

Foundations of Practice and Beyond

Wednesday

Stream E

Session 6 0930

Session 7 1100



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Breaking down the barriers for bariatric patients. (Improving the way in which bariatric patients are handled during routine and non routine ambulance transportation)

Biography

I joined the private ambulance sector in 2002 after training as an engineer at college and spending several years working in the retail sector.

Upon joining the ambulance service as a patient transport driver at my local hospital I rose quickly through the organisation holding the post of training manager for several years during which time we gained accreditation to teach Moving and Handling, Basic life support and also Fire Safety to all 73 London NHS trusts.

In 2007 I was tasked with developing our bariatric capabilities. This has resulted in us becoming the country's leading provider of bariatric ambulance transfers. We have achieved this by conveying our patients in a safe and dignified manner without compromising the safety of our staff.

Abstract

We recognised the need for a specially commissioned Bariatric Ambulance Service in August 2007, as it was obvious to us that this category of patients were not receiving the care they needed.

Patients were being dragged out of their homes on sheets and transported on the floor of Ambulances, Fire Trucks or even in Furniture Lorries! We believe this practice was placing both the Patient and the Staff involved in a high risk situation throughout the process of either admission to hospital or discharge home. Having witnessed the issues first hand, we believed there had to be a solution that would ensure any patient would not only receive the care they needed, and allow them to travel with the dignity they deserve.

The Challenges:

- Peoples attitudes to bariatric patients.
- Ambulances not designed to transport bariatric patients.
- Standard ambulance equipment not capable of carrying the required capacity.
- Standard ambulance equipment not being big enough to provide safe comfortable transport.

- Staff not trained to deal with the complex challenges presented.
- Receiving environments not equipped to deal with the patient.

The Solution:

- Purpose built ambulances for the transport of bariatric patients
- Purpose built support vehicles for the service
- Specialist equipment for the handling and transport of bariatric patients
- Staff intensively trained to deal with the complex needs of patients in an appropriate way.
- Links with the UK's leading suppliers of bariatric equipment in pre hospital, community and hospital settings. Allowing us to provide equipment to the receiving environment.

“Our service has been designed around two principles, firstly the safe, comfortable and dignified transport of this specialist group of patients. The second is the safety of our staff in carrying out these often challenging duties. This has been achieved by considerable investment in specialist and often ground breaking equipment, not to mention intensive staff training. Many of our patients have commented how comforting it is to be treated with respect and compassion for a change.”