York, and Texas are currently in the process of adopting similar policies. Effective April 1, 2015, all MONOC EMS providers will discontinue the routine utilization of LSBs during transport.

Routine Spinal Immobilization has been the traditional method of preventing movement in the prehospital setting. Spinal Immobilization is the application of a LSB and cervical collar. This has been replaced in the literature by the terminology: Spinal Motion Restriction (SMR). SMR is the application of a cervical collar and maintenance of the spine in a neutral position without the use of a long spine board.

Traditionally, LSBs were used because it was felt to be the best care until the patient could be evaluated by a physician. The most recent evidence is that no benefit exists to LSB utilization; in fact there is clear evidence of harm. LSBs result in worsening pain, increased utilization of imaging, early tissue breakdown, increased risk of aspiration, and significant worsening of pulmonary function.

We encourage our EMS colleagues to adopt our SMR protocol which we have attached for your review. In this protocol you will note that if the MONOC MICU will be accompanying the patient to the hospital and that patient is on a LSB, the patient will be removed from the board prior to transport if applicable.

We realize that SMR is a major change in the way we care for our patients however as advocates for our patients, we all can recognize that this change is good for patient care.
appreciate your support as we all continue to provide the best care for our patients. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/emssomd-2061451-course-overview/