

**April, 2011**

## **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 to answer questions and provide direction for ambulance, rescue and fire services regarding participation in this important program. 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. Why is the State collecting prehospital EMS data?**

To improve patient outcomes. Timely and appropriate prehospital care and transportation is dependent on information that addresses what services are available, their location and response capacity, the types of patients being served and the disposition of those patients. Recently the state has generated NMEMSTARS reports on: fall related injuries; firearm related injuries; drug related indicators; air medical transports; EMS Fund Act distribution; and, EMS services applying for certification. The system is designed for public health surveillance and EMS administrative purposes.

### **2. How does my agency participate?**

If you are an administrator in your service and your service is not currently participating, 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 have the ability to enter run reports and generate reports. Once entered, your data will be available to you for review.

If you are not an administrator for your department, contact your supervisor and request login information.

### **3. When does my agency need to start submitting data to the State?**

Ground services must report within 30 days of the incident and air ambulance services must report quarterly.

The EMS Bureau uses the following criteria to calculate a service's Fund Act distribution:

- The run volume listed must be the number of calls that have been entered in NMEMSTARS for the previous federal fiscal year. For applications due January 2011, this was 10/1/09 – 9/30/10.
- All EMS runs should be entered, including patient transports from a scene; interfacility transports; patient refusals and cancelations.

#### **4. What legal authority does the state have to collect prehospital data?**

Four specific regulations address this issue. First, 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 (NMAC 7.27.4.11.C). Second, 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 (NMAC 18.3.14.24).

Third, the Certification of Emergency Medical Services Agencies requires the submission of 16 data elements about the service and 92 elements about the patient encounter to the EMS Bureau (NMAC 7.27.10.12).

Lastly, 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.

#### **5. What is New Mexico Data Collection and Submission Compliance?**

Patient care reports can be submitted to the state through the web based run report data entry system; or, if your EMS run data is either Silver or Gold level NEMSIS 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 requiring the submission of 59 NEMSIS defined elements. Seventeen of the 59 elements define the service and only need to be entered once, the remaining 42 are unique to each patient care record. However, a service may choose to use any additional data elements to help them document the service they provide and generate meaningful reports. Any of the technical contacts listed at the end of this document can provide you with a list of the elements.

#### **6. What is considered an EMS Run?**

As defined in the EMS Fund Act, 7.27.4.7, "run" means an EMS response dispatched to an existing or potential medical event, by one or more local recipients to provide EMS assistance and/or transportation of a patient, regardless of the number of patients on scene." All EMS runs should be entered into NMEMSTARS and a separate "run" should be entered for each patient encounter. There is no requirement to enter those calls that are strictly fire related, although they can be incorporated. A local fire department can use NMEMSTARS to generate a file of fire related calls for NFIRS reporting (see Question 12).

#### **7. What is the current status for the project?**

Over 315 (93%) New Mexico EMS and Fire services are currently participating in the statewide EMS data collection program. Systems are using a variety of data entry procedures, including direct entry on the NMEMSTARS web site, uploads from lap top computers, and XML imports to NMEMSTARS. Currently there are approximately 670,000 reports in the system, with about 33,000 new records added each month.

#### **8. What about HIPAA Compliance?**

State health departments collect multiple 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 (which the New Mexico Department of Health is), HIPAA allows covered entities (i.e. hospitals and EMS services) to supply the necessary data to the public health authority without patient authorization (Section 164.512).

## 9. 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 EMS Region office (listed at the end of this document).

## 10. 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 enables you to download data to Excel<sup>®</sup>, or another database program for analysis at the agency level. Medical directors, consulting pharmacists, and service administrators can review run reports from any location with an internet connection, at any time. Aggregate reports are generated at the Regional and State level, but public documents do not include agency or personal identifiers.

## 11. What happens when multiple agencies respond to the same call?

Each agency should complete a patient care report and submit it to NMEMSTARS. Properly designating *call number*, *incident number*, and *patient care report number* will avoid duplicate records of calls. In most jurisdictions the incident number is assigned by the county or dispatch agency, while the call number is assigned by the EMS service. The patient care report number is used to designate the number of patients at the scene; i.e., 1 of 1, or 1 of 2, etc. All services responding to a single incident should complete their own patient care report and submit it to NMEMSTARS.

## 12. Why is there a fire reporting system included in the EMS reporting software?

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) module is provided by the EMS Bureau as a courtesy to services that wish to use the same program to write NFIRS reports as they do EMS Reports. It is important to remember that NFIRS reports written in NMEMSTARS must be exported from NMEMSTARS to your computer and then uploaded to the NFIRS website in order to be compliant with the NM Fire Marshalls office requirements. For additional instructions on NFIRS uploads click on the "my service" tab when you are logged in to NMEMSTARS and scroll down to "NFIRS Export Users Guide". For assistance with the NFIRS site, please contact the NM Fire Marshall's office.

## 13. Where can I get technical assistance?

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