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COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

HEALTH DISASTER MANAGEMENT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

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TO: EMS DISTRIBUTION LIST

FROM: SAM J. STRATTON, MEDICAL DIRECTOR
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SUBJECT: NORMAL SALINE SHORTAGE

There is currently a nationwide shortage of intravenous saline solutions in sterile IV bags. While medical supply companies are being variably affected with some able to fill orders, others have placed restrictions on orders to re-supply normal saline inventories.

To address this problem, judicious use of saline is recommended, and the following is recommended:

1. Hang IV fluid for the following situations:
 - A. Trauma criteria patients with a systolic blood pressure < 100 mmHg.
 - B. Suspected hypovolemic states with systolic blood pressure < 100 mmHg. These cases may present as suspected sepsis, dehydration, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, anaphylaxis, vomiting/diarrhea, agitated delirium, cardiac arrest with PEA rhythms, or hypotension with acute myocardial infarction without pulmonary edema.
2. When IV access is indicated in situations other than those listed above, use a saline lock. If IV medications are indicated and there is no need for IV fluid replacement, the medication can be given through a saline lock with a 10 mL saline flush.
3. BLS crews who are assisting with ALS responses should check with paramedics before setting up for IV access to determine if a saline lock or normal saline IV bag is needed.

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