

## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Health district medical advisory board addresses

(Las Vegas, Nev., - February 5, 2003) – The Clark County Health District Medical Advisory Board passed a protocol this evening designed to limit ambulance wait times at hospitals.

The protocol will allow ambulance personnel to leave patients who are not on a cardiac monitor after they have waited up to an hour in order to free up their units to respond to incoming emergency calls. This protocol is effective immediately and has been instituted on a 30-day trial basis to allow a review by the Facilities Advisory Board, a committee made up of representatives from all area hospitals.

“Hospital overcrowding and the subsequent problem of ambulances being detained at the facilities while they wait to transfer patients is an ongoing problem in Clark County,” said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer for the health district.

“This protocol is meant to prevent a situation from occurring where there would be no ambulances available on the streets to respond to new calls. We think it is a positive step towards solving this ongoing issue,” said Kwalick.

Discussion at the medical advisory board meeting included other factors that contribute to the overcrowding. One important factor is the chronic misuse of the 9-1-1 system. The public is urged to only use this system for life-threatening or serious injuries or illness. The Clark County Health District has information posted on its website and a fact sheet available to the public regarding the appropriate use of the emergency system.

For more information, or for a copy of the fact sheet access the website at [www.cchd.org](http://www.cchd.org), or call 383-1225.

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