

April, 2008

New Mexico Emergency Medical Services Tracking and Reporting System (NMEMSTARS)

Prehospital Data Collection and Reporting

This document is provided by the New Mexico Department of Health, Epidemiology and Response Division, Emergency Medical Systems Bureau to answer questions and provide direction for ambulance services to initiate participation in this important project. If you have additional questions regarding the data collection program after your review of this information, please call or email the project staff listed at the end of this document.

1. What is the background of the project?

Historically, New Mexico has used various methods including a statewide EMS run form in the late 1980's and 90's. Various approaches have been used; however, the rapid development of technology has significantly improved the methods and mechanisms that can be used to gather, analyze, and report large amounts of data.

In May 2007, the NM Department of Health purchased a software licenses for web based pre-hospital data collection, and launched the New Mexico Emergency Medical Services Tracking and Reporting System (NMEMSTARS). The package includes a statewide software license, support and hosting of the data repository, and training for system administrators and users. The provider is a Minnesota based company, ImageTrend. The software can be viewed on the web at: www.nmemstars.org, going to the log on, and using the username: *provider*, password: *provider*. This will give you access to a training site which you can use to examine the data input and reporting capacity of the software.

2. How does my agency participate?

Contact your regional representative listed at the end of this document and make a request to participate. You will be assigned a user name and password, giving you access to NMEMSTARS. From there you can enter your service information, if it isn't already there or is not current, and the ability to enter run reports and generate reports. Alternatively, if you would like to submit "batch" run reports, these individuals can assist you with the specific details to get this accomplished. Once entered, your data will be available to you for review.

3. What will the Department of Health do with our agency data?

Our goals are three-fold:

- Provide meaningful data to each agency in a timely manner.
- Ensure New Mexico's participation in the national EMS database so that we can apply for federal funding opportunities; and measure our system performance against national benchmarks.
- Create a database of aggregate data that can be used for research within New Mexico and create an annual report of EMS performance goals and objectives that are based in science and will help assure quality patient care.

4. What is NHTSA?

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) created the list of data elements the NEMSIS project uses (currently NHTSA 2.2.1). New Mexico, and most other states in the United States, are, or are working toward, NEMSIS compliance. This means they are creating data collection systems based on these NHTSA data elements as well.

5. What is NEMSIS?

The National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS) was developed with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). There are 420 data elements described and defined within the national data set. The NEMSIS project has three primary goals & objectives:

- Implement an electronic EMS documentation system in every local EMS system, which can collect and use data based on the NHTSA Version 2.2.1 dataset standard.
- Implement a state EMS information system in every state and territory, which can receive and use a portion of the local EMS data via the XML standard. XML (eXtensible Markup Language) is a database standard that describes how data is encoded such that it has a

meaningful structure that both computers and humans can understand.

- Implement a national EMS database, which can receive and use a portion of the state and territorial EMS data via the XML Standard.

For more information about NEMSIS, visit their web site: <http://www.nemsis.org>.

6. What legal authority does the state have to collect prehospital data?

The EMS Fund Act requires EMS services to participate in the bureau's prehospital data collection system, as determined by the bureau, by using the bureau's software, web-site or by submitted compatible data (7.24.4.11). Further, for those services regulated by the Public Regulation Commission, the Commission requires ambulance services to maintain a written quality assurance program, which shall provide for patient care records retention and submission of a completed patient run report to the EMS Bureau (18.3.14.24).

Air ambulance services that serve New Mexico are required to submit reports for patient transports on a quarterly basis to the Emergency Medical Systems Bureau of the NM Department of Health in compliance with the New Mexico Regulations for Air Ambulance (Section 7.27.5, NMSA 1978), promulgated January 1, 2006.

7. What is NEMSIS Compliance?

NEMSIS has described a compliance standard so agencies will know what their software vendor can do with the data and ensure that they are purchasing data systems that meet their needs. There are two levels of NEMSIS compliance:

- a. Silver Compliance: Any records management system that has passed a testing process that meets the national minimum 68 data elements, but could include all 420 NEMSIS data elements.
- b. Gold Compliance: Any records management system that has passed a testing process that meets the entire 420 NEMSIS data elements.

8. What is New Mexico Data Collection and Submission Compliance?

New Mexico will be collecting data in two parts. First is the ongoing collection and updating of EMS Agency contact information, which is stored and available for review or updates at www.nmemstars.org. Please go to this site and verify that the information entered for your service is accurate and up to date. If updates are needed, please contact one of the individuals listed at the end of this document and provide them with the correct information.

Second is the ongoing submission of run reports, which can be done through the web based, ImageTrend, run report data entry system; or, if your EMS run data is either Silver or Gold level

NEMESIS compliant, it can be downloaded into NMEMSTARS. Contact one of the people listed at the end of this document for specific instructions on how to download your run reports into NMEMSTARS.

New Mexico is considering requiring the submission of approximately 39 NEMESIS defined, national level elements. However, we would like you to submit an additional 50 “optional” elements so we can generate meaningful reports and contribute to the national data system. Any of the technical contacts listed at the end of this document can provide you with a list of the elements being reviewed. Any comments or suggestions regarding these data elements would be appreciated and should be submitted to Stuart Castle, EMS Bureau data manager. It is anticipated that this list will be finalized by May 2008.

9. What is the timeline for the project?

Over 45 New Mexico ambulance services are currently participating in the statewide EMS data collection project, with services being added on a regular basis. The goal is to have all New Mexico ambulance services compliant and submitting the minimum required data by January 1, 2009.

10. What about HIPAA Compliance?

Public Health Data Collection Systems - Many state health departments collect various data sets—such as birth, death and EMS records—in their role as a public health authority. As long as the public health authority is legally authorized to collect such data, HIPAA allows covered entities (i.e. hospitals and ambulance services) to supply the necessary data to the public health authority without patient authorization (Section 164.512).

11. Does the State system include a billing module, or will it link to my current billing software?

NMEMSTARS does not contain a billing component. However, once the run report is entered, data can be exported to a billing system of your choice. More specific details on these functions can be discussed with staff of the Region I EMS and Trauma Foundation (listed at the end of this document).

12. What can I do with my agency’s data?

The web-based system will allow you to log in and view your agency data along with a reporting engine that allows you to download data to Excel or another database program for analysis at the agency level. Medical directors and service administrators can review run reports from any location with an internet connection, at any time. At the Regional and State level, aggregate reports will be generated and will be devoid of both agency and personal identifiers.

13. Where can I get technical assistance?

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