EMS Information Bulletin- #047

DATE: March 19, 2007

SUBJECT: Replacement of Promethazine with Ondansetron

TO: Regional EMS Directors and Regional EMS Training Coordinators

FROM: Bureau of Emergency Medical Services
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Issues have been identified regarding the safety of promethazine (Phenergan), and this has resulted in a modification of the statewide ALS nausea – vomiting protocol and the state ALS drug list. The PEHSC Medical Advisory Committee recommended that promethazine be removed from the state ALS drug list and that ondansetron be added to this list. The regional EMS medical directors have approved a modification of the statewide ALS nausea – vomiting protocol (# 7010). The prior version of this protocol permitted the use of promethazine while the modified version permits use of ondansetron (Zofran).

The Bureau of EMS has submitted this change in the ALS drug list to the Pennsylvania Bulletin and anticipates publication of this change in mid-March 2007. The change will remove promethazine and replace it with ondansetron on the list of approved medications for ALS ambulance services.

Regional EMS councils are asked to work with licensed Advanced Life Support Ambulances to remove any promethazine they have in medication kits or stock and consider replacing this medication with ondansetron at the time regional EMS councils implement the new Statewide ALS Protocols. Medical command facilities and physicians should be notified of the changes in the protocol and the time frame for the replacement of promethazine.

Like promethazine, ondansetron is considered an optional medication and regions may choose to mandate that their ALS services carry this drug, or regions may choose to defer the optional decision to carry this medication to the ALS service/service medical director.

The regional EMS councils are to have the Statewide ALS Protocols implemented by July 1, 2007.

Please forward any questions to rcooney@state.pa.us