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Background: Pregnancy and childbirth are a normal part of the lives of many women. However, there are now fewer obstetric or gynecologic resources available in Maine, including fewer hospitals capable of offering childbirth services.

As of the 2019 Maine EMS Protocols, there is no clear guidance regarding management or destination-decision making for patient suffering obstetric emergencies.

Summary: The Medical Direction and Practices Board (MDPB) has amended the *Childbirth* protocol in the 2021 protocol update and added a section covering the care of women experiencing childbirth emergencies. This includes quick, clinically relevant reference material and management steps for the following conditions:

- 1) Shoulder dystocia
- 2) Prolapsed umbilical cord
- 3) Breech birth
- 4) Excessive bleeding, and
- 5) Maternal cardiac arrest.

The MDPB hopes that the addition of this protocol will benefit EMS clinicians in the field managing emergent deliveries or complicated childbirths as these are very low frequency/high-risk and heightened-stress events.

In addition, the 2021 Maine EMS Protocols have added a new protocol to the gold section titled *Obstetric Emergencies*. This protocol focuses on prenatal and postnatal emergencies, such as vaginal bleeding/abdominal pain in pregnancy and post-partum hemorrhage.

The MDPB believes that EMS services should be familiar with local hospital resources and local destinations for obstetric patients or patients suffering gynecologic emergencies. As such, the MDPB feels that this is best handled by local EMS agencies working collaboratively with their local hospitals to

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discover and disseminate hospital capabilities. While there is no statewide destination protocol, the 2021 updates do recommend transfer directly to a hospital capable of managing obstetric or gynecologic emergencies, if the patient condition permits AND the total transfer time is less than 45 minutes. Otherwise, the protocol advises to transport to the closest Emergency Department for stabilization or initial evaluation and management.

The following is a list from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, updated in 2018, of the hospitals capable of childbirth services -

<https://www.maine.gov/ems/sites/maine.gov/ems/files/inline-files/Birthing%20Hospitals%20Maine%202018.pdf>. Please review, but also discuss, with local hospital or Emergency Department leadership to determine in detail the capabilities of any given hospital.