



EMS Information Bulletin 2017-01

DATE: February 14, 2017

SUBJECT: County-level or Broader-level EMS Response Plan

TO: Pennsylvania EMS Agencies

FROM: Aaron M. Rhone, EMS Program Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Rhone", written over the "FROM:" line.

The EMS Systems Act requires that agencies provide service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Those agencies that are unable to meet this requirement of the act must participate in a county-level or broader-level EMS response plan approved by the Department.

Under a county-level or broader-level EMS response plan, the EMS agencies that make up this plan will not all be required to provide EMS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, the plan as a whole must provide for coverage around the clock under its response plan. For a plan to be approved by the department it should meet the following:

1. The primary goal of the plan should be to ensure that 95% of calls for service are answered by the first agency dispatched. This will ensure patients receive the appropriate level of care in a timely fashion.
2. Provide a reasonable response parameter to all calls for service.
3. If an agency knows they are unable to be in service due to staffing, a process should be identified as to how they will ensure coverage. This should be completed and communicated to affected agencies and the PSAP at least 12 hours in advance.
4. Identify a mechanism that will be used for agencies to collaborate to provide 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage. For example,
 - Agency A may struggle with daytime coverage
 - Agency B may struggle with nighttime coverage
 - The mechanism should allow for agency B to fill the daytime gap while agency A fills the nighttime gap. Neither agency is able to provide coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but by collaborating, there are no gaps in service.
5. Collaborative scheduling should be done in advance so that the PSAP and participating agencies are aware and the appropriate agency is dispatched
6. Agencies must report all out of service periods to the PSAP in advance.
7. Identify a quality improvement process
8. Ratified by all participating agencies

The regional EMS councils will work with agencies to facilitate the creation and implementation of a county-level or broader-level EMS response plan to be approved by the Department of Health, Bureau of EMS.

If a response plan submitted for Department approval does not ensure EMS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week within the area that the response plan covers, the Department will not approve the plan because it does not meet statutory and regulatory requirements.