GA10-010 Resolution
Resolution Title: Promote a positive safety culture for air medical transports by discouraging the practice of “helicopter shopping”

Whereas, There are times that patient care requires the out-of-hospital environment to be as short as possible therefore necessitating the use of an air medical transport for the transfer; and inter-facility transfers from emergency departments are a common practice across the country for the critically ill or injured patients; and

Whereas, The practice of helicopter shopping, defined as making sequential calls to several air medical providers in an attempt to obtain transport for a critically ill or injured patient to a specialty resource center, creates a potential safety risk when weather turn-downs are not communicated to air medical providers or transport agencies by requesting facilities; and

Whereas, Helicopter shopping has become a common practice of transferring facilities; it has been identified that when one air medical program turns down a request then another program in the area is contacted with hopes of being able to accept the transport; and

Whereas, Failure to provide all information can lead to unsafe conditions in which an air medical transport agency may initiate a flight that it would have declined if they had been aware of all the facts surrounding the request; and

Whereas, The majority of fatal air medical helicopter accidents have occurred at night or in bad weather with poor visibility, and that helicopter shopping has been identified as a contributing factor by creating an additional risk to the patient and crew due to lack of information provided to the transport agency; and

Whereas, ENA is an advocate for patient safety; therefore, be it

Resolved, That ENA shall encourage emergency departments across the country to work with their emergency medical systems and if applicable, their air medical programs, to assist in developing policies or protocols to address the practice of helicopter shopping, including a requirement that communication of all information about the transport request be relayed to any agency being asked to complete a transport; and

Resolved, The General Assembly requests that ENA collaborate with Air Surface Transport Nurses Association (ASTNA), American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS), National Association Air Medical Communication Specialists (NAACS), National Emergency Medical Service Pilot Association (NEMSPA), Air Medical Physicians Association (AMPA) and the International Association Flight Paramedic (IAFP) associations to develop policies to promote better communication of transport issues or concerns between emergency departments and air medical programs; and

Resolved, The General Assembly requests that ENA work jointly with ASTNA, ACEP, CAMTS, NAACS, NEMSPA, AMPA and IAFP with investigating the current practice of helicopter shopping and report the findings with recommendations for establishing policies or protocols for Emergency Departments and Inter-facility transfers.

RESULT: Adopted as amended