

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Dr Shane Broad MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

QUESTION:

A constituent has raised a deeply concerning incident involving a seriously unwell 17-year-old with a chronic condition who called 000 with symptoms indicating a potentially life-threatening situation yet was transported alone in a taxi rather than receiving an ambulance response.

Can the Minister clearly outline what criteria are used to classify a patient as critical within our emergency response system and how those criteria determine whether a patient receives a trained paramedic response, versus being referred to an alternative transport such as a taxi or rideshare?

Can the Minister confirm that specific safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable patients, particularly minors, when these decisions are made?

ANSWER:

Ambulance Tasmania Triple Zero calls are triaged through the Medical Priority Dispatch System by emergency call takers.

Calls triaged as Priority 2 through Priority 5 are eligible for Secondary Triage assessment. Where it is determined to be clinically appropriate and safe, alternative care pathways and transport options, including taxi transport, may be considered in consultation with the patient, with due consideration of the

patient's capacity to make informed decisions about their health and provide consent.

Any alternate care pathway and/or transport decision is made on a case-by-case basis by an experienced Secondary Triage Clinician, who is either a Clinical Nurse Consultant or a Paramedic, and is informed by an assessment of the nature and acuity of the health concern, the care required, and patient safety considerations.

In circumstances where a patient does not wish to accept transport by taxi, the Secondary Triage Clinician may consider alternative appropriate and agreeable transport options, including waiting for an available ambulance to provide transport.

I am advised that, while it is not standard practice to arrange alternative transport for a minor without parental involvement or support, a 17-year-old may consent to their own medical care if assessed as a mature minor (Gillick competent). This requires that the young person demonstrates sufficient understanding and maturity to comprehend the nature, risks, benefits, and likely outcomes of the proposed care. In such circumstances, parental consent may not be required.

Any taxi booking is made through a centralised booking system that allows the Secondary Triage Clinician to coordinate the journey for the patient and maintain oversight of the patient's journey until they safely reach the entrance of the most appropriate health care facility.



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