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**PHYSICIAN HOSPITALS OF AMERICAN SUPPORTS EMERGENCY SERVICES
MEMORANDUM FROM CMS**

Sioux Falls, South Dakota, May 9, 2007 –

Physician Hospitals of America (PHA), the nonprofit trade association representing the nation's physician owned hospitals, has expressed public support for the April 26 memorandum to State Survey Agency Directors clarifying the requirements for the provision of emergency services to patients.

PHA Executive Director, Molly Gutierrez states, "We are gratified that the requirements apply to all hospitals. There is no relationship between hospital ownership and patient safety. Patient safety is a function of clear policy and trained staff that is able to carry out the policies of the hospital properly. If staff cannot discharge their patient care responsibilities effectively, then all patients are at risk, regardless of the size of the hospital or its ownership."

PHA agrees that calling 911 cannot be a substitute for the hospital's own ability to provide essential care in emergency situations. Hospitals must have the capacity to properly appraise people with emergencies, initiate necessary treatment, and handle transfers when needed. The use of 911 should be limited to arranging transport for patients after they have been evaluated and treatment has been initiated.

PHA Board President, Doug Johnson added, "Patient safety in hospitals is a critical issue in our healthcare system. Far too many Americans are injured or die because of medical errors and hospital acquired infections. Until every hospital has successfully addressed these situations, it is incumbent upon CMS to regularly remind all hospitals of their responsibilities to patients."

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact Molly Gutierrez at 605-321-3483.

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