



## FACT SHEET

# Ambulance Clinical Emergency Response Assistance Initiative – CERS Assist

CERS Assist is the provision of urgent additional clinical assistance in response to a rapidly deteriorating patient in a public health care facility. A CERS Assist request should be considered if a facility is unable to provide sufficient clinical resources to manage the rapidly deteriorating patient (red zone) as defined in the Local Health District (LHD) CERS Plan.

## Background

The NSW Ambulance CERS Assist initiative has been developed in conjunction with the Between the Flags program and NSW Health Policy Directive, the Recognition and Management of Patients who are Clinical Deteriorating (PD 2010\_026). This initiative has come about as the result of NSW Ambulance being identified as an agency that may have capacity to provide additional assistance in response to clinical emergencies, especially at rural and remote locations across the state.

## Is CERS Assist a statewide program?

Given the broad geographical spread and varying health needs across LHDs, NSW Ambulance has prioritised its focus on assisting health care facilities with an average role delineation of Level 1 and Level 2 (predominately in rural remote locations) where high level nursing and medical services may not be immediately available. Occasionally, Level 3 facilities with external co-located buildings may require a CERS Assist response depending on local circumstances. It is not anticipated that higher level facilities in metropolitan and regional areas will require this service.

## What are the most important things to remember about CERS Assist?

- NSW Ambulance's CERS Assist initiative should be viewed as an enhancement to existing health care services and is not intended as a substitute for existing or planned medical or nursing services.
- NSW Ambulance's core function of responding to emergencies in the community will remain its priority. This means ambulances may be engaged on emergency calls in the community and may not be available for a hospital response.
- Where NSW Ambulance has the capacity to respond, this response will be to the level of basic life support i.e. cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, including airway management and defibrillation skills.
- In situations where paramedics are required to work as part of the health care team, the paramedics will take instructions from the most senior clinician.
- NSW Ambulance paramedics who have been dispatched in the course of their normal ambulance duties are governed by NSW Ambulance protocols, procedures and pharmacology.
- All CERS Assist requests are to be made via the Triple Zero (000) emergency telephone network.
- A CERS Assist call is not a transport request; however NSW Ambulance may also be identified in facility CERS Plans in terms of the transport of a patient who may require transport/retrieval to a higher level facility on medical advice or failure to improve over a designated timeframe.
- These calls are to be managed as a transport/retrieval request according to local health service protocols.
- A NSW Ambulance charge will apply to the health care facility for each CERS Assist request.

Since CERS Assist commenced, NSW Ambulance has responded to over 200 requests to provide clinical assistance in response to clinical emergencies in rural and remote health care facilities.

