

2020

ANNUAL UPDATE

NHTSA OFFICE OF EMS

The Office of EMS is housed within the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the U.S. Department of Transportation



ems.gov



Advancing EMS Systems

Supporting the importance of developing EMS as a coordinated system of care



Education

Supporting a nationwide systems approach to EMS education



Research

Analyzing data and measuring performance to enable improvements in EMS systems



Workforce

Supporting efforts to strengthen and prepare the EMS workforce nationwide



Safety

Protecting the health and safety of EMS clinicians and their patients



EMS Data

Collecting and sharing standardized EMS data to support improvements in patient care and EMS systems



Preparedness

Fostering collaboration to enhance readiness for catastrophic incidents



911 Systems

Providing leadership and coordination to support and promote optimal 911 services



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

EMS professionals have long served at the frontlines of our healthcare system, ready for any emergency. This year, EMS organizations in communities across the United States and around the globe are busy tackling a pandemic like nothing we've ever seen—one that tests us as individuals, and as a profession. The team at the NHTSA Office of EMS and National 911 Program recognizes and salutes every EMS clinician and the people who support them as we all work together to fight COVID-19.

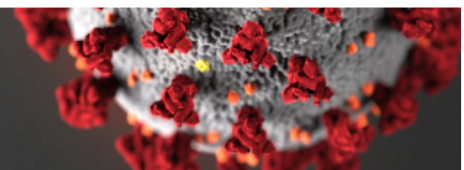
Soon after the discovery of the new coronavirus, our office began coordinating with others across the Federal government to support EMS at the state and local levels. OEMS director, Jon Krohmer, MD, stood up and led the Prehospital (EMS/911) Team as part of the HHS/FEMA Healthcare Resilience Task Force. For several months, the task force has worked consistently, bringing together representatives from federal agencies, states and local EMS to address the challenges facing local EMS and 911 systems. Some of the actions taken by the team and the NHTSA Office of EMS since the onset of the pandemic include:

- Convening subject matter experts to produce guidance documents for EMS and its public safety partners
- Coordinating with other task force teams and task force leadership
- Disseminating timely guidance and other information to the community through [ems.gov](https://www.ems.gov) and other channels
- Serving as a voice for EMS within the federal response framework
- Hosting several EMS Focus webinars on topics such as crisis standards of care and COVID-19 testing, as well as supporting HHS/ASPR EMS, emergency department and critical care COVID-19 clinical rounds webinars
- Working with the NEMSIS technical assistance center staff to provide timely national data to support the COVID-19 response

Many of the day-to-day activities of the task force are now occurring through regular federal processes in both our office and the many others involved in supporting EMS and 911. We continue to coordinate closely with FEMA, HHS and other entities, as well as through the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS. The COVID-19 resources on EMS.gov will continue to be updated for as long as this pandemic continues, and we urge you to review the resources there periodically.

COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR EMS

[Click here to access](#)



Report your agency's PPE supply and personnel status each week with NHTSA's EMS COVID Resource Reporting Tool to give State and National EMS leadership insight into your resource needs.



[Click to learn more and report your agency's status](#)



ADVANCING EMS SYSTEMS

State EMS Assessments – At the request of state officials, the NHTSA Office of EMS brings together teams of experts from around the country to evaluate state EMS systems. Through in-person discussions with state and local EMS stakeholders, observations of systems and infrastructure, and reviews of state and local data, the team develops recommendations to help the state’s EMS office evaluate and improve its EMS system, found on the [project page](#).

Nomenclature of the EMS Profession – Following recommendations by the National EMS Advisory Council that the EMS profession consider new nomenclature, leaders representing two dozen diverse organizations from across EMS and emergency healthcare convened to discuss topics ranging from the future of EMS to whether or not the term “EMS” is the most appropriate description of the profession. Information about the project is available [here](#).

National EMS Assessment 2020 – This cooperative effort between NHTSA and the National Association of State EMS Officials used state and national data to obtain a clear picture of the current state of EMS across the country. The report, the first of its kind in nearly a decade, can be downloaded [online](#).

Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey – A periodic NHTSA survey of people across the United States revealed that most respondents consider EMS an “essential service,” and 99% had confidence in the abilities of EMS clinicians who would respond if 911 had to be called. That finding and others are discussed in a NHTSA Traffic Tech brief that can be found [here](#).



PROMOTING EDUCATION

National EMS Education Standards Revision – With support from the Health Resources and Services Administration Maternal and Child Health Bureau’s EMS for Children Program and NHTSA, the National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE) and RedFlash Group are leading a collaborative effort to update the National EMS Education Standards and Instructional Guidelines. Since 2009, the standards have helped to ensure EMS clinicians receive an education preparing them to perform their roles. The revision will align the standards with the newly revised National EMS Scope of Practice Model and current evidence-based EMS practice. Learn more on the [project page](#).



SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Field Trauma Triage Guidelines Update – The field trauma triage guidelines are being updated to provide EMS clinicians across the country with evidence-based tools to use when deciding which patients will benefit from transport to a trauma center. The project, led by the American College of Surgeons through a cooperative agreement with NHTSA, will use as a reference the results of a systematic literature review supported by NHTSA and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, published in 2018. That review can be read [here](#).

Prehospital Airway Management Systematic Review – NHTSA is supporting the first step in development of an evidence-based guideline for prehospital airway management comparing endotracheal intubation with other interventions, through an interagency agreement with the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality. This systematic review of the literature is being conducted by the Evidence Based Practice Center at Oregon Health Science University. Follow this effort, which was the result of responses from the community to a federal request for information, [here](#).

Evidence-Based Guideline for EMS Management of Acute Pain – A systematic review of available research on prehospital pharmacologic management of acute pain was published by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and NHTSA in the fall of 2019. Based on that research, NHTSA and the Health Resources & Services Administration is collaborating with the National Association of State EMS Officials, the National Association of EMS Physicians and the American College of Emergency Physicians to develop an evidence-based guideline as well as related education and implementation guidance for EMS services. For more information about this project and other EMS evidence-based guidelines, visit the [NASEMSO project page](#).



ENHANCING THE EMS WORKFORCE

Fatigue Risk Management in EMS – The Fatigue in EMS initiative, a collaboration of NHTSA and NASEMSO, kicked off in February 2016, aiming to address the potential dangers of fatigue among EMS workers, including the risk of traffic crashes, injuries to providers and patients, and medical errors. After an extensive review of more than 30,000 published research articles, the project team released its evidence-based guidelines for fatigue risk management. The project recently entered phase two with researchers testing the impact of one or more evidence-based recommendations in the EMS community. In the third phase, the project team will develop a biomathematical model tailored to EMS shift scheduling. Learn more [online](#).



PROMOTING SAFETY

Characterizing EMS Ambulance Driver Training in EMS Systems – Reducing ambulance crashes is a priority for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This project aimed to describe the state of ambulance operator education and training across the United States through discussions with personnel in State EMS offices and through a survey of local EMS agencies. The study also examined selected existing ambulance Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) training programs to determine their content and alignment with current best practices. Find the report [here](#).



USING EMS DATA TO IMPROVE CARE

National EMS Information System – The National EMS Information System creates a standard for the collection of patient care and EMS system operational data and also collects portions of that data in a National EMS Database. The NEMSIS uniform dataset and database help local, state and national EMS stakeholders more accurately assess EMS needs and performance, as well as support better strategic planning for the EMS systems of tomorrow. The 2019 NEMSIS public release dataset contained information from more than 34 million EMS activations from 47 states and territories. The National EMS Database has also been used by researchers and policymakers tackling issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid crisis. Learn more by visiting the [project page](#).

Development of EMS Quality Measures – EMS Compass engaged the EMS community and designed a process for the development, testing and evaluation of EMS performance measures. That work is now being continued through the National EMS Quality Alliance (NEMSQA), a coalition of EMS organizations supported by NHTSA to create, evaluate and publish EMS performance measures. NEMSQA released revised EMS Compass measures in 2019 and continues to work on the development of new measures. Find the NEMSQA measures and learn how to get involved on the [NEMSQA site](#).



ENABLING PREPAREDNESS

Stop the Bleed – Stop the Bleed has united government agencies, not-for-profit organizations and corporations in an effort to provide resources and teach the public how to control major bleeding prior to the arrival of professional responders. NHTSA and its Federal partners continue to support the initiative through a variety of activities, including participation in National Stop the Bleed Day. Find out how your organization can help Stop the Bleed by clicking [here](#).



SUPPORTING 911 SYSTEMS

Next Generation 911 for Public Safety – Next Generation 911 provides the ability to share voice and data-rich information that will improve first responders' ability to save lives, ensure responder safety and protect property. NHTSA published several resources to help EMS, fire and law enforcement agencies explore specific benefits of the transition to NG911 and understand the impact an IP-based 911 system will have on the emergency communications ecosystem. Access these resources and more on [911.gov](#).

911 DataPath – 911 data is regularly collected and used, but challenges exist in comparing non-standardized data across states. *911 Data & Information Sharing: A Strategic Plan*, released in 2019, is the first step of a larger effort to create a nationally uniform 911 data system. Such a system will provide 911 and community leaders with essential information to assist with strategic planning, governance decisions and operational improvements at all levels of the nation's 911 system. Read more about the initiative and what's happening now to make it a reality on the [911 project page](#).



FICEMS

The Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services was established by Congress in 2005 to ensure coordination among federal agencies supporting local, regional, State, tribal, and territorial EMS and 911 systems, with the goal of improving the delivery of EMS throughout the nation.

In 2020, FICEMS members worked closely together to coordinate federal efforts supporting the State and local EMS response to COVID-19. They also continued to push forward on other important priorities, a few of which are highlighted below. Learn more and find materials from the recent FICEMS meetings [here](#).

Helping Ensure Pre-Hospital and Hospital Data Integration – FICEMS, in cooperation with the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT, the Department of Transportation, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, hosted a National Pre-Hospital and Hospital Data Integration Summit on January 29, 2020, to listen to and gain insights from invited stakeholders representing state and local authorities, professional societies, health systems, hospitals, health information exchanges, and private sector companies on the exchange of health data and information. Find out more about the meeting and review the presentations [online](#).

ET3 and New EMS Funding Mechanisms – The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that 205 organizations would be participating in the Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport (ET3) model to trial new funding mechanisms for pre-hospital care. While the implementation was delayed due to COVID-19, CMS expects to start ET3 in late 2020. FICEMS members are working closely with CMS to support the initiative and its data collection and reporting efforts. Find more details on the [CMS.gov site](#).

A New FICEMS Strategic Plan – In 2013, FICEMS published its five-year strategic plan, which has guided the committee's efforts. Over the past year, members of FICEMS and its technical working group have collaborated with an outside team of experts to evaluate the status of the objectives in that plan and to devise a new strategic plan for the years ahead. FICEMS members plan to review a draft of the new strategic plan in the winter of 2020-2021 and to approve and release the final plan soon after.



NEMSAC

The National EMS Advisory Council was established in April 2007 as a nationally recognized council of EMS representatives and consumers to provide advice and recommendations regarding EMS to NHTSA and FICEMS. The council provides a forum for the development, consideration and communication of information from a knowledgeable and independent perspective.

Over the past year, the members of NEMSAC have tackled a number of issues, from EMS clinician health and safety to data integration to EMS funding. Below are just a few highlights; to learn more about NEMSAC's past work and future meetings, visit the [EMS.gov NEMSAC page](#).

Trauma Priorities – In 2018, subsequent to the release of the National Academy of Medicine report, *A National Trauma Care System: Integrating Military and Civilian Trauma Systems to Achieve Zero Preventable Deaths After Injury*, NHTSA held a public request for information on improving prehospital trauma care. After receiving input from several national organizations and individuals, NHTSA staff asked NEMSAC to review the input to identify themes and critical issues to address. NEMSAC created an ad hoc Trauma Task Force, whose report can be read [here](#).

PPE and Opioid Emergencies – To address a growing concern over unsubstantiated reports of first responders being “exposed” to opioids while responding to medical or other emergencies, NEMSAC drafted an advisory reinforcing the evidence-based guidance to PPE for opioid-related incidents.

EMS Recruitment and Retention – With recruitment and retention of EMS clinicians remaining a top concern of EMS leaders across the country, NEMSAC spent significant time addressing this issue in 2019 and 2020. The council approved an advisory on Rural and Volunteer EMS Recruitment and Retention in January 2020.

About NHTSA's Office of EMS

Consensus building, collaboration and supporting significant national projects are the hallmarks of NHTSA's contribution to EMS system development. The mission of the NHTSA Office of EMS is to reduce death and disability by providing leadership and coordination to the EMS community in assessing, planning, developing and promoting comprehensive, evidence-based emergency medical services and 911 systems.

For more information about the Office's programs and initiatives, visit [ems.gov](#). There, you can sign up to receive EMS Update, the Office's official newsletter, and find out more about EMS Focus, the Office's webinar series.

