SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING GUIDELINES

I. AUTHORITY:

California Penal Code (CPC), Article 2.5, Section 11166: "Any . . . health care practitioner or employee of a child protection agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment who he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse shall report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and shall prepare and send a written report within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident."

II. APPLICATION:

This policy describes the mandate for health care practitioners to report suspected instances of child abuse. This policy provides a current local reporting phone number and a sample reporting form.

III. DEFINITIONS:

Physical abuse *means any act which results in a non-accidental injury.*

Physical neglect *means the negligent treatment or mal-treatment of a child by a parent or caretaker under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child's health or welfare. The term includes both acts and omissions on the part of the responsible person.*

Reasonable suspicion *means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain such as suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing when appropriate on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse.*

Health care practitioner *means a physician and surgeon, resident, intern, licensed nurse, EMT-I or EMT-P.*

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE:

Any health care practitioner who suspects an incidence of possible child abuse shall report his or her suspicions by phone and in writing as described below:

A. Telephone a report to the Child Abuse Registry (714) 940-1000 immediately or as soon as practically possible. The telephone report shall include the following:

- Name of the person making the report
- Name of the child
- Present location of the child
- Nature and extent of the injury
- Information that led reporting party to suspect child abuse

Italicized Text Identifies Quotation From An Authority Outside The OCEMS.

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B. Prepare a written report within 24 hours of the incident (see www.ochealthinfo.com/medical/ems/forms.htm for copy of report form). Send all copies of the report to: Child Abuse Registry, P.O. Box 14102, Orange, CA 92863-1502.

C. When two or more persons who are required to report are present and jointly have knowledge of a suspected instance of child abuse, and when there is agreement among them, the telephone report may be made by a member of the team selected by mutual agreement and a single report may be made and signed by such selected member of the reporting team. Any member who has knowledge that the member designated to report has failed to do so, shall thereafter make the report.

D. The reporting duties are individual and no supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit such reporting duties and no person making such report shall be subject to any sanction for making such a report. However, internal procedure to facilitate reporting and apprise supervisors and administrators of reports may be established provided that they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this article.