

Frequent EMS Users



Illustration by Ruben DeLuna

Frequent 911 callers or frequent visitors to emergency departments (EDs) are provided with case management services to connect them with primary care, behavioral health, housing, and social services.

Results (as of September 30, 2016)

- ▶ Community paramedics helped patients obtain housing and other nonemergency services that met the physical, psychological, and social needs that led to their frequent EMS use.
- ▶ The number of 911 calls, ambulance transports, and ED visits among enrolled patients was significantly reduced.
- ▶ Payers, ambulance providers, and hospitals saw cost savings. Since 35% of patients enrolled were uninsured, reducing their frequency of ED visits also decreased the amount of uncompensated care provided by partner hospitals.

How It Works

The frequent EMS user pilot sites enroll people who are frequent 911 callers, ED visitors, or both. Community paramedics identify the reasons for the frequent 911 calls and ED visits and link patients to appropriate nonemergency service providers that can reduce the patients' dependence on EMS agencies and EDs for care.

Community paramedics first assess the patient's physical, psychological, and social needs. For patients with a stable home, a home safety assessment is also conducted. Medication reconciliation is provided for patients who take any prescription medications. These assessments are performed at an initial in-person meeting and as-needed for the duration of the patient's tenure with the project. Patients remain enrolled in the projects until a community paramedic determines

that the patient no longer needs the project's services. Criteria for graduation from the project include reaching important individual milestones, such as obtaining housing or maintaining sobriety.

The two pilot sites enroll different populations of frequent EMS users. The City of San Diego's project primarily enrolls people with 20 or more ED visits per year. The City of Alameda's project, which serves a population much smaller than San Diego's (79,227 vs. 1,391,676), is open to anyone identified by the EMS agency or the partner hospital as frequent 911 or ED users. San Diego's community paramedics provide frequent EMS user services exclusively, and Alameda's community paramedics alternate between working full-time as community paramedics and full-time as traditional firefighter paramedics.

Partners

LOCAL EMS AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY	HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PARTNERS	EMS PROVIDER PARTNERS	LOCATIONS
Alameda County	Alameda County EMS Agency	Alameda Hospital	Alameda City Fire Department	City of Alameda
San Diego	City of San Diego	UC San Diego	Rural Metro / AMR San Diego City Fire Department	City of San Diego



For more information on community paramedicine programs operating today in California, visit www.emsa.ca.gov/community_paramedicine.