Scenarios Module 1

Introduction to Emergency Medical Care

You are a volunteer for a rural ambulance agency and are dispatched to a two-car automobile accident about 12 miles out of town. There are six reported victims, at least two of whom are in bad shape. When you arrive, there are two people on scene who identify themselves as first responders, and they begin telling you what they have been doing. Shortly after your arrival, a car stops, and an EMT from a fire department in another city gets out and assumes control of the scene. It is quickly determined that the EMT is an EMT-B with less than a year of experience.

Describe how you would deal both with the first responders and with the other EMT. What is the primary goal at the scene of any emergency?

The Well-Being of the First Responder

It is 7:30am and you are dispatched to the scene of an unconscious male. Upon arrival, you find a 54-year-old man who apparently died in his sleep during the night. It is obvious that the man has been dead for much of the night. His teenage children and wife are in the room when you enter. A quick check of pulse and breathing confirm that the man is both apneic and pulseless. When you tell the family that there is nothing you can do, they begin yelling at you to do something, and they become a little abusive.

Explain how you would deal with this situation, including how you would tell the family that the man is beyond your help and how you would deal with their aggressive behavior.

The Well-Being of the First Responder

Today you are assigned to transfers. Your third transfer of the morning is to take a 54-year-old, terminally ill patient from a hospital to an extended care facility. The hospital staff informs you that the patient has infectious tuberculosis, hands you a surgical mask, and tells you in what room to find the patient. You double-check your chart, and there is no indication that this patient may be infectious. Your ambulance is equipped for standard street care. You have four more transfers before you are scheduled to return to base.

Would you accept this patient? If so, what actions and precautions would you take? If not, how would you justify it?

Medical, Legal, and Ethical Issues

You and your partner are greeted at the door of a house by a middle-aged woman and are directed into a bedroom where an elderly woman lies, unresponsive, in the bed. Her pulse is very weak and irregular, and her breathing is coming in gasps. While you are assessing her, you hear her husband telling your partner that she is in the terminal stage of cancer and he does not want any resuscitation efforts made. He has handed your partner some papers that he says are “Do Not Resuscitate Orders.” The woman who let you in immediately interrupts, saying that she is the daughter and that the children want their mother to have “every possible chance to live” and so you must treat her as needed.
Explain how you would handle this situation. If the two sides cannot agree quickly, whose wishes would you follow?

**The Human Body**

You respond at 2:00am to a medical distress call of a 24-year-old woman with acute abdominal pain. The patient describes a burning pain in her lower abdomen. She states that she has had diarrhea for two days now and that her period is due any day. The pain is just superior to her public hair. When you palpate the lower quadrants, she complains of pain on both sides.

Would you expose the area for observation? What organs may be involved? What other questions regarding her body functions would you ask?

**Lifting and Moving Patients**

You are working transfers and are assigned to transport a 43-year-old man from his home to the hospital for admission. His bedroom is on the second floor, and the stairway has two turns in it that require you to lift the stretcher above the railing to make the turn. When you enter the bedroom, you find that the patient appears to weigh over 400lb. He has pneumonia and is being hospitalized for treatment. The patient has been able to get up and use the restroom, but only with difficulty. Besides you and your partner, his caretaker, who is of average size, and the patient's 65-year-old mother are present. Protocols are very clear that the patient is to be moved on the stretcher and at no time should walk. It appears to you that the patient is too large to get down the stairs on the stretcher but that, given enough time, he could walk down the stairs. No other units are available at this time.

How would you deal with this situation? Would you go against protocol? Why or why not? How long would you wait for assistance?