



National Association of State EMS Directors
National Association of EMS Physicians
American Public Health Association

Emergency Medical and Public Health Response to Terrorism: Memorandum of Understanding

The American Public Health Association (APHA), the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP), and the National Association of State EMS Directors, developed a strong collaboration over the past two years through a series of joint meetings sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). These meetings focused on strategies to improve community health care by enhancing collaboration between emergency medical services and public health agencies. A key benefit of this collaboration will be an improved medical/public health response to terrorism and other public health threats.

APHA, NAEMSP, and NASEMSD, serving the interests of the health of the U.S. public, agree to the following principles in their collective responses to terrorism and other public health threats:

- X Emergency medical Services should collaborate with public health to define EMS providers' role in symptom complex identification, surveillance, distribution of medications and immunizations, care of casualties, and provision of backup to and protection of hospital Emergency Departments.
- X Leadership from EMS and Public Health should develop mechanisms to rapidly assimilate and distribute "best practices" from EMS and Public Health collaborations in the medical/public health response to terrorism.
- X In order to assure prompt notification to Public Health agencies of clustered illnesses identified by EMS responders, and for EMS responders to receive notification of Public Health alerts, a communication infrastructure needs to be established that connects them. This infrastructure should allow communication from ambulance-to-ambulance, hospital-to-hospital, ambulance-to-hospital, and Public Health-to-all EMS components. Such a system will ensure that the most important EMS resources, its volunteer and career providers, will receive vital notifications and shared intelligence that will help them to protect themselves and their families, and to permit them to continue providing essential EMS services to their communities.

- X Leadership from state and local EMS and Public Health agencies should meet and establish regular contact and working relationships immediately.
- X EMS and Public Health should develop guidelines for prophylaxis and treatment of biological and chemical threats, including those that address the management of special needs groups such as infants, children, pregnant women, and the elderly.
- X EMS and Public Health should develop a model of local EMS/Public Health response to acts of terrorism. This model should be used as the foundation for an emergent addendum to the *EMS Agenda for the Future*.
- X EMS and Public Health should consider how EMS providers and Public Health workers should be cross-trained and certified in order to expand personnel capabilities in the medical/public health response to terrorism and to rapidly emerging public health threats.
- X A joint EMS/Public Health *Medical Response Plan to Terrorism* should be developed with Federal Partners, using as its foundation the previous EMS/Public Health/NHTSA/HRSA EMS-C studies.
- X Public Health and EMS should cooperate in developing and presenting education concerning the medical response to terrorist weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to EMS, Public Health and front-line health care providers.
- X EMS and Public Health should develop and advocate for joint position statements regarding protection for EMS, Public Health and all other front-line health care providers, including the ready availability for them of appropriate immunizations and antibiotics.
- X Rural EMS systems, especially those in health professional shortage areas, can serve as detection and treatment outlets on behalf of Public health. Despite the lower population density in these areas, any emergence of biological, nuclear, or environmental threats must be promptly mitigated, not only for the medical/public health impacts of these events but also because of possible compromise or farmland and water supplies upon which urban areas depend.
- X EMS and Public Health representatives should rapidly reassess the current Ambulance Equipment Guidelines to assure inclusion of equipment appropriate for response to weapons of mass destruction, and to make recommendations for revisions and financial support where indicated by the reassessment.