

SECTION 1

INTEGRATION OF HEALTH SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Integration of Health Services is a concept that is intended to result in improved patient care, improved delivery of health care and the improved health of the general public of the Commonwealth through collaboration among health related agencies and organizations. This will be accomplished by emergency medical services groups working with other entities (e.g., health related state and private agencies and institutions), to share expertise and to mutually address and solve problems.

GOALS

To develop a partnership between EMS and other health services in our communities and EMS regions.

To provide increasingly effective and comprehensive prevention, treatment and health promotion in our communities.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Enhance partnerships between emergency medical services (EMS) and other community agencies (non-health related) (e.g., Department of Transportation, Department of Aging, Department of Public Welfare, Department of General Services, Department of Education, Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Public Utilities Commission, military, local governmental bodies, American Association of Retired People and appropriate private enterprises such as taxi cab companies).

Short Term Objective - Identify community agencies and organizations, including their missions and structures, with which EMS might collaborate to improve communications, cooperative delivery of service and subsequent follow-up by referral services.

<i>Tasks*</i>
1. Beginning with the <i>PA Safe Kids Coalition</i> , <i>Safe Communities</i> and domestic violence prevention organizations, identify additional community agencies, some of which may be listed above, with which the EMS Office may pursue collaborative partnerships.
2. Create a listing of the agencies identified above to include name, title, telephone number and address of a contact person in each agency.
3. Identify EMS Office staff person to act as liaison with each agency.
4. Collaborate with other agencies to identify the "model" or ideal relationship that EMS could have with each.
5. Identify the policies within EMS and within each community agency that act as barriers or deterrents to collaboration and integration.
6. Select at least two (2) agencies with which to develop a "model" relationship.
7. Encourage regional councils to invite county emergency management coordinators to attend their regional council meetings.
8. Include language in the EMS regional contracts that will serve as an incentive to regional councils to collaborate with other agencies in their communities.

* The Tasks in this document represent only the EMS Office/DOH tasks. For Regional Tasks, see regional EMS development plans.

Intermediate Term Objectives - Disseminate information about the model relationships between EMS provider agencies and other community agencies and organizations; define how these relationships affect EMS' contribution to community health.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include the agencies identified above (in Short Term Task #1) on every mailing list and in other communication vehicles available to demonstrate the partnership in action.
2. Provide a schematic description of the "model or ideal" collaborative relationship to each agency.
3. Establish a joint work plan with two (2) of the agencies identified above to include an annual plan for collaborative activities and other efforts.

Long Term Objective - Partner with other community agencies and organizations to improve community health, provide prevention and health promotion activities, support treatment/referral programs and implement referral programs for EMS patients.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Continue to meet on a regular basis (quarterly or semi-annually) with the long term planning or strategic planning committee of each agency.
2. Offer to co-sponsor with at least five (5) of the agencies identified above, at least one public information product.
3. Offer to participate in at least one public information forum and one professional conference or seminar with each agency, all or any of which may be planned or organized by EMS or the other partnering agency.
4. Analyze the success of the collaborations by evaluating the joint activities with staff of each partner.

Objective No. 2. Develop cooperative relationships with other community healthcare providers such as the various professional ambulance associations, the professional associations of other health care professionals, poison centers, and insurers.

Short Term Objective -- Facilitate collaboration between EMS provider agencies and healthcare networks and insurers.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify the state office or headquarters office of the community healthcare providers and insurers that EMS Office will contact.
2. Develop a listing of names and phone numbers of a contact person at each provider and insurer as well as a point of contact (POC) in the EMS Office for each.
3. Identify the top three (3) EMS related issues for each provider and insurer.
4. Contact each provider and insurer to initiate the cooperative relationship.
5. Add the EMS Office to the mailing list for all providers and insurers identified above.

Intermediate Term Objective - Establish and maintain open communication in order to develop mutual understanding of important issues among EMS agencies and the healthcare networks, insurers and providers.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Develop links on the EMS web site with community healthcare providers and insurers as relationships are developed.
2. Publish on a regular basis a bulletin/column/editorial/news piece from the EMS Office and develop a process for distribution of the hard copy.
3. Contribute articles to the newsletters/bulletins of the community healthcare providers and insurers as relationships are established.

Long Term Objective - Involve EMS in collaborative efforts to address the particular needs of specific patient groups, healthcare networks, insurers and other members of the community.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Work to change reimbursement policies to support EMS care without transport.
2. Invite specific patient advocacy groups (e.g., Coalition Against Domestic Violence and AARP), to participate in regulatory and legislative discussions and decisions to improve care for their particular population.
3. Identify partners to assist the EMS office in evaluating the EMS response to behavioral emergencies.
4. Identify mutually beneficial ways in which EMS data and information can be used by EMS Office and the community healthcare providers and insurers as identified (e.g., The Institute for Healthy Communities, The Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation Study (CODES) project with PennDot and PennFirs with the Fire Commissioner's Office).

Objective No. 3. Integrate the goals and activities of EMS and healthcare networks.

Short Term Objectives - Enhance efforts by the EMS lead agencies, including state and national associations, to educate EMS related agencies about the healthcare system.

Educate insurers and other healthcare providers about the current and potential roles of EMS.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Beginning with the <i>PA Safe Kids Coalition</i> , DOH injury prevention programs and other DOH initiatives and programs, identify additional health related organizations and programs with which EMS may share information and activities.
2. Develop a listing of names and phone numbers of a contact person at each healthcare network as well as the POC at the EMS Office for each.
3. Prepare educational/informational articles describing the goals and mission of EMS and offer that information to at least five (5) organizations or programs identified above for inclusion in their newsletter/web site.
4. Continue to play an active role in the National Association of State EMS Directors (NASEMSD).

Intermediate Term Objectives - Support the inclusion of EMS into healthcare networks' plans for their members' health needs.

Improve the understanding regarding complementary roles in caring for the community among EMS, healthcare networks and insurance managers.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Provide information to each healthcare network regarding the EMS mission and service.
2. Develop strategies to encourage each healthcare network to include the EMS office in its annual work plan or long term strategic planning efforts.
3. Contact each healthcare network on a regular basis to continue working toward inclusion of EMS into the network's planning.

Long Term Objective - Provide forums for the study, examination, development and dissemination of models that integrate the goals and activities of healthcare networks and EMS systems through research, demonstrations, evaluations, conferences, publications and other means.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Promote regularly scheduled meetings with at least 3 major healthcare networks.
2. Identify and prioritize the issues with the three (3) networks identified above that will be addressed each year.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the integration efforts with each network and disseminate that evaluation to stakeholders.

Objective No. 4. Enhance rescue service capability within the Commonwealth.

Short Term Objectives - Implement the Voluntary Rescue Service Recognition (VRSR) Program.

Identify funding mechanisms available to facilitate development of services' capability to achieve VRSR standards.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Update the existing VRSR requirements.
2. Develop a brochure to be distributed to regional councils, state fire commission and other rescue services announcing VRSR certification program.
3. Participate on the Rescue Task Force of the statewide advisory council to assist in developing the VTRs (vote to recommend) regarding rescue.
4. Repilot the certification program in a way that allows each region to observe the current program and give input prior to finalization.
5. Develop a generic list of funding sources available to individual rescue services and distribute the list to the regional councils for their further enhancement.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop consensus regarding the attributes of essential community rescue capability and a strategy to achieve this level of service.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Revisit and revise, as necessary, at least every two (2) years, the rescue certification requirements considering technology changes in rescue equipment and changes in personnel recommendations.
2. Consider expanding the definition of rescue to include "trench, water and other confined spaces" and consider developing separate certification requirements for each.
3. In collaboration with the Fire Commissioner, develop a listing of all specialized and general rescue services in the Commonwealth which are participating in the VRSR program, fully describe the capability of each and distribute the list to all EMS providers, fire companies and police departments.

Long Term Objective - Facilitate communities achieving essential rescue capability.

Tasks

1. Provide support, by offering DOH accreditation, to community colleges, continuing education providers and training institutes which offer educational programs in rescue.
2. Investigate the mechanism, authority and fiscal intermediary requirements involved in enabling rescue services to receive compensation for services rendered.
3. Update annually the statewide listing of specialized rescue services which participate in the VRSR program.

SECTION 2

EMS RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of EMS research is to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency medical care. Ultimately, it is an effort to improve patient care and to determine the appropriate allocation of resources. A continuous and comprehensive effort must be made to validate current EMS practices and to further explore the possibilities of what emergency medical care can do to prevent injuries and illness and to reduce death and disability.

GOALS

To promote, encourage and facilitate EMS research within the Commonwealth to examine a variety of approaches to patient care and treatment and to evaluate the effectiveness of each in reducing death and disability.

To pursue new procedures, innovative technology and other system-wide improvements that support EMS research activities.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Develop and pursue a state EMS research agenda.

Short Term Objective - Develop methods to establish a state EMS research agenda to include uniform reporting styles and standard outcome measurements.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assure that EMS data collection system is reliable, accurate and timely.
2. Utilize the state CODES committee as a resource for agenda development.
3. Encourage the Data Committee (EMS Office and representatives of the regional councils) to research reporting styles and standard outcome measurements and recommend a uniform system for EMS statewide.
4. Survey EMS providers statewide to determine research needs and interests.
5. Identify a lead staff member in EMS Office for research information and coordination.

Intermediate Term Objectives - Establish a state EMS research agenda that includes a timeline, guidelines for uniform reporting styles and standard outcome measurements.

Use conferences and publications to disseminate the research agenda.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify priority areas for research in PA EMS and publish on DOH web site.
2. Publish listing and description of current EMS research on DOH web site.
3. Support research initiatives with data and other resources as available.

Long Term Objectives - Incorporate research findings to improve all aspects of the EMS system in the Commonwealth.

Institutionalize the integration of findings as part of the system process.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Revise protocols as needed based on research findings.
2. Include research section in annual EMS report.
3. Contact all institutional review boards to invite them to apprise DOH of all EMS related research.

Objective No. 2. Ensure that EMS related research is conducted in accordance with standards.

Short Term Objective - Develop educational programs and information papers regarding informed consent and institutional review board requirements as they pertain to EMS related research.

Intermediate Term Objective - Establish relationships between EMS agencies that conduct research and institutional review boards in order to facilitate appropriate scrutiny of proposed research projects.

<i>Task</i>
Support Commonwealth Medical Director in collaboration with academic institutional review boards.

Long Term Objective - Convene regular meetings of EMS researchers, ethicists and representatives of appropriate agencies as part of the continuous evaluation of the informed consent process.

<i>Task</i>

As part of the annual statewide EMS development plan, provide the opportunity for EMS researchers, ethicists and representatives of appropriate agencies to meet to continue the evaluation of the informed consent process.

Objective No. 3. Identify and develop sources for EMS related research funding.

Short Term Objective - Identify potential private and government funding sources for EMS research.

Task

Review Federal Register and other resources regularly for opportunities to apply for grants and other funding sources.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop and distribute a list of potential EMS research funding sources to stimulate research grant applications.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Post research funding sources on DOH web site.
2. Distribute opportunity information at regional directors' meetings.

Long Term Objective - Plan and budget for increased state appropriations for healthcare research related to EMS issues.

<i>Task</i>
Estimate funding needs and include in funding request FY beginning 2000.

Objective No. 4. Enhance coordination of the Commonwealth's emergency healthcare research efforts.

Short Term Objective - Identify the mechanism to coordinate the Commonwealth's EMS research assistance.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Survey providers, educational institutions, regional councils and others to identify agencies currently or recently engaged in EMS research.
2. Establish a mechanism to publicize and share funding sources.
3. Continue Commonwealth Medical Director's participation with Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), statewide advisory council, to refine the research approval process and the medical review process for proposed EMS research.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop a clearinghouse for information about Commonwealth EMS research assistance.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize DOH web site for research information sharing.
2. Disseminate research information on a regular basis (e.g., at each regional directors' meeting).
3. Increase access to EMS and CODES data to stimulate and facilitate system research.

Long Term Objective - Designate a resource/consultant within the Department of Health to coordinate and advise on EMS healthcare research.

<i>Task</i>
Coordinate with educational institutions and DOH experts to provide the technical/statistical analysis and support needed by EMS workforce to carry out EMS research.

Objective No. 5. Increase the number of healthcare professionals dedicated to EMS research by cultivating EMS research within academic programs.

Short Term Objective - Enlist the support of medical community to emphasize EMS research within appropriate curricula to include EMS fellowship programs.

<i>Task</i>
Contact all post-secondary educational institutions statewide to identify those that incorporate EMS research into their curricula.

Intermediate Term Objective - Encourage and facilitate well-designed EMS research studies, including multi-center trials, which address local, regional, state and national healthcare issues.

Long Term Objective - Provide funding to cultivate individuals and agencies dedicated to continuing EMS research.

Objective No. 6. Evaluate existing models and develop additional EMS system models for use at local levels.

Short Term Objective - Identify funding sources for development and research of models.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Review Federal Register and other funding resource documents.
2. Include research funding in budget requests.

Intermediate Term Objective - Appoint appropriate research agencies to oversee development and research of models.

<i>Task</i>
Continue to build on models developed by research agencies e.g. PA Rural Highway Trauma Program as developed by the Applied Research Laboratory of the Penn State University.

Long Term Objective - Disseminate and implement research findings.

<i>Task</i>
Utilize DOH web site and partnerships developed pursuant to Section 1 of this Plan to publicize and disseminate research findings.

SECTION 3

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

INTRODUCTION

The EMS System Act (Act 45 of 1985 as amended) provides the foundation for the development, maintenance and funding of the Commonwealth's emergency medical service system. Concerted effort must be made to legislatively facilitate the intent and mission of EMS in this Act.

GOAL

To collate, prioritize and regularly update all laws and regulations affecting the EMS system and to develop an ongoing program to educate the Commonwealth's public officials and others about this system.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Review and revise, as necessary, all laws and regulations affecting the EMS community.

Short Term Objective - Compile all Federal and State laws and regulations affecting the EMS community to be used as a reference, resource and support.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. With the assistance of the DOH/ Legal Department, compile a user-friendly reference manual which will include all laws and regulations, Federal and State, which affect the EMS community.
2. Disseminate the reference manual using the DOH web site and provide hardcopy to stakeholders, as needed.

Intermediate Term Objective - With input from the EMS community, prioritize those laws and regulations that need revision.

<i>Task</i>
Promote the use of stakeholder focus groups and town meetings convened by the regions to encourage discussion of the various laws and regulations.

Long Term Objective - Initiate legislative/regulatory revisions through Congress and the Commonwealth's legislature based upon the priorities defined.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support a Federal lead agency for EMS.
2. Participate in state and national conferences and seminars which address legislative and regulatory issues
3. Review legislation introduced in Congress and the State legislature affecting EMS in any way.
4. Provide liaison staff to the statewide advisory council's Committee on Law.

Objective No. 2. Educate public officials regarding EMS and other issues.

Short Term Objective - Assess the level of EMS awareness of local, state and federal elected officials.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Design a questionnaire for distribution to regions for their use in assessing the level of knowledge of EMS.
2. Utilize EMS Week as an opportunity to assess awareness.

Intermediate Term Objective - Based upon the results of the assessment, develop and implement statewide EMS awareness programs that are directed toward public officials.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Develop or procure public service announcements and other public information announcements as described in the "EMS PIER" (Public Information, Education and Relations) manual, distributed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, FEMA, and the United States Fire Administration.
2. Promulgate a distribution/loan policy to disseminate announcements to the regions for use by local media.

Long Term Objective - Create programs for EMS providers to initiate and maintain their own contacts and awareness programs for their respective public officials

<i>Task</i>
Provide ongoing updates, including critical action dates for new and pending state and federal legislation, including committee status and points of contact for legislative initiatives, at regional directors' meetings, through the DOH/web site or both.

Objective No. 3. Identify or develop legislation that reduces the risk of liability to EMS providers.

Short Term Objective - Identify unusual situations that place EMS providers at higher liability risk.

<i>Task</i>
Encourage each region to solicit suggestions from its EMS workforce of situations which suggest high liability risk.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop strategies to reduce EMS providers' risk of liability, possibly including the development of model legislation that affords limited protection.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Encourage the Law Committee of the statewide advisory council to examine legislation from at least five (5) other states which address EMS liability issues.
2. Draw upon the resources of DOH/Legal Department to support any needed legislation to address EMS liability issues.
3. Update the Pennsylvania Good Samaritan Law.

Long Term Objective - Implement programs, including legislation, which reduce EMS providers' risk of liability.

SECTION 4

SYSTEM FINANCE

INTRODUCTION

EMS systems must be financially viable. A solid financial base is necessary to develop and maintain a system which provides EMS access to the public and delivers services when needed. The role of EMS is expanding to include prevention efforts, participation in trauma and medical research, as well as partnering with other health related organizations on both the local and state levels.

GOAL

To develop a sound financial base for acquiring and maintaining the resources necessary to operate a comprehensive, reliable and safe statewide EMS system.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Identify the financial incentives of EMS and other healthcare providers and payers.

Short Term Objective - Establish cooperative relationships between EMS provider agencies and other healthcare providers and payers.

Intermediate Term Objective - Facilitate development of models for financial relationships between EMS and healthcare payers in urban, suburban and rural communities.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support forums for exchange of information and brainstorming for improved financial processes and agreements among groups such as DOH regions, ambulance associations, financial intermediaries, and others.
2. Spotlight successful models in Pennsylvania and other states through systems and opportunities.

Long Term Objective - Support implementation of pilot projects, involving collaboration of EMS and other healthcare providers and payers, that align financial incentives and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to address communities' emergency healthcare needs.

Objective No. 2. Resolve conflicting EMS finance and reimbursement issues.

Short Term Objective - Promote awareness among government and healthcare finance officials regarding conflicting EMS finance and reimbursement issues.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Continue information sharing among professional associations vested in this issue, Federal sources and EMS directors associations to assure complete and up-to-date awareness within EMS Office of these issues.
2. Through liaison with the statewide advisory council's Task Force on Finance and Reimbursement Issues, facilitate a cooperative approach to further identification of any reimbursement or payment disputes among the various payers and providers.

Intermediate Term Objective - Work to resolve conflicting EMS finance and reimbursement issues in collaboration with professional organizations, policy makers and governmental agencies.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Participate with Atlantic EMS Council and the NASEMSD in this effort.
2. Distribute information to PA EMS stakeholders to improve awareness and information accuracy.
3. Support forums for resolution of issues.

Long Term Objective - Promote creation of an effective EMS funding system.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify need for additional funding.
2. Assess need relative to existing resources.
3. Collaborate with legislature, DOH, statewide advisory council, etc. to establish process for additional funding, if needed.

Objective No. 3. Ensure stable support for EMS system funding.

Short Term Objectives - Develop a tool(s) to inventory and assess the costs of EMS system components.

Utilize tool(s) developed to assess the costs associated with providing an EMS system.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Use analyses of the expenditure of Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund (EMSOF) in past years to identify trends and amounts expended.
2. Utilize the regional and statewide EMS development plans to project financial needs and shortfalls for years 2000-2003.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop a methodology for the distribution of funds for the support of EMS development and system maintenance.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Continue to support the statewide advisory council task force in addressing this issue.
2. As part of the tasks of the various work groups comprised of EMS Office staff and regional council directors, examine the various factors affecting the distribution of EMSOF and various methods to attain the most beneficial distribution to accomplish the goals of EMS development and system maintenance.
3. Revise the contract process to support the EMS statewide and regional development plans.

Long Term Objectives - Develop funding strategies to support continued EMS system development and maintenance.

Continue to educate local, state and federal government officials and their staff members regarding the importance of maintaining and improving the EMS system and the funding it requires.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include in annual report.
2. Include in updates of EMS Statewide Plan.

SECTION 5

HUMAN RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Individuals involved in EMS have the desire to contribute to the health and well being of their communities. Preparation, in terms of knowledge and skills acquisition, must be a priority for EMS personnel.

GOAL

To ensure that EMS personnel are prepared to meet the challenges of providing health services competently.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Ensure adequate trained manpower resources at all levels are available to meet emergency medical services needs.

Short Term Objective - Assess and identify those factors that positively affect recruitment and retention.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Using NASEMSD, collect information regarding recruitment and retention in other states.
2. Conduct an EMS literature search.
3. Seek input from training institutes.
4. Identify and implement an improved screening process to identify candidates likely to be successful.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop recruitment and retention strategies for use by EMS system providers which take into consideration those positive factors as identified above and begin to implement them through community agencies and organizations.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Develop an information paper to accompany DOH/PEHSC management video tape series to be distributed to all regions.
2. Seek out successful models and publicize them through regional councils, DOH web site and statewide advisory council.
3. Market the strategies to partners in education, military, employment agencies and others.
4. Utilize recruitment and retention data as a "vital sign" of the health of the EMS system by institutionalizing it into the appropriate components of the system, e.g., planning and system quality assessment/performance quality assessment.

Long Term Objective - Assess the strategies implemented to determine how further implementation will proceed.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify successful strategies by encouraging advisory councils to host focus groups of stakeholders.
2. Publicize results to stakeholders.

Objective No. 2. Create an understanding of EMS occupational health and safety standards and hazards.

Short Term Objective - Identify and assess psychological and physical EMS occupational health and safety hazards.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Conduct an EMS literature search and collect information on this subject.
2. Conduct an information search for Pennsylvania in particular, emphasizing volunteer vs. paid staff, workers' compensation issues and Department of Labor and Industry data.

Intermediate Term Objective - Establish cooperative relationships with providers and other interested individuals to study EMS occupational health and safety issues.

Long Term Objective - Conduct a re-assessment of EMS occupational health and safety issues.

Objective No. 3: Create an understanding of occupational stress among EMS personnel.

Short Term Objective - Assess, evaluate, develop and implement a plan for stress management programs among EMS personnel.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Distribute information to regions on Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) teams, roles/responsibilities and how to access them.
2. Work with experts specializing in health promotion within DOH as well as elsewhere to learn what is currently available on this subject.

Intermediate Term Objective - Educate EMS personnel about stress management.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Encourage EMS training institutes to incorporate this subject into initial training programs for EMS personnel.
2. Encourage continuing education providers to incorporate this subject into their training.

Long Term Objectives - Evaluate and improve stress reduction and management programs.

Utilize subject matter experts to assist in long term evaluation.

Objective No. 4. Increase the cultural sensitivity of the EMS workforce.

Short Term Objective - Identify and assess the cultural issues that affect EMS in Pennsylvania.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Partner with PA Human Relations Commission to develop strategy to assess need.
2. Present the DOH/Equal Opportunity Office's "Intent vs. Impact" Program to regional directors at a monthly meeting.
3. Utilize training institutes to obtain data on this issue and examples of need.
4. Encourage regions to follow up with more extensive cultural sensitivity training utilizing local experts.

Intermediate Term Objective - Implement programs that will enhance the cultural sensitivity of the EMS workforce.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Continue work with PA Human Relations Commission to select programs/strategies for implementation.
2. Explore the feasibility of utilizing DOH programs/expertise in conducting "train the trainer" opportunities for the EMS regions.
3. Disseminate training programs to EMS regions via video, satellite, etc.

Long Term Objective - Implement strategies such as increasing access to EMS educational programs to heighten the cultural sensitivity of the EMS workforce.

<i>Task</i>
Evaluate progress annually.

Objective No. 5. Increase the cultural diversity of the EMS workforce.

Short Term Objective - Identify and assess cultural diversity issues that affect EMS statewide.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support regions in providing EMS personnel recruitment programs at the high school/ vocational classes.
2. Encourage regional councils to develop speakers' bureaus.

Intermediate Term Objective - Implement programs that will enhance cultural diversity of the EMS workforce.

<i>Task</i>
Coordinate with the PA Department of Relations and encourage regions to partner with the Human Relations Offices in various regions to develop appropriate programs.

Long Term Objective - Implement strategies to increase the cultural diversity of the EMS workforce so that it is representative of the population it serves.

Objective No. 6. Establish a prevention-oriented atmosphere at the EMS workplace.

Short Term Objective - Include topics related to preventing EMS workforce injuries and illnesses during the initial and continuing education of all EMS providers and managers. Incorporate the need for risk management and safety into rules and regulations.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include risk management as an ambulance licensure requirement.
2. Gather information on prevention of EMS workforce injuries from a variety of sources including literature, DOH, and other state EMS offices.
3. Promote education of risk management principles throughout EMS regions.

Intermediate Term Objective - Establish workplace programs to help prevent injuries and illnesses among EMS providers.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Work with Division of Immunizations/DOH to educate EMS personnel regarding risks and prevention.
2. Work with Division of Communicable Diseases/DOH to educate EMS personnel regarding risks and prevention.
3. Develop model policies for infection control.
4. Disseminate training programs to regions via video, satellite, etc.

Long Term Objective - Collect, assess and develop health and safety guidelines for EMS providers.

<i>Task</i>
Develop health and safety guidelines for EMS providers.

SECTION 6

EDUCATION SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

As EMS continues to evolve, the need for quality education increases. Educational programs must be regularly evaluated to ensure they meet the needs of the EMS provider.

GOAL

To deliver high quality educational programs to the EMS community.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No.1. Develop joint ventures between the EMS system and academic institutions for educational research.

Short Term Objective - Approach academic centers to establish educational research initiatives.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify academic centers/schools statewide which offer health related courses.
2. Survey EMS community to identify academic centers/schools which have participated in EMS/educational research in the recent past.
3. Survey EMS community to identify educational research interests/needs.
4. Organize an academic support network for these institutions and other related academic institutions.
5. Designate a member of the EMS Office staff to participate or collaborate with the curriculum committee of the Commission for Community Colleges.

Intermediate Term Objectives - Expand research and educational initiatives to include the EMS provider agencies and the appropriate academic institutions.

Establish liaisons among academic institutions, EMS system and EMS education programs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Designate a lead staff person in the EMS Office for liaison to all educational research issues.
2. Develop a listing of the academic institutions identified above with a contact person identified for each.
3. Disseminate the listing of academic institutions to EMS training providers through the DOH web site and to regional councils for inclusion in their newsletters.
4. Conduct a literature search of educational research issues and disseminate findings to EMS stakeholders and contacts at educational institutions.

Long Term Objective - Conduct meaningful EMS related research to improve EMS provider educational opportunities between EMS systems and academic institutions.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support these projects by including eligibility under EMS funding priorities as published annually in the PA Bulletin
2. Encourage the sharing of success through as many mechanisms as feasible (e.g., conferences, web sites, meetings).

Objective No. 2. Provide EMS education that includes innovative technology.

Short Term Objective - Assess and identify the resources needed to provide conventional and alternative methods of EMS education.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize the academic network created for Objective No. 1 of this section to determine current methods being used in EMS education and resources needed.
2. Utilize this network and the statewide advisory council to assess need for alternative methods of EMS education, recommendations and implementation.
3. Share information on new initiatives from other States with this network for consideration and adoption.

Intermediate Term Objective - Evaluate various education formats, including distance and interactive self-learning, by applying existing and developing technology.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Solicit volunteers from the network of educational institutions identified above and the EMS workforce to participate in piloting applications of existing and developing technology in EMS education.
2. Evaluate existing relevant products for continuing education approval.
3. Develop reporting mechanisms for crediting learners for participating in programs using alternative methods of delivery.

Long Term Objectives - Work with academic institutions so that EMS education is recognized as an academic achievement resulting in academic credit; promote the requirement of such partnerships as a condition of accreditation.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilizing the network of institutions identified above, determine whether each institution grants academic credit for its EMS related courses.
2. Advocate for the appropriate recognition for EMS course work by requiring same as a prerequisite to attaining accreditation as a DOH approved training institution.
3. Encourage partnerships between non-academic based EMS training with academic institutes to facilitate student acquisition of academic credit.
4. Publish available programs on DOH web site complete with details of cost, credit and other elements of the program.

Objective No.3. Provide a cyclical review of all EMS educational programs.

Short Term Objective - Review the state and national EMS education guidelines and objectives.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilizing the statewide advisory council and representatives from regional councils, develop a review program for PA.
2. Beginning with existing education programs, review all EMS educational programs (state and national) currently offered in PA and develop a timeline to review each.
3. Incorporate review process into regional contracts and QA/QI.
4. Identify EMS Office staff person to manage this review.

Intermediate Term Objective - Incorporate state and national skills and knowledge guidelines and objectives into the EMS educational program curricula.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. In cooperation with the state advisory council's Education Task Force and Committee of Training Coordinators from the various regions, review existing curricula in use and make recommendations to DOH.
2. Develop guidelines/best practices for dissemination to all education providers.
3. Participate in EMS <i>Education Agenda for the Future</i> and apply as appropriate to PA EMS.
4. Collaborate with colleges, community colleges and universities to develop training support proactively.

Long Term Objective - Implement a process to periodically review all educational programs being conducted.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Develop an evaluation tool to survey samples of new graduates of EMT and paramedic programs.
2. Utilize DOH continuing education task force to review continuing education programs.
3. Incorporate QA/QI of training institutes, continuing education programs, instructors and tests into state and regional QA/QI plans.
4. Assess feasibility of interagency certification program by comparing instructor qualifications, curricula outcomes, etc. of each.

Objective No.4. Incorporate research, quality improvement and management-related objectives into EMS education.

Short Term Objective - Develop and provide EMS education that includes research, quality improvement and management-related objectives.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Survey the educational institutions with EMS programs to assess whether research, quality improvement and management related objectives are included in their programs.
2. Share successful models from other states, regions and institutes to support these objectives.

Intermediate Term Objective - Include research, quality improvement and management-related objectives in the Commonwealth's education core contents.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Request recommendations from the statewide advisory council's Education Task Force for EMS research, quality improvement and management-related objectives.
2. Disseminate selected objectives to educational institutions and regional councils for integration into programs.

Long Term Objectives - Require accredited EMS educational programs to incorporate research, quality improvement and management-related objectives. Include questions related to these topics on credentialing examinations.

<i>Tasks</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate with educational institutions about the possibility of including EMS research, EMS system quality improvement and EMS management into training programs as a condition of DOH accreditation. 2. Provide opportunity for feedback from training programs about implementation.

Objective No. 5. Assess and validate that EMS providers are prepared to perform their required tasks in accordance with standards.

Short Term Objective - Conduct local task analyses to determine the cognitive and technical skills required for EMS providers functioning at various levels and in different environments to include interfacility patient transfers.

<i>Tasks</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With the assistance of the statewide advisory council's Education Task Force and Committee of Training Coordinators, develop a comprehensive summary of the cognitive and technical skill areas currently required for the various EMS environments and patient care situations. 2. Recruit researchers to address this objective.

Intermediate Term Objective - Determine the structure and content of EMS educational programs, including initial and continuing education, and the appropriate staffing necessary to consistently meet the needs identified by local task analyses.

<i>Tasks</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using needs identified by data collected in response to the short term objective above, develop curriculum recommendations to address these needs. 2. Evaluate expectations in comparison to community needs and feasibility of implementation. 3. Compile and maintain an inventory of EMS education programs. 4. Revise regulations and statute as required. 5. Support research in this objective.

Long Term Objective - Evaluate and update initial and continuing education programs and staffing complements in order to meet the needs identified through local task analyses.

<i>Tasks</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support EMS regions in assisting training institutes to meet this objective. 2. Institutionalize this objective in the QA/QI programs at state and regional levels.

Objective No. 6. Provide medical direction for EMS education.

Short Term Objective - Develop guidelines for the role medical direction plays in EMS educational programs.

<i>Tasks</i>

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assess the existing role of medical directors in EMS education and develop recommendations for change or standardization, if needed.2. Utilize the Commonwealth EMS Medical Director to strengthen the medical professional network and participation in education programs. |
|--|

Intermediate Term Objective - Encourage all EMS educational program providers, including providers of continuing education, to designate a medical director.

- | <i>Tasks</i> |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assist regions in matching physicians with providers of EMS.2. Utilize the Commonwealth EMS Medical Director to increase support to EMS education programs. |

Long Term Objective - Encourage the medical directors of EMS educational programs to participate actively during the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of their educational programs.

- | <i>Tasks</i> |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clarify the requirements of the medical director in planning, curriculum and evaluation.2. Encourage educational institutions to utilize the medical director as an instructor. |

Objective No. 7. Assess the need for EMS education bridging programs.

Short Term Objective - If needed, develop pilot bridging educational programs that facilitate EMS providers moving from one provider level to the next higher level.

<i>Task</i>
Continue the work with the statewide advisory council in developing bridging programs for First Responder to EMT and the State Fire Academy's Essentials Module I or certification as a Firefighter I or Firefighter II to the Basic Rescue Practice Certification.

Intermediate Term Objective - Evaluate alternative education approaches to achieving bridging programs learning objectives (e.g., distance learning and other innovative instructional techniques).

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize the statewide advisory council's Education Task Force and the Committee of Training Coordinators to consider the various educational approaches that may be incorporated into bridging class instruction.
2. Solicit EMS educational institutions to identify at least one which would agree to provide bridging classes utilizing alternative educational approaches.

Long Term Objective - Integrate bridging educational programs into existing EMS education programs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Develop and administer a tool to evaluate the success of the bridging programs.
2. Utilize the data collected to encourage other educational institutions to offer similar programs.

Objective No. 8. Encourage that all healthcare professionals have a basic knowledge of EMS issues.

Short Term Objective - Survey other healthcare professional educational programs to determine the extent to which EMS related objectives are included.

<i>Task</i>
In cooperation with the Nursing Advisory Committee, the MAC of the statewide advisory council, and others, develop a tool to determine the extent to which other health related fields of instruction include EMS related objectives.

Intermediate Term Objective - Provide opportunities for all healthcare professionals to gain EMS exposure and provide other healthcare professional educational programs with EMS core content objectives.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Contact the state headquarters of other health professions to offer guest speakers for the organizations' conferences/seminars.
2. Encourage each regional council to contact educational institutions in their regions for similar events.
3. Support proposed innovative approaches as funding resources permit.
4. Identify training programs with which to communicate EMS core objectives.

Long Term Objective - Incorporate EMS related core content objectives into the curricula of other healthcare professional educational programs.

Tasks

1. Explore and pursue this objective utilizing the contacts made through other objectives of this plan.
2. Reassess long term impact.

Objective No. 9. Assess and identify the need for new EMS programs.

Short Term Objective - Identify, evaluate and disseminate programs to meet the educational needs of providers, educators and trainers (e.g., geriatrics, pediatrics, terrorism, management).

Task

1. Using advocacy and focus groups, regional councils, surveys, and the various task forces and committees of the statewide advisory council, collect data regarding the perceived educational needs of the EMS workforce with regard to populations who have special needs (e.g., children and the elderly), and need for training in specialized areas of EMS (e.g., terrorism and EMS management).
2. Promote and support educational/training programs for all levels of prehospital care providers which specifically address the handling of hazardous materials.

Intermediate Term Objective - Evaluate the effectiveness of each newly developed program.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Begin planning for evaluation with program development.
2. Develop mechanisms to measure the results attained as compared to the need expressed from the practitioner, consumer and system leaders.
3. Require monthly reports from regional councils on the status of hazardous materials, terrorism and management training to assess the need for additional training support.

Long Term Objective - Evaluate the long-term educational needs for new programs and others that may be required.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Link new technology, new legislation and new treatment initiatives with analysis of existing education support system to support implementation.
2. Request assistance from subject matter experts, statewide advisory council and others as appropriate in monitoring new developments and system changes

Objective No.10. Evaluate EMS programs on a consistent basis.

Short Term Objective - Ensure that every EMS provider has the opportunity to review and provide evaluation of his or her training program.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Require the inclusion of course/program evaluation tools as a prerequisite to accreditation of all educational and training programs.
2. Require that the educational and training programs provide a summary report to DOH/EMS Office through regional councils of evaluation data collected.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop and disseminate EMS evaluation models.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support the development and piloting of evaluation tools.
2. Distribute evaluation models to regional EMS councils, educational institutions and other training organizations for their consideration and use.
3. Include evaluation section in EMS regional monthly reports.

Long Term Objective - Adapt EMS evaluation models for consistent evaluation of EMS programs.

SECTION 7

PUBLIC ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

The focus of public access/communication is the ability to secure prompt and appropriate EMS care regardless of socioeconomic status, age or special need. Once the initial access is achieved, the focus switches to ensure continuous communication between all agencies involved until the conclusion of the event.

GOAL

To provide easy public access to telecommunicators who are knowledgeable in the specific emergency medical interventions essential for the efficient management of the emergency patient until EMS arrives at the patient's side. Once the EMS system is accessed, there must be dependable communication among all agencies until the conclusion of the event.

Objective No. 1. Eliminate barriers to accessing EMS.

Short Term Objective- Identify the existing barriers to accessing EMS.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support cross section of community, including consumers, as members of the regional councils.
2. Identify issues raised through the EMS/DOH complaint process.
3. Utilize advocacy groups and others to assist in identifying barriers.

Intermediate Term Objectives - Support the development of a universal telephone symbol that can be identified by people with special needs.

Evaluate other technologies to facilitate access to EMS.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Partner with technology experts to learn about new technologies.
2. Maintain subscriptions to professional journals.
3. Schedule appropriate staff attendance at specialty conferences to keep abreast of new initiatives.

Long Term Objective - Improve access to EMS for all community members, including children, the elderly and others with special needs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Institutionalize input from specialty group advocates into the EMS system through memberships in advisory councils, regional councils and other resources.
2. Utilize federal resources and other state resources available to assist in this objective.
3. Formalize a partnership between EMS/DOH and Department of Education to improve integration of EMS principles into the education of children.

Objective No. 2. Ensure statewide access to 911.

Short Term Objectives - Work with PEMA to collect and disseminate information about the extent and adequacy of Commonwealth 911 coverage; identify and work to eliminate barriers to its use.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Establish regular communication with PEMA regarding 911 issues.
2. Provide regional directors with information for dissemination to their regions regarding usage of 911.
3. Work with PEMA, American Red Cross, statewide advisory council, regions and others to address any Y2K impact on 911 access to EMS.

Intermediate Term Objective - Collaborate with PEMA and other related entities to promulgate laws or regulations that will ensure the availability of 911 to those who cannot afford routine access.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include public access to resources such as Poison Centers and domestic violence resources through 911.
2. Support laws and regulations that ensure 911 availability to all residents of the Commonwealth.

Long Term Objective - Educate consumers of the availability and appropriate usage of 911 for medical assistance, regardless of their access capability.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Using lessons learned from pilot programs (e.g., Philadelphia EMS Council), develop public information/education messages to assist regions in implementing programs as needed.
2. Identify public information partners (e.g., colleges, universities or training institutes in the Commonwealth), to produce public information messages to support this objective.
3. Partner with other agencies (e.g., PennDOT), to provide resources that address the patient needs which may cause non-emergency use of 911.

Objective No. 3 . Eliminate barriers and confusion to improve appropriate use of EMS.

Short Term Objective - Educate local, state and federal elected officials regarding the importance of eliminating barriers and confusion to emergency medical care access.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Provide regions and others with information to support education efforts targeting this population.
2. Develop guidance documents to assist policy makers in decision making related to this need.
3. Distribute EMS annual reports to elected officials.

Intermediate Term Objective - Promote legislation or adopt regulations that eliminate financial barriers to appropriate and timely emergency care, including EMS.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Participate in development of managed care regulations.
2. Participate in development of hospital regulations.
3. Educate financial intermediaries about PA EMS system.
4. Work through professional associations to influence federal regulations and laws.

Long Term Objective - Educate community members about appropriate use of the EMS system and other points of access to healthcare.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Develop public information/education messages to assist regions in implementing programs as needed.
2. Identify public information partners (e.g., colleges, universities and training institutes), to produce public information in support of this objective.

Objective No. 4. Ensure that all calls for emergency help are automatically accompanied by location-identifying information.

Short Term Objectives - Assess the current communication system capabilities.

Communicate with Commonwealth and local government officials about the importance of adopting a national standard for addressing EMS communication system needs and service delivery to include rural and urban communities.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Work with PEMA to assess the current status of 911 dispatch centers and the utilization of Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) in the 911 centers.
2. Confer with PEMA to determine the current capabilities of the 911 system along with the capabilities of the independent dispatch centers.
3. Support and encourage state legislation which adopts a national standard for addressing EMS communication systems.
4. Identify an EMS Office staff person to work with communication experts and assist the EMS Office in staying abreast of developing technologies.

Intermediate Term Objective - Support the actions by communication lead agencies that will require all residences, businesses, established public places and permanent telephone locations have assigned addresses.

<i>Task</i>
Support state legislation and regulation, which require all residences, businesses, established public places and permanent telephone locations to have assigned addresses.

Long Term Objective - Employ automatic number identification and automatic location identification technology at all public safety answering points and other dispatch centers as appropriate.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Provide EMS system input to PEMA to assist in the development of 911 regulations.
2. Assist in educating regional EMS councils in capabilities of Public Service Answering Points (PSAPs)/dispatch centers.
3. Gather PSAP/dispatch center information in EMS system QA/QI.
4. Participate in communication studies that may contribute to improved EMS.
5. Support proposed state legislation and regulation which provide for automatic number identification and automatic location identification technology at all PSAPs and other dispatch centers.

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SECTION 8

COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

Communication systems provide the efficient transfer of information between dispatch centers, EMS providers, and other public safety agencies. Our communications system in Pennsylvania must incorporate adjoining states and Canada, as well. Rapidly developing technology is creating capability faster than it can be implemented by our communication system. Current technology allows us to receive automatic notification of an accident occurrence, the location of the vehicles and the patients' vital physiological status but the technical expertise that is needed to fully utilize those technological advances is often beyond what is available within EMS. Therefore, EMS must utilize external experts to develop state of the art systems that incorporate new technology thereby improving patient care and survival.

GOAL

To create a communications network linking EMS with communications centers and other healthcare providers to facilitate EMS response and improve patient outcome.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Review and establish EMS dispatching and communications standards.

Short Term Objective - Support the development of consensus standards for EMS dispatching and communications.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Ensure the input of medical/clinical expertise in consensus.
2. Include expectation of dispatch center collaboration in regional contracts.
3. Assist PEMA as the lead agency for this objective.

Intermediate Term Objective - Ensure that EMS communications centers provide appropriate training for pre-arrival instructions.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assist PEMA to incorporate this component of system QA/QI.
2. Review all dispatch training programs for compliance with PA protocols.

Long Term Objective- Evaluate and regularly update EMS dispatching and communications standards.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Participate in QA/QI programs identified by PEMA.
2. Apply standards to all dispatch/communication centers.
3. Assure congruent regulations among EMS, PEMA and others.

Objective No. 2. Improve the utilization of communication devices which facilitate access to emergency assistance.

Short Term Objective - Facilitate methods to provide emergency call priority within networks for wireless telephones, i.e. cellular and digital personal communication systems.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Stay abreast of federal and state research efforts.
2. Participate in pilot programs to develop these methods.
3. Address DOH specific needs such as priority calling and satellite phones.

Intermediate Term Objective – Support incorporating technology in wireless communications systems to route emergency calls made from them directly to the appropriate public safety answering point in order to facilitate a prompt response to the correct location.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Modify regulations and policies to support evolution of the technology.
2. Support education of regional EMS councils regarding this technology.
3. Identify information resources to stay current on technology.

Long Term Objective- Update public safety answering point technology to automatically receive geographic location data from wireless communications devices.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assist regions and PEMA in these efforts.
2. Enlist assistance from researchers to address these needs.

Objective No. 3. Enhance the use of mobile telephone services as resources for EMS system communication.

Short Term Objective - Evaluate the ability of wireless telephone companies, i.e., cellular and digital personal communication systems, to prioritize calls made from EMS system wireless telephones.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify experts who can assist EMS office regarding this technology and capability.
2. Support pilot programs to add to information about this capability.

Intermediate Term Objective- Develop plans for prioritizing emergency calls made from EMS system wireless telephones.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assist PEMA in developing plans to support this objective.
2. Monitor developments in other state EMS systems.
3. Continue to work with state communications experts to identify opportunities for EMS to progress towards this objective.

Long Term Objective- Facilitate area wide priority for emergency calls made from EMS system wireless telephones.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support PEMA and state communications experts in implementing this objective.
2. Utilize expert information resources to stay abreast of developments in this area.

Objective No. 4. Provide an EMS response that is appropriate for the need.

Short Term Objective- Conduct ongoing evaluation of the ability of public safety answering points with PEMA to reliably determine the appropriate level of response needed and mode for EMS calls.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assist PEMA in development of QA/QI for 911 system.
2. Assure the input of Commonwealth EMS Medical Director in determining appropriate level of response to need.
3. Utilize the EMS/DOH complaint process to identify areas where improvement is needed.

Intermediate Term Objective - Create communication networks that link EMS and other resources to facilitate the appropriate transfer of calls for EMS to those resources in specific circumstances.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assist each region in assessing its ability to link EMS resources.
2. Utilize the assessment results, indicating need, to determine Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund (EMSOF) distribution.

Long Term Objective - Conduct epidemiological and outcome research to guide efforts to match health resource allocations to EMS callers' needs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Continue to strengthen and increase partnerships with researchers to expand and support this objective.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Enlist other DOH elements with related interests (e.g., injury prevention), to conduct research in EMS. 3. Recruit staff person with expertise in this area of system research. |
|---|

Objective No. 5. Ensure the interoperability of EMS communication with other emergency services.

Short Term Objective- Evaluate current communication system.

- | <i>Tasks</i> |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support regional EMS councils in assessing regional communication system. 2. Seek experts to assist DOH in achieving this objective. 3. Continue partnership with technology developers, applied research agencies and the statewide communication project. 4. Pursue partnership with the Fire Commissioner to explore a joint communication project. 5. Identify an EMS Office staff member as the liaison and a POC for EMS communication issues. |

Intermediate Term Objective - Review equipment and technology to meet future needs.

- | <i>Tasks</i> |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate testing of interoperability into disaster/mass casualty exercises. 2. Promote pilot projects which improve interoperability. 3. Incorporate interoperability mandates into regional contracts and into funding priorities for EMSOF spending. |

Long Term Objectives - Reevaluate technological advances as needed.

Support and encourage research of interoperability in EMS communications.

SECTION 9

MEDICAL DIRECTION

INTRODUCTION

The Medical Direction section focuses on the granting of authority to qualified physicians and their acceptance of responsibility for the care provided. It requires the medical communities' participation in all aspects of EMS to ensure maintenance of accepted standards of medical practice as well as innovation.

GOAL

To ensure accepted standards of medical practice and also promote innovative standards.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Ensure that Pennsylvania has the Commonwealth EMS Medical Director required by statute.

Short Term Objective - Ensure required staffing.

<i>Task</i>
Evaluate medical director's compensation, schedule and support systems.

Intermediate Term Objective - Review Commonwealth EMS Medical Director job description and responsibilities.

<i>Task</i>
Review and update Director's job description annually.

Long Term Objective - Modify requirements as necessary within resource capability.

<i>Task s</i>
1. Take appropriate action regarding Commonwealth EMS Medical Director as required based upon results of action to short term or intermediate term objectives.
2. Assure QA/QI program measures quality of EMS medical direction by medical command facilities.

Objective No. 2. Provide EMS medical direction by credentialed medical command physicians and accredited medical command facilities.

Short Term Objectives - Maintain compliance with regulatory requirements by medical command facilities and medical command physicians.

Review and update protocols as necessary.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Implement regularly scheduled meetings involving the Commonwealth Medical Director and regional medical directors.
2. Assure consistency across EMS regions in implementing medical command physician and facility review and application by conducting system quality assurance and regional training.

Intermediate Term Objectives - Review adequacy of regulatory and statutory language.

Integrate EMS medical direction with facilities, command physicians and service medical directors to assure that it is consistent, congruent and proactive.

Automate process for medical command facility application and medical command physician application.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Review and assess the consistency of medical direction and protocols statewide.
2. Develop consistent and simplified regulatory and statutory requirements.
3. Develop consistent quality assurance policy and procedures.

Long Term Objective - Modify regulatory requirements as necessary.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Review and determine the need to revise EMS statute to include specific authority to issue recognition to medical command physicians and accredit medical command facilities.
2. Clearly define the responsibility of medical command facilities to ambulance services not based at their facility.

Objective No. 3. Ensure that EMS service medical directors meet regulatory requirements.

Short Term Objective - Maintain compliance with regulatory requirements.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assure that new EMS service medical directors receive an orientation to the regional and state EMS system.
2. Assess the existing system for technology support opportunities.
3. Update appropriate manuals (e.g., medical command).
4. Revise the EMS training manual to update advanced life support (ALS) medical director requirements, roles and responsibilities.

Intermediate Term Objective - Provide ample educational opportunities that meet and address nationally recognized standards for service medical directors.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Collaborate with the Pennsylvania chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians to support continuing education and endorsement of national standards.
2. Utilize each EMS regional council to communicate with local professional education providers regarding the availability of educational opportunities for the physicians in the region.

Long Term Objectives - Evaluate and update EMS service medical director standards as necessary.

Establish triage and transfer protocols to ensure patients requiring specialty care have access to appropriately categorized facilities as well as appropriate medical direction during transfer.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include support in EMS regional contracts for providing educational opportunities (e.g., seminars and conferences), for ALS service medical directors which address roles and responsibilities
2. Publish patient triage and transfer protocol compliance reports on a regular basis.
3. Clarify responsibility for medical direction during interfacility transfer.

SECTION 10

CLINICAL CARE

INTRODUCTION

The Clinical Care section focuses on clinical methods, technologies and delivery systems utilized in providing emergency medical care. This encompasses in-hospital, pre-hospital (out-of-hospital) patient care and patient transport capabilities to, from and between various healthcare facilities. The comprehensive EMS system includes traditional and emerging community health services, rescue services and mass casualty management.

GOAL

To deliver optimal pre-hospital emergency medical services.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Commit to a definition of essential EMS capacity.

Short Term Objective - Define State essential EMS capacity.

Tasks

1. In collaboration with regional EMS councils and the statewide advisory council, develop comprehensive guidelines describing the minimum required EMS workforce and basic equipment needed for the general population and any special population who reside in or visit the community.
2. Review current licensure and certification requirements and evaluate the sufficiency of both in terms of adequacy of equipment and training of EMS personnel.

Intermediate Term Objectives - Ensure that Pennsylvania has essential EMS capacity available.

Task

Develop a geographic or graphic representation of ambulance stations statewide, the distribution of certified EMS personnel statewide and the communications channels utilized by the EMS system.

Long Term Objectives - Re-evaluate the adequacy of the definition of essential community EMS capability.

Tasks

Review the distribution and availability of the EMS workforce, facilities and communication capability to determine adequacy of essential EMS coverage statewide; compare and contrast it with the data collected in previous years to identify needed EMS capacity.

Objective No. 2. Commit to a definition to enhanced EMS capacity.

Short Term Objective - Define enhanced statewide EMS capacity.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. In collaboration with consumers, health related organizations and the MAC of the statewide advisory council, develop a comprehensive description of the desirable EMS workforce and equipment to fully serve the resident population, including those with special needs as well as any needed by visitors to the Commonwealth.
2. Review the licensure/certification requirements of the elements of an enhanced EMS system (e.g., ALS licensure, paramedics, prehospital registered nurses, physicians in emergency medicine and medical command facilities).
3. In collaboration with the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation (PTSF), develop a description of the desirable comprehensive statewide and regional trauma systems.

Intermediate Term Objective - Facilitate regions achieving enhanced community EMS capacity.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Communicate the information developed in Objective #1, the definition of essential EMS capacity, to regional EMS councils.
2. Assist regions lacking sufficient service or system capacity by providing assistance in acquiring or developing essential or enhanced EMS service.

Long Term Objective - Re-evaluate the attributes of basic/essential and enhanced EMS capacity.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize the statewide advisory council to develop a consensus regarding attributes.
2. Incorporate the concepts of essential and enhanced EMS system capacity into regional contracts.
3. Identify benchmarks for essential and enhanced EMS system and incorporate into EMS development plans.

Objective No. 3. Enhance the technical assistance provided by the Commonwealth through the EMS Office and the regional councils.

Short Term Objective - Establish technical assistance standards, consistent with the *EMS Agenda for the Future* for state EMS lead agencies, to be evaluated during the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) EMS assessments.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilizing regional representatives and the statewide advisory council, develop draft technical assistance standards relevant to PA EMS.
2. Assess draft standards for feasibility and implementation potential.
3. Publicize availability of resources to regions and stakeholders.

Intermediate Term Objective - Disseminate information regarding successful EMS technical assistance projects and programs conducted by various regions.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Create communication mechanisms for regular reports to stakeholders on technical assistance projects.
2. Incorporate reporting of projects and programs into monthly regional reports.

Long Term Objective - Secure authority and resources in the EMS Office, DOH to perform technical assistance.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Review statute and regulations to determine authority and responsibility of EMS lead agency to perform technical assistance; update as required.
2. Request a management study of EMS Office staffing to assess capability to meet requirements.
3. Seek other state models for possible application to PA.

Objective No. 4. Review and evaluate techniques, technologies and pharmacology for their applicability in EMS.

Short Term Objective - Develop a time sensitive mechanism to review and evaluate new or existing techniques, technologies and pharmacology for inclusion or exclusion in EMS.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize the statewide advisory council and its MAC to regularly monitor professional EMS journals and other sources of relevant information to discover innovative EMS techniques, technologies and pharmacology.
2. Adhere to the 90 day response time to recommendations from the statewide advisory council.
3. Utilize the Commonwealth EMS Medical Director to accomplish this objective.

Intermediate Term Objective - Implement a mechanism to facilitate appropriate growth and development in clinical aspects of emergency medical care.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Incorporate EMS clinical priorities into annual EMS conferences.
2. Develop focused training opportunities.
3. Utilize regional contracts to encourage the regions/providers to incorporate new initiatives into the clinical aspects of emergency medical care.
4. Incorporate new clinical initiatives into QA/QI programs.
5. Utilize the leadership of the Commonwealth EMS Medical Director to mobilize medical professionals to support changes.

Long Term Objective- Share Pennsylvania's experiences and findings through journal articles and presentations at professional seminars and conferences.

<i>Task</i>
Encourage EMS regions to publicize innovative projects and experiences through professional journals and meetings.

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SECTION 11

DISASTER RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

The role of EMS during a disaster is to provide emergency medical care to the general population. Although the specifics of patient care during a disaster may be very similar to routine operations, the challenge to the EMS system is extraordinary. Good planning and coordination are necessary to minimize delays in resource mobilization and decrease overall mortality. Myriad agencies and organizations work together in response to disaster and mass casualties. The EMS system must be a full partner in a comprehensive approach to these catastrophic events.

GOALS

To prepare EMS providers to respond effectively to disasters and to deliver effective patient care.
To mount an effective EMS system response in a timely manner to address threats to the Commonwealth.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Enhance the involvement of EMS in hazardous materials and mass casualty management planning including weapons of mass destruction.

Short Term Objective - Assist emergency management agencies with development of and revisions to the medical portions of mass casualty plans including identifying and inventorying available EMS resources.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Designate an EMS Office staff member as a liaison for disaster related issues.
2. Support regions in assessing EMS resources of importance to developing the statewide EMS disaster plan.
3. Identify DOH resources and other state level medical resources and incorporate them into the statewide EMS disaster plan.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop enhanced plans for mobilizing EMS resources in the event of a potential or actual disaster or mass casualty situation.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assure that the statewide EMS disaster plan addresses mobilization of EMS resources in the event of a potential or actual disaster or mass casualties without conflicting with existing local and other disaster plans.
2. Assure that the resulting disaster plan is clearly communicated to each EMS regional contractor.
3. Promote the inclusion of regional EMS disaster planning activities through the DOH contracts and enhanced collaboration with PEMA, county EMAs and other stakeholders.
4. Coordinate EMS plans with DOH and PEMA plans.

Long Term Objective - Assist in conducting exercises to test and teach the plan.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Participate in PEMA exercises, regional exercises and conduct DOH exercises.
2. Regularly update plans to include lessons learned and new requirements.

Objective No. 2. Enhance EMS response capabilities in mass casualty incidents.

Short Term Objective - Develop consensus regarding the elements of essential mass casualty capability and design a strategy to achieve this level of preparedness.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Upon completion of the statewide EMS disaster plan, facilitate its delivery and explanation to the EMS regional and advisory contractors. Require each contractor to demonstrate a minimum level of knowledge of the critical elements of the plan by participation in exercises.
2. Assist regions in the development of regional EMS disaster plans.

Intermediate Term Objective - Identify resource shortfalls by quantity and/or distribution and mechanisms to augment existing resources.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Working with DOH information system management, incorporate data regarding EMS resources into an easily useable database so that it is most helpful to EMS regions in identifying EMS resources in each region and at the state level.
2. Utilize software, e.g. mapping systems, to support routine and on-going system information gathering so that it is easily useable and meaningful during disaster operations.
3. Define communication and operational pathways for redistribution of resources to meet needs during a disaster response.

Long Term Objective - Facilitate communities achieving essential mass casualty capability.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assure that state and regional EMS disaster plans support local and community plans.
2. Recognize and include regional mass casualty roles in regional and advisory contracts.
3. Include mass casualty preparedness as a funding priority for EMSOF contracts.

Objective No. 3. Augment public health resources in mass casualty/disaster incidents.

Short Term Objective - Identify EMS capabilities to assist with public health support associated with mass casualty/disaster incidents.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Use EMS pilot programs (e.g., immunization), to identify possible capabilities.
2. Participate in State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) process to increase communication and sharing among DOH, regions and community partnerships.
3. Utilize bioterrorism opportunities to forge new EMS/public health partnerships and collaboration.

Intermediate Term Objective - Work with public health agencies to integrate EMS resources into other public health plans in statewide EMS disaster plan component.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Create and conduct joint training programs.
2. Include non-EMS public health agency representatives in planning EMS response.
3. Participate with DOH non-EMS disaster planning (e.g., pandemic response).
4. Utilize SHIP committees and community partnerships as foundations for building regular interactions which will also serve during disaster operations.
5. Communicate the statewide EMS disaster plan throughout the SHIP network.

Long Term Objective - Integrate mass casualty/disaster objectives into EMS provider education.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Communicate concept of statewide mass casualty/disaster plan to EMS training institutes, continuing education providers, etc.
2. Encourage providers of EMS education to include objectives related to mass casualty and disaster response in their programs.
3. Include assessment of mass casualty disaster plans in EMS system quality assurance/improvement plans.

Objective No. 4. Improve EMS care for patients with special needs.

Short Term Objective - Identify agencies and individuals who provide care for and support patients with special needs, i.e., latex allergies, those dependent on medical devices, children, geriatric, hemophiliac, HIV-infected and others, in order to develop relationships between them and EMS provider agencies.

<i>Task</i>
Determine what information and processes currently exist by canvassing agencies (e.g., DOH, Department of Public Welfare, PEMA, etc.), and convey this information to the EMS regions.

Intermediate Term Objectives - Collect and analyze data regarding EMS utilization by patients with special care needs. Regularly review and update policies and protocols as appropriate.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Work with other DOH elements and other partners to produce information papers and protocols for managing special needs patients.
2. Include information in EMS annual report.
3. Develop state level collaboration with advocacy groups and appropriate lead agencies to create, update and review policies and procedures.

Long Term Objectives - Share information among EMS agencies, other healthcare providers and community agencies and groups to facilitate enhanced coordination of efforts to care for those community members with special needs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Provide information to regional councils to assist in developing regional initiatives regarding special healthcare needs that may be impacted in the event of a mass casualty or disaster event.
2. Include other agency experts in regional/state EMS meetings and training.
3. Promote the sharing of plans among agencies.
4. Include assessment in state level QA/QI program.

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SECTION 12

PUBLIC EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The focus of public education is to provide learning experiences to the general public that promote and encourage good health and reduce morbidity and mortality. To achieve this goal, the public must understand the EMS system and how to utilize it to achieve maximum benefit.

GOALS

To develop public understanding of EMS through knowledge, skills and motivation.

To develop preventive measures aimed at reducing costly emergency medical care.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Develop collaborative strategies to identify and address community health and safety issues.

Short Term Objective - Develop relationships among EMS agencies and other public/community health and safety organizations to identify priority community health and safety issues.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilizing the partnerships and collaborative efforts initiated to achieve the objectives of Section 1, <u>Integration of Health Services</u> and Section 8, <u>Prevention</u> , identify priority community health and safety issues.
2. Monitor the progress and outcomes of the 911 public information project in Philadelphia to identify exportable lessons learned to other EMS regions, PEMA and DOH.

Intermediate Term Objective - Use meetings and publications to disseminate information regarding successful strategies, projects and programs that address community health and safety issues and incorporate EMS participation.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include public information as a reportable category on monthly EMS regional reports.
2. Disseminate to regional EMS directors at their monthly meetings, and post on the DOH web site, a written summary of at least three successful strategies, projects or programs from across the Commonwealth which describe EMS participation in community health and safety issues.
3. Promote this goal at town meetings, conference presentations and DOH/SHIP publications and meetings.

Long Term Objective - Ensure EMS services at state and local levels, public/community health and safety agencies and other organizations work to improve community health.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Incorporate this requirement in regional EMS contracts.
2. Include this as a category approved for EMSOF expenditures.

Objective No. 2. Create community partnerships for public education.

Short Term Objective - Identify community organizations and consumers interested in or currently providing public education in EMS related issues.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support EMS regions in surveying their community organizations and consumers to identify those who are interested in or are currently providing public education in EMS related issues.
2. Encourage DOH/ SHIP community partnerships to consider and address EMS as part of the broad based health care network and include EMS in their public education efforts.

Intermediate Term Objective - Develop partnerships that include community/consumer members to determine the educational needs of the public regarding prevention as EMS system clients, bystanders at emergency scenes or EMS consumers.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize the relationships developed pursuant to Section 1, <u>Integration</u> and Section 8, <u>Prevention</u> , of this Plan to determine the EMS educational needs of the public.
2. Implement bystander care training for highway maintenance workers through PennDOT collaboration and EMS regions.
3. Implement bystander care training for truck drivers through the PA Motor Trucking Association collaboration and EMS regions.
4. Implement cardiopulmonary resuscitation/automated external defibrillator (CPR/AED) programs in schools through the Department of Education and EMS regions.
5. Explore consumer organizations such as AARP, sports medicine groups, industry and others to better identify consumer prevention needs.

Long Term Objective - Involve EMS in community health improvement partnerships that focus on public education programs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Provide speakers/seminar presenters to other health related organizations for statewide conferences and meetings.
2. Support public education initiatives in EMS regional contracts.
3. Build upon Commonwealth EMS Medical Director's efforts and expand throughout the EMS regional system.

Objective No. 3. Conduct public education that is relevant and meaningful to the community.

Short Term Objective - Designate a person within each EMS agency to assess the knowledge base of the community members prior to initiating public education projects and programs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Continue to support the EMS PIER programs through EMS regional contracts.
2. Identify in each EMS region the staff person responsible for public education projects.

Intermediate Term Objective - Establish public education programs that are distinct from public relations.

<i>Tasks</i>

1. Utilize existing information from other expert sources to focus efforts.
2. Encourage colleges and universities to foster partnerships between their communications departments and their EMS/health professions departments to work together to develop EMS related public education projects.
3. Utilize DOH in developing this program.

Long Term Objective - Revise and update EMS public education efforts as indicated by needs assessments and consistent with contemporary quality improvement models.

Objective No. 4. Incorporate innovative techniques and technologies in public education.

Short Term Objective - Use the media to enhance public education efforts.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Establish contacts with media utilizing the DOH Press Office
2. Support regional EMS councils in contacting media in their regions.

Intermediate Term Objective - Convene focus groups at state and regional forums to evaluate tools and technologies for achieving EMS public education goals.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize the statewide advisory council to conduct forums and evaluate tools and technology.
2. Seek the assistance/guidance of the state government experts knowledgeable in technology applications.

Long Term Objective - Incorporate state-of-the-art technology in EMS public education programs.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Seek the assistance of DOH, academia, industry, the military, the statewide advisory council and EMS regional councils to incorporate technology.
2. Consider successful models from other than EMS for EMS application.
3. Support EMS regional efforts to incorporate new technology through contracts, technical assistance and other resources available.

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SECTION 13

PREVENTION

INTRODUCTION

Community health can be improved through prevention, early identification and treatment. Additionally these actions will help to control healthcare costs.

GOAL

To improve the health of residents of the Commonwealth by identifying EMS related injury and illness patterns and prevention techniques to address them.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Participate in community-based prevention efforts.

Short Term Objective - Educate EMS provider agencies about the injury prevention programs of DOH district offices, county and municipal health departments, PA *Safe Kids Coalitions*, and *Safe Communities* concepts and identify possible community based, prevention-oriented partnerships.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Educate EMS provider agencies about the principles of illness and injury prevention and the role of local health departments, <i>Safe Kids Coalitions</i> and <i>Safe Communities</i> , in local injury prevention initiatives.
2. Educate EMS provider agencies about the importance of local injury data to local health departments, <i>Safe Kids Coalitions</i> and <i>Safe Communities</i> programs and the potential role of EMS in the collection and utilization of these data.
3. Educate EMS provider agencies about the methods of conducting primary illness and injury prevention educational activities in their communities.
4. Provide EMS provider agencies with a resource guide describing ongoing illness and injury prevention programs and local health departments, <i>Safe Kids Coalitions</i> and <i>Safe Communities</i> programs throughout the Commonwealth.

Intermediate Term Objective - Work with community agencies, organizations, and healthcare providers to identify community prevention needs and the potential roles of EMS.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assess the need for focused illness and injury prevention programs.
2. Facilitate, through regularly scheduled programs, interactions between EMS provider agencies and the Department of Health's Injury prevention coordinators in Districts and county and municipal health departments.
3. Facilitate interactions between EMS provider agencies and local domestic violence programs affiliated with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Long Term Objective - Develop the resources necessary to support consistent EMS participation in community based illness and injury prevention efforts.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Provide EMS provider agencies with educational materials to assist them in implementing illness and injury prevention educational programs in their communities.
2. Support, through train-the-trainer programs, the development of a cadre of EMS providers with expertise in implementing community based illness and injury prevention programs.
3. Monitor and evaluate the involvement of EMS provider agencies in community based illness and injury prevention efforts.

Objective No. 2. Incorporate “prevention” into the education of EMS providers.

Short Term Objective - Support the inclusion of prevention intervention for both the EMS workforce and community members as a component of the *National EMS Education and Practice Blueprint*.

<i>Task</i>
Provide continuing education for the EMS workforce that incorporates the “Essential Knowledge Areas” and “Desirable Leadership Activities” outlined in the Consensus Statement of the EMS Role in Primary Injury Prevention” (a 1996 publication of NHTSA).

Intermediate Term Objective - Participate in the review and development of national and state EMS certification tests to assure that questions related to illness and injury prevention are included.

Long Term Objective - Support the inclusion of prevention-related material in each training module and examination.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Provide guidance to training institutions regarding prevention education.
2. Conduct sampling of curriculum content to assess inclusion of prevention material.

Objective No. 3. Strengthen existing partnerships with organizations which have a prevention focus.

Short Term Objective - Provide a means of identifying and contacting other organizations with a prevention focus.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify state offices of organizations which have a prevention focus.
2. Create a directory of the local/regional offices of each organization.

Intermediate Term Objective - Encourage and support regions in developing partnerships on the local level.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Disseminate directory to EMS regional councils.
2. Provide a listing of organizations to EMS regional councils of all organizations with which the EMS Office has formed a partnership or is developing a partnership.

Long Term Objective - Achieve formal inclusion of EMS as a contributing partner in the efforts of other prevention focused organizations.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Contribute at least one article per year to the newsletter of each organization with which a partnership has been formed.
2. Serve on an advisory board of at least two organizations with which a partnership has been formed.

SECTION 14

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

Information systems focus upon the identification and review of a minimum data collection set and methods to collect data to meet healthcare community needs. The information system(s) play a key role in documenting EMS provider certification records, continuing education status and source data for quality assurance, planning, research and program evaluation.

GOAL

To design an integrated multi-focal information and evaluation system for the Commonwealth's pre-hospital system.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Identify and review a statewide, standard set of data to identify DOH data collection needs.

Short Term Objective - Define, identify and review the existing data collection set.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Involve the Commonwealth EMS Medical Director to assure that clinical patient care remains a priority in system assessment.
2. Consider CODES project institutionalization and assure that decisions regarding this objective correlate with that process.
3. Utilize subject matter experts from DOH, PTSF, regional EMS representatives and the statewide advisory council to accomplish this objective.

Intermediate Term Objective - Create, publish and implement a revised data collection set.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Assure consensus exists among stakeholders regarding the data set.
2. Include electronic and hard copy methods in implementation.
3. Publish in Pennsylvania Bulletin, on web sites and support with a manual and training.

Long Term Objectives - Link the Commonwealth's EMS information systems, pre-hospital information system, other healthcare providers, public safety agencies and community resources. Resolve hardware and software compatibility and confidentiality issues.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Continue linking all regions using advice and assistance from data system and information management.
2. Support regional EMS capability to participate and communicate using internet or similar mechanisms with DOH, with each other and intra-regionally.
3. Utilize the DOH data release policy.

Objective No. 2. Identify and review the statewide EMS provider database.

Short Term Objective - Define, identify and review the existing EMS provider database.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Request the assistance of the statewide advisory council in updating this database.
2. Update DOH database regarding content, format and accessibility.

Intermediate Term Objective - Create, publish and implement a revised statewide EMS provider database.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Using information from short term objective, post the database on the DOH web site.
2. Assist regions in doing the same regionally and in providing DOH with regular updates.

Long Term Objectives - Link the Commonwealth's EMS provider database pre-hospital information system, other healthcare providers, public safety agencies and community resources. Resolve hardware and software compatibility and confidentiality issues.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Periodically update the data release policy for the EMS Office/DOH and evaluate effect of use.
2. Continue and strengthen data sharing with PennDOT, the CODES project, PTSF, and law enforcement.
3. Continue information system development to expand individual access to records.
4. Increase accessibility of aggregate data by all users.

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SECTION 15 EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is the process of assessing the attributes of EMS to ensure that a system for continual improvement can be designed and implemented.

GOAL

To provide consistent and regular evaluation of the EMS system.

OBJECTIVES

Objective No. 1. Identify and develop a comprehensive system-wide program and evaluation process.

Short Term Objective - Define, identify and review evaluation processes within the current EMS system and review other available models.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Support the Commonwealth EMS Medical Director and the EMS System Administrator in their lead roles in accomplishing this objective.
2. Utilize "A Leadership Guide to Quality Improvement for Emergency Medical Services Systems", published and distributed by NHTSA and The Health Resources Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Intermediate Term Objective - Create, publish and implement a system-wide program and evaluation process.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Utilize subject matter experts to assist in this objective.
2. Share draft program with stakeholders and obtain feedback.
3. Modify as necessary and incorporate into regional contracts.

Long Term Objective - Perform a comprehensive review of the system-wide program and system evaluation format to verify if EMS planning objectives are being met.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Identify a schedule for periodic review of progress.
2. Assemble an evaluation team to conduct an internal review.
3. Utilize NHTSA Assessment Team to assist in review.

Objective No. 2. Support regions in developing comprehensive region-based quality improvement and review process.

Short Term Objective - Define, identify and review current region-based quality improvement practices as well as other models.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include this requirement in EMS regional contracts.
2. Support Commonwealth EMS Medical Director and EMS System Administrator in their roles as lead for this objective.

Intermediate Term Objective - Create, publish and implement a region-wide quality improvement program and system evaluation process.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Include this requirement and funding to support it in regional EMS contracts.
2. Facilitate sharing of programs among regions.
3. Include results in annual reports.
4. Provide assistance and consultation to regions.

Long Term Objective - Link EMS quality improvement and system evaluation format with other healthcare providers, public safety agencies, and community resources to verify if EMS planning objectives are being met.

<i>Tasks</i>
1. Incorporate this objective into CODES project research initiatives.
2. Work with SHIP initiatives to encourage support of this objective.
3. Structure regional data analysis to support this objective.