

# EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES INTEGRATION WITH PUBLIC HEALTH

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When a typical emergency arises in the community, and concerned people call for medical assistance, they would want fast and efficient service from a professional team of trained staff and the accurate and reliable equipment from their local Emergency Medical Services provider. Their expectations are raised by what is perceived within different media forms, not by the true happenings and events in their own surrounding which they lack knowledge of, but in the end, will always vary from different set-ups and environments. Sadly, very few EMS systems engage in proper procedure and practices

to assure the members of the community that they really have everything in control and can actually prioritize the varying demands of the community at large.

The public health sector is in dire need of a reliable system to systematically integrate their resources, man-power, advantages and political will to layout a definite positioning of their clientele, the existing and anticipatory needs of these customers, and how to address specified problems within their community. With this system, the EMS can focus its limited resources and can empower the services of the public health sector for better health services for the community.

«The public health sector is in dire need of a reliable system to systematically integrate their resources»

“EMS must expand its public health role and develop ongoing relationships with community public health and social service resources”. These factual statements, according to Ahed Al Najjar, is the key factor in one of the major steps in achieving the collaborative integration many developed communities immediately need.

We often have the interpretation of our own when it comes to healthcare delivery systems, but to better get a grasp of EMS, it is worthy to note that it is PATIENT or SCENE based compared to a 'public health' or 'population' based approach in caring for patients. This gives EMS the edge when addressing concerns where dedicated professional staff are conditioned and trained to respond to acute events, and are optimized to respond quickly with maximum response that expects patient's health to improve on the way to the hospital. Public health on the other hand has its key element of prevention that utilizes epidemiologic methods to systematically detect threats to community health intervening mainly through changing environmental factors or through strengthening community immunity to the disease.

EMS and public health, though maybe dissimilar in some aspects, but they are complementary - both helps to ensure that the care providers has potential positive effects in terms of improved health for the individual patients and community. As they both immersed in the same environment of change and they are passionate about their field. Surely the benefits of the collaboration of EMS and public health will bring about a status of increased professionalism, a more analytic approach, access to the use of patient health data to EMS purposes, new funding opportunities, increased satisfaction, strong partnership and broader community perspective. The benefits of collaboration of EMS to public health is focused on preventive, visibility, increased referrals, increased cost effectiveness and access to populations.

To realize this vision, continued development of 14 EMS attributes is required. They are:

- Integration of health services
- EMS research
- Legislation and Regulation
- System finance
- Human Resources
- Medical direction
- Education systems
- Public education
- Prevention
- Public access
- Communication systems
- Clinical care
- Information systems
- Evaluation

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## THE CHALLENGES

Would EMS and public health face the challenge with flying colors? In time there will be new roles and responsibilities that could be perceived as a threat to their job, overcoming vast differences in professional environments between EMS and public health providers, combining professions may mean combining very different performance measures, with limited funds may

limit interest to adopt roles viewed as expanded scope, lack of cross training, legislative support, and few established mechanisms to share information or ideas.

The bottom line is, with the improved responsiveness, greater efficiency and enhanced effectiveness this will lead to improved health in the community.

The community will benefit by the increased access to healthcare and accountability, reduced case costs and better consumer education, a simplified delivery system and improved community outreach, assess the relative value of health to extend the reach of EMS, its mobility, and adaptability. Emergency Medical Services in synergy with public health therefore means improve health for all. ■

## REFERENCES

References available on request  
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