ASA/ACEP Joint Statement on the Safe Use of Ketamine in Prehospital Care

Issued August 26, 2020

Ketamine is a dissociative anesthetic that is widely used in the emergency department and in prehospital care for effective pain management, sedation, the control of delirium in acute psychotic emergencies and drug intoxications. Its safe use in prehospital care is dependent on an appropriate medical assessment by a paramedic with medical direction guiding appropriate dosing, monitoring as soon as feasible, and timely transport to an emergency department for further assessment and treatment.

The American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) and the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) firmly oppose the use of ketamine or any other sedative/hypnotic agent to chemically incapacitate someone solely for a law enforcement purpose and not for a legitimate medical reason.