

Community Paramedicine (CP) Evaluation Tool - Summary

Community Paramedicine is an emerging field in health care where EMTs and Paramedics operate in expanded roles in an effort to connect underutilized resources to underserved populations.

The Rural and Frontier EMS Agenda for the Future defined community paramedicine as “an organized system of services, based on local need, which are provided by EMTs and Paramedics integrated into the local or regional health care system and overseen by emergency and primary care physicians. This not only addresses gaps in primary care services, but enables the presence of EMS personnel for emergency response in low call-volume areas by providing routine use of their clinical skills and additional financial support from these non-EMS activities.”

Each of the successful programs now in place across the country was uniquely and specifically designed to meet one or more health care needs essential to that community. Additionally, successful programs capitalize on linkages, collaboration and integration with other health care resources in the community.

A multi-disciplinary advisory committee should be assembled consisting of key representatives from:

- Public health
- Hospitals
- Primary care
- Regulatory agencies
- EMS
- Social services
- Other areas impacted by the community paramedicine program

CP programs should focused on

- Efficiently allocating scarce health care resources and improving access to care in these underserved areas.
- Keeping “frequent fliers” out of the emergency care system by ensuring their health care needs are met in other ways.
- Taking health care into the patient’s home.
- Specific medical needs (DM, HTN, CHF, COPD, etc.)
- Social issues (substance abuse & mental health)

A successful CP program must:

- Define its system-specific health status benchmarks and performance indicators
- Use a variety of community health and public health interventions to improve the community’s health status.
- Reduce the burden of illness, chronic disease, and injury as a community-wide public health problem, not strictly as a patient care issue.

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- Provide a common framework by which data can be collected from multiple community paramedicine programs and aggregated to develop a snapshot of common successes and challenges.

Key elements of a CP program

- **Assessment:** Regular systematic collection, assembly, analysis, and dissemination of information on the health of the community.
- **Policy Development:** Promoting the use of scientific knowledge in decision making that includes building constituencies, identifying needs and setting priorities, legislative authority and funding to develop plans and policies to address needs, and ensuring the public's health and safety.
- **Assurance:** Assurance to constituents that services necessary to achieve agreed-on goals are provided by encouraging actions of others (public or private), requiring action through regulation, or providing services directly.