



Letters to the Editor

Praise for Dr. Gibson's Inflight article

I want to thank and commend you on publishing David [Gibson]'s article in the July/August *Sierra Sacramento Valley Medicine* on In Flight Medical Emergencies... Every physician should read this article. It is a subject that in my opinion should be covered in hospital staff and medical society meetings. Why? Because it doesn't matter what one's specialty, when the call comes through, it's "Is there a doctor on board?" and they don't give a hoot or take as an excuse one's specialty or whether one is retired or not. Since retiring five years ago, I have had three or four such calls in the Air, and just three weeks ago, a call on a sightseeing train in Alaska.

In each case in the air, I had help from another health professional, a nurse, a corpsman, and a physician (who helpfully spoke Chinese). As you pointed, the flight attendants on these long distant flights were well trained, knew and made available the equipment, and helped re-arrange nearby passengers. I was always aware of my responsibility to the captain and the hazards of making unscheduled landings with very large aircraft. I was glad to know that at least Southwest Air has in-air connections with ground emergency medical personnel, i.e., EMTs with emergency rooms and that there is MedLink. Regarding paper work, I wrote it up primarily for the next physician who would see the patient recording the key positives and negatives of the unfolding case, what we did and clinical course. I was also aware that legal eyes might be reading the same thing...

The state Legislature has recently muscled into the CME business with terminal care, and now, ethnic competency. I'd suggest "how to respond to inflight emergencies" is a much more relevant subject if they want to meddle in our CME. Again, sincerest thanks for a wonderful, very practical article.

- Cleve Baker, MD

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