

EMS Best Practices

MARCH 2015

UPDATE ON OUR CONTRA COSTA EMERGENCY AMBULANCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

—By Pat Frost, RN, MS, PNP, Director Emergency Medical Services



As many of you know, Contra Costa is in the midst an emergency ambulance request for proposal (RFP) process for Zone I, II and V, which is currently being served by American Medical Response. Local EMS Agencies are required by statute to competitively bid emergency ambulance zones periodically with a few limited exceptions.

The Contra Costa emergency ambulance RFP was developed in consultation with Fitch and Associates and reflects recommendations made as part of the Contra Costa EMS System Modernization Study. Input from numerous EMS System stakeholders was also included in the RFP process. Our RFP process timeline is documented on our website at cchealth.org/ems/system-review.php

- **December 9th** **The Preliminary Draft RFP was posted for review and public comment**
- **December 16th** **The Draft RFP was presented to the Board of Supervisors for discussion**
- **January 13th** **The revised RFP was approved by the Board with direction**
- **January 16th** **The revised RFP was submitted to the State EMS Authority for approval**

February 27th State approved RFP released.



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ASK EMS

Do you have questions for EMS? Not quite sure who to ask? This column will help address those questions. As space permits, we will answer questions you submit. As always, for immediate response please contact EMS.

Q: HOW CAN FIELD PROVIDERS HELP IMPROVE HOSPITAL OFFLOAD TIMES?

A: Reporting events in our EMS system where offloading of patients to the ED have been longer than 60 minutes is a requirement defined in our recently published Contra Costa EMS Policy #40.

The policy under section V-C read, "Never events must be reported on an EMS event form and forwarded to the EMS Agency within 24 hours."

Contra Costa EMS considers a "never event" to be a serious and preventable patient safety incident where patient transfer of care is delayed for 60 minutes or more.

By reporting these types of events, the EMS agency is able to provide feedback to our hospitals to help them improve their services. All of our hospital emergency departments are experiencing very high patient loads and are working hard to reduce the offload times for patients arriving by ambulance. Recent reports have demonstrated significant trends in reducing offload times.

To see our system off-load reports or to access the EMS event report form, visit our website at cchealth.org/ems/event-reporting.php.

CONTRA COSTA PILOT SITE FOR STROKE DATA COLLECTION

—By Mia Fairbanks RN, CEN, Prehospital Care Coordinator

Contra Costa County will be the pilot site for a new way of collecting stroke data. The California Stroke Registry is partnering with Contra Costa EMS and the Primary Stroke Centers in Contra Costa County to connect pre-hospital and hospital data.

The California Stroke Registry is a data repository that hospitals throughout California use to monitor and evaluate the quality of care stroke patients are receiving. All Contra Costa County Primary Stroke Centers send data to the California Stroke Registry. Being able to combine EMS and hospital data will provide a comprehensive picture of the stroke patient from dispatch to discharge in one database.

Why is this important? EMS plays a vital role in the treatment and transport of stroke patients, from recognition of stroke symptoms to alerting the hospital of a "stroke alert." Bridging the data will help us understand our entire system across the continuum of care and how, as EMS Providers, we can best care for the patient suffering from a stroke. The database will also provide the outcome information of our patients which we so often do not get as EMS providers. What happens after our stroke patient enters the hospital? Did they go home? Connecting the data will give us answers to those questions and many more.

LIVE HEALTHY: AMERICAN HEART MONTH IS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

—By Laura O'Neal, BSN, RN, Quality Improvement Program

50 years ago, a Presidential Proclamation designated February as American Heart Month; bringing attention to the need for cardiovascular health. Heart disease is responsible for one out of four deaths in the United States.

As providers, we have the opportunity to educate our patients about risk factors that lead to heart disease, such as poor diet, lack of physical exercise and smoking. We can encourage lifestyle choices such as eating a healthy diet of fruits and vegetables, which is low in salt and cholesterol, not smoking and getting regular exercise.

We can also encourage the community to know the signs and symptoms of stroke, heart attack and sudden cardiac arrest. We can also promote learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), how to use an automatic external defibrillator (AED) and to call 9-1-1.

Every February our nation publicly focuses on a message we carry every day with every contact we make. On February 3, 2015 the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors again proclaimed February as American Heart Month, reminding everyone to live a healthy lifestyle.

Please send questions for future ASK EMS columns to:
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