

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



SUBJECT: PATIENT CARE SERVICES' SCOPE AND AVAILABILITY

POLICY NO. 320

PURPOSE:: To establish policy relating to:

1. The types of patient care services the Department will provide.
2. The priorities for limiting such services to funds available.
3. The priorities for admission to service when service capacity limits are reached.
4. Fairness of treatment afforded all patients.

POLICY:: 1. The Department may provide or contract for provision of the following patient care services:

- A. Those services which are compatible with guidelines for the Medi-Cal program, to the degree that funds are available.
 - B. Other services mandated by State law, or permitted by State law and specifically authorized by the Board of Supervisors. Mandated services include services for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of communicable diseases which are a threat to public health.
 - C. Other services authorized by a senior responsible physician for the specific purpose of reducing malpractice liability or for conforming to the settlement provisions of a claim against the County.
 - D. Other services which are less expensive substitutes for Medi-Cal covered services.
 - E. Other services required to maintain the accreditation of training programs, subject to the following findings:
 - The training program is the least expensive means by which the County can provide this specialty care.
 - The necessary training cannot be provided without offering the service in question.
 - F. Other services authorized by a facility or program administrator in unusual situations where severe hardship to the patient would otherwise result.
2. The priority for budgeting and staffing the approved scope of services given limited availability of funds, shall generally be as follows:
- A. Public Health Services (services which directly affect the health or well-being of the public at large, including services for the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of communicable diseases).

- B. Life-threatening emergency care.
 - C. Non-deferrable care.
 - D. Patient care services which:
 - (1) Are required to prevent deterioration of chronic disease, or
 - (2) Clearly reduce the incidence of disease or the overall cost of providing health services.
3. In situations where the demand for County patient care services exceeds the County's capacity, priorities for county patient care will be as follows:
- A. County care required by law or contract, including emergency-related care.
 - B. Non-emergency care to County responsibility (Section 17000) patients.
 - C. Non-emergency Medicare/Medi-Cal patients.
 - D. Non-emergency care to patients requiring services unavailable elsewhere.
 - E. Non-emergency care to other patients, and services as permitted by law and this policy.
4. All persons seeking medical treatment at county facilities shall be treated fairly.

GUIDE::

Utilization Review Each patient care facility or program shall establish utilization review programs to ensure compliance with this policy for all patients treated.

Uniformity The scope of benefits shall be as uniform as possible throughout the County subject to legitimate demographic differences, required availability, and location of existing facilities and programs.

Procedures for Allocation of Scarce Services Where demand for a certain service exceeds the County's capacity, facilities and programs shall develop priority implementation procedures consistent with this policy and with any general promulgated guidelines.

Fair Treatment Each facility's administration should be prepared to demonstrate that differences in priority and scope of services to patients are justified by factors related to the good of the patients and the County (e.g., medical condition, service efficiency).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Jan 01, 1985

SUPERCEDES: Policy #320 (May 11, 1983)

APPROVED: Signature on File
