



Vision Statement on Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) & Community Paramedicine (CP)

Mobile Integrated Healthcare – Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) is the provision of healthcare using patient-centered, mobile resources in the out-of-hospital environment. MIH is provided by a wide array of healthcare entities and practitioners that are administratively or clinically integrated with EMS agencies, while CP is one or more services provided by EMS agencies and practitioners that are administratively or clinically integrated with other healthcare entities. MIH-CP may include, but is not limited to, services such as:

- Increasing access to care in underserved areas
- Providing telephone advice to 9-1-1 callers instead of resource dispatch;
- Using community paramedics or other specially trained EMS practitioners for management of high healthcare system utilizers or patients at risk for hospital admission or readmission, chronic disease management, preventive care or post-discharge follow-up visits
- Transport or referral of patients to a broad spectrum of appropriate care, not limited to hospital emergency departments

While the services provided by local programs may vary, key characteristics of MIH-CP programs include:

- **Fully integrated** – a vital component of the existing healthcare system, with efficient bidirectional sharing of patient health information.
- **Goal directed** – predicated on meeting a defined need of a specific patient population in a local community articulated by local stakeholders and supported by formal community health needs assessments.
- **Patient-centered** – incorporates a holistic approach focused on the improvement of patient outcomes.
- **Collaborative** – works together with existing healthcare systems or resources, fills resource gaps within the local community.
- **Consistent with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) Triple Aim philosophy** - improving the patient experience of care; improving the health of populations; and reducing the per capita cost of healthcare.
- **Data driven** – data collected and analyzed to develop evidence-based performance measures, research and benchmarking opportunities.
- **Physician led** – overseen by engaged physicians and other practitioners involved in the MIH-CP program, as well as the patient's primary care network/patient-centered medical home, using telemedicine technology when appropriate and feasible.
- **Team based** – integrating multiple providers, both clinical and non-clinical, in meeting the holistic needs of patients who are either enrolled in or referred to MIH-CP programs.

- **Educationally appropriate** – including more specialized education of MIH-CP practitioners, with the approval of regulators or local stakeholders.
- **Financially sustainable** – including proactive discussion and financial planning with federal payers, health systems, Accountable Care Organizations, managed care organizations, Physician Hospital Organizations, legislatures, and other stakeholders to establish MIH-CP programs and component services as an element of the overall (IHI) Triple Aim approach.
- **Legally compliant** – through strong, legislated enablement of MIH-CP component services and programs at the federal, state and local levels.

Rationale

Since the creation of modern emergency medical services, EMS has largely been considered and funded as a transportation system for people suffering from medical and trauma conditions.

Recent changes in the healthcare finance system have created an unprecedented opportunity for EMS to evolve from a transportation service to a fully integrated component of our nation’s healthcare system. Aligned financial incentives now focus stakeholder awareness on the value of EMS in providing either “patient navigation” throughout the healthcare system, efficiently and effectively directing each patient to the right care, in the right setting at the right time, or providing primary care in medically underserved areas.

In 1995, then-NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez, NHTSA and the Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) commissioned a strategic plan for the future EMS system. The resulting report, *Emergency Medical Services Agenda for the Future* (NHTSA, 1996), outlined a vision of an EMS system fully integrated within our nation’s overall healthcare system, proactively providing community health, and adequately funded and accessible. The companion report published in 2004, the *Rural and Frontier EMS Agenda for the Future*, also focuses on an integrated workforce and specifically identified community paramedicine (or EMS-based community health care) as a means to accomplish this.

The *Agenda for the Future*, now nearly two decades old, has been effective in drawing attention to EMS within the emergency and trauma care system. Several of the Agenda’s goals, however, were difficult to realize before the implementation of the PPACA.

A subsequent implementation guide, developed by NHTSA in 1997, offered several recommendations to make the Agenda for the Future a reality and focused on three strategies:

- Improve linkages between EMS and other components of the healthcare system;
- Create a strong infrastructure; and,
- Develop new tools and resources to improve the effectiveness of EMS.

The types of changes envisioned by the Agenda and the implementation guide include:

EMS Today (1996)	EMS Tomorrow
Isolated from other health services	Integrated with the healthcare system
Reacts to acute illness and injury	Acts to promote community health
Financed for service to individuals	Funded for service to the community

The healthcare finance reforms now being enacted are creating an environment more conducive for implementing the *EMS Agenda for the Future*. Specifically, the reforms are shifting focus to care provided to entire communities rather than individuals and to proactive rather than reactive care.

Defining the Problem

Currently, the U.S. healthcare system spends approximately \$9,255 per capita¹ caring for our population. This amount is nearly three times the average amount expended by other economically developed nations. Ironically, U.S. health status is among the lowest in the developed world in terms of life expectancy, obesity, preventable hospitalizations and overall wellness.

Many healthcare experts believe that the fee-for-service, quantity-based structure of our healthcare system is the main driver of this cost/outcome mismatch. Unrelenting increases in healthcare costs have compelled the need to refine the financing of our healthcare system, based on the IHI Triple Aim Model:

- Improved experience of care for the patient (including outcomes and satisfaction).
- Improved population health.
- Reduced costs.

EMS is uniquely positioned to help meet the IHI Triple Aim by transforming from a transportation system focused on stabilizing and transporting patients to a mobile integrated healthcare system focused on:

1. Patient education, consultation and dispatch/telephone advice using approved clinical algorithms.
2. Preventive care, chronic disease management or post-discharge follow-up care.
3. Navigating patients to appropriate alternative healthcare destinations.

This transformation will enhance the value of EMS to healthcare system stakeholders and help fully realize the vision of the *EMS Agenda for the Future*.

The Path Forward

The following organizations support the vision articulated in this statement and recognize the unprecedented opportunity to bring substantial value to the healthcare system through the transformation of EMS agencies into Mobile Integrated Healthcare agencies.

- National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT)
- National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO)
- National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP)
- American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)
- National EMS Management Association (NEMSMA)
- National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE)
- International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED)
- Association of Critical Care Transport (ACCT)
- North Central EMS Institute (NCEMSI)
- The Paramedic Foundation
- American Ambulance Association (AAA)
- Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS)

¹ <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/NationalHealthAccountsHistorical.html>

We strongly encourage our joint memberships to engage in the logical, effective, and collaborative evolution of MIH-CP programs and component services, to ensure that the goals of their local healthcare systems and communities are met.

These organizations will continue to provide resources, education, leadership and advocacy at the local, state and national levels to assist members and their consideration of the opportunities created from this new environment of healthcare.

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