

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

SUCCESS STORY 2017

Emergency Medical Services Health Information Exchange

The Future of Emergency Medical Services Patient Care Depends on Successful, Secure, and Bi-directional Health Information

Issue: The goal of Health Information Exchange (HIE) programs is to facilitate secure access to health care data by appropriate individuals to provide safe, efficient, effective, equitable, patient-centered care. HIE relies on a bi-directional flow of data and should cover all aspects of the patient care continuum including dispatch, field care, transport, emergency department, hospital admission, hospital discharge, and practitioner care. Connecting Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to the broader health care system through HIE will lead to better patient care, more efficient transitions of care, improved outcomes and experiences, and stronger disaster resilience.

Intervention: The Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) hosted a two-day Health Information Exchange Educational Forum, "Moving Interoperability Forward by Engaging EMS". The forum was held in Anaheim, California on April 4th and 5th, 2017. The event brought together over 170 attendees made up of federal, state, and local partners representing EMS providers, hospitals, local EMS agencies, and software vendors. This educational event propelled the importance of Health Information Exchange to the forefront in the EMS field in California. For those unable to attend the HIE Educational Forum, EMSA made all materials and presentations available on the EMSA website. The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funding also facilitated a Health Information Exchange Advisory Meeting which hosted HIE leaders from local and federal partners who are interested in California HIE efforts and assisting in the development and deployment of successful HIE models across the U.S. held on April 3, 2017.

Impact: Health information is critical for healthcare providers in improving population health and patient outcomes, especially during medical emergencies and disasters where they are tasked with rapidly assessing and treating patients they have not seen previously. Having access to a patient's health care information in the field provides responders with reliable information that can affect initial care decisions made for the patient that can affect long-term outcomes.

Typically, paramedics and emergency medical providers rely on the patient or others to volunteer critical medical information before treatment. The HIE Forum showcased the field implementation of the Search, Alert, File and Reconcile (SAFR) model for HIE in San Diego, Orange, Imperial and San Bernardino Counties.

Before the implementation of SAFR, EMS paramedics in San Diego, Orange, Imperial, and San Bernardino Counties were unable to search for a patient's medical history electronically and EMS providers were required to input a patient's data manually into their electronic Patient Care Report (ePCR). Additionally, they communicated patient information to the receiving Emergency Room at the Hospital via radio or cell phone, which was less accurate and inefficient than the Electronic Medical Records.

After implementation of SAFR, a patient's medical information was available within seconds through connection with a cloud based Health Information Hub using an electronic mobile device and an ePCR.

The ability to have health data in the field such as recent hospitalizations, past medical history, medications, allergies, preferred health care facilities and end-of-life care preferences enables care providers to provide the most appropriate prehospital patient care.