



# comfort ONE

The word "comfort" is in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. Below it, the word "ONE" is in a large, outlined, uppercase sans-serif font. To the right of the "ONE" text are two silhouettes of people walking towards the right. The first silhouette is solid black, and the second is white with a black outline. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the bottom right of the white silhouette.

## ADMINISTRATIVE HANDBOOK

**Division of Emergency Medical Services  
R. I. Department of Health  
June 1993  
July 1995 Revised  
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The Rhode Island prehospital EMS-DNR Program is entitled **COMFORT ONE**, based on a similar program developed in the State of Montana. The use of the **COMFORT ONE** name and logo is part of a national effort to identify **COMFORT ONE** as the universal title specific to prehospital EMS-DNR programs. The Rhode Island Division of Emergency Medical Services is grateful to the State of Montana Division of Emergency Medical Services and the Montana Hospital Association for their considerable guidance in the development of the **COMFORT ONE** Program in Rhode Island.





## **INTRODUCTION**

The ability to honor a terminal patient's request for humane comfort measures while avoiding resuscitation in his last minutes has been a paradox for EMS providers. The challenge has been to devise a method for EMS providers to know at the scene, **immediately and unequivocally**, when they are to withhold life-sustaining treatment. Legislation passed in 1992 protects the EMS provider honoring such a request.

To develop **COMFORT ONE**, a committee was formed in 1991 which involved representatives from the Ambulance Service Advisory Board, Rhode Island Fire Chiefs Association, R.I. State Association of Firefighters, R.I. EMS Directors Association, R.I. Hospital Association, Medical Society of R.I., Division of EMS, prehospital care providers and Emergency Physicians. Working with legislators ensured that the final outcome was a law designed to help all touched by this specific circumstance: the ability to honor a terminal patient's wishes not to be resuscitated in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest.

In 1992, the Rhode Island General Assembly approved amendments to Chapter 23-4.10 of the General Laws entitled "Health Care Power of Attorney" and Chapter 23-4.11 of the General Laws entitled "Rights of the Terminally Ill Act" ("Living Will"). These amendments extended legal immunity to emergency care providers complying with the wishes of a patient who has executed a Durable Power of Attorney and/or Living Will **and** has been diagnosed by a physician to have a terminal illness. These amendments also relieve prehospital care providers from liability when following a physician authorized Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) order. The Do-Not-Resuscitate Order must be recorded in the patient's medical record. These laws authorize the Director of Health to develop a standardized, statewide program for ensuring "reliable documentation" for prehospital EMS-DNR orders. Under its existing authority and consistent with these laws, the Department developed appropriate EMS protocols which have been approved by the Ambulance Service Advisory Board, for use in patients with such credentials. This program is entitled **COMFORT ONE**. The Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Emergency Medical Services is responsible for the day to day operation of the **COMFORT ONE** program.

The **COMFORT ONE** program represents an innovative approach to the problem of honoring a patient's Living Will, Durable Power of Attorney or DNR order in the out-of-hospital setting. Responsibility for determining whether appropriate DNR, Living Will or Durable Power of Attorney documents are on file and whether appropriate procedures have been followed has been formally determined prior to the emergency care provider arriving at the scene. In "the field" all the emergency provider needs to know is whether or not the **COMFORT ONE** Bracelet is present, or whether a DNR order is recorded in the patient's medical record.

## **COMFORT ONE**



