Are We Professionals?

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Overview

• About me
• About you
• Are we professionals?
  • Why?
• Why does it matter?
• What constitutes a professional?
• Developing a code of conduct for EMS
About Me
Collegiate EMS
University of Florida
Law School
University of Michigan
Lawyer

Washington, DC
Volunteer EMT
Bethesda-Chevy Chase (MD) Rescue Squad
Paramedic
Alexandria Fire Department
About You
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Are We Professionals?
Why?
Why Does it Matter?
Money
Money

• Average salary for EMTs
  • $31,849 (nationally)
    • $15.31/hour
  • $31,982 (VA/MD/WV/PA)

• Average salary for Paramedics
  • $41,085 (nationally)
  • $42,327 (VA/MD/WV/PA)

• Second job
  • Over 40% of full-time EMS providers
Power

“The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.”

Oxford American Dictionary
Power (Influence)

“She doesn’t have any real power—just influence.”
Power (Policy)

Policy & How to Change It

To realize the potential of EMS in mobile integrated healthcare, we must know how to shape the playing field.

The development of mobile integrated healthcare practice offers great promise for emergency medical services, including the opportunity for EMS to make its way into an integral part of the broader healthcare system. Indeed, the proposed MIMP framework outlines that EMS systems will provide the underlying structures for the coordinated delivery of non-emergent care. In other words, the right care at the right place at the right time and at the right cost.

The EMS hub paradigm in the new model of healthcare delivery, however, requires significant changes to the role and responsibilities of EMS providers. The implementation of MIMP programs will require change in EMS operations and policy and practice. Consequently, improving the quality of care for EMS providers generates. This article discusses the role of EMS in the delivery of mobile integrated healthcare. The opportunity for EMS organizations to influence the policy process and the importance of understanding and taking advantage of opportunities for policy change.
Respect

“A feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.”

Oxford American Dictionary
Respect (ER Staff)
Respect (ER Docs)
Respect (Administration)
Respect (Management)
Respect (Policymakers)
Respect (Other Professionals)
What Constitutes a Professional?
Common EMS Themes...

• Appearance, Appearance, Appearance
  • Is a clean, neat uniform all it takes?

• Courtesy
  • We are in the service industry, right?

• Etiquette?
  • “Sir”
  • “Ma’am”
  • “Hey, doc”
  • Firm handshake
  • No smoking or loud music
Professionalism (Defined)

“the competence or skill expected of a professional”

Oxford American Dictionary
Professional (Defined)

“a person engaged in a specified activity as one’s main paid occupation rather than as a pastime”

Oxford American Dictionary
Professional (Defined)

“having or showing the skill appropriate to a professional person; *competent or skillful*”

Oxford American Dictionary
Professional (Defined)

“of, relating to, or connected with a profession”

Oxford American Dictionary
Profession (Defined)

“a paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification”

Oxford American Dictionary
Professionals: An MPA Perspective

“A professional is someone who receives important occupational awards [i.e., money, power, respect] from a reference group whose membership is limited to people who have undergone specialized formal education and have accepted a group-defined code of proper conduct.”

James Q. Wilson, Bureaucracy (1989)
Reference Group
Specialized, Formal Education

- **Specialized?**
  - Is EMS knowledge unique?
    - Medicine
    - Nursing

- **Formal?**
  - Vocational training
  - Undergraduate training
    - Associates degree
    - Bachelors degree
  - Graduate and post-graduate training
Group-Defined Code of Conduct

• Professional Norms
  • What is expected?
  • Based on objective standards

• Professional Ethics
  • What is right?
  • Based on subjective values
Developing a Code of Conduct for EMS
Preparedness
Preparedness
Competence (Initial Training)
Competence (Excellence)
Competence (Scholarship)
Personal Accountability

“Well, we got them to the hospital, didn’t we?”
Personal Accountability

“I’m not a doctor, I don’t diagnose.”
Risk Tolerance & Safety
Risk Tolerance & Safety
Risk Tolerance & Safety

Rule #1
Do No Harm
Patient-Centered Care

• Focuses on patient’s needs and preferences
• Emphasizes good communication by provider
• Allows patient to make informed decisions regarding their care
• Supported by evidence-based information
Evidence-Based Care
Evidence-Based Care

“[T]he prehospital emergency care system provides a stark example of how standards of care and clinical protocols can take root despite an almost total lack of evidence to support their use.”

Institute of Medicine, Report on EMS (2007)
Evidence-Based Care
Evidence-Based Care
Evidence-Based Care

• 2008: Conference on the development of national evidence-based guidelines
  • Co-sponsored by FICEMS and NEMSAC
  • Focused on the development of a model process for the development of evidence-based guidelines

• 2014: First evidence-based guidelines published
  • Pediatric seizures
  • Pain management
  • Helicopter transport
  • External hemorrhage control
Performance Measurement
“Very little is known about the quality of care delivered by EMS. The reason for this lack of knowledge is that there are no nationally agreed-upon measures of EMS quality and virtually no accountability for the performance of EMS systems.”

Institute of Medicine, Report on EMS (2007)
Performance Measurement

“Regular measurement of outcomes and results, which generates reliable data on the effectiveness and efficiency of programs.”

U.S. Department of State
Performance Measurement

• 2008: First set of *clinical* EMS performance measures published
  • Focused on treatment “bundles” for several conditions
    • STEMI
    • Pulmonary edema
    • Asthma
    • Seizures
    • Trauma
    • Cardiac arrest
  • Based on evidence of *number-needed-to-treat* (NNT)
Performance Measurement

• 2014: New federal initiative to develop EMS performance measures
  • Two-year project
  • Collaboration between NASEMSO and NHTSA
  • Goal is to develop performance measures “derived from the latest published literature and identified best practices”
  • Stakeholder meeting scheduled for December 2\textsuperscript{nd} in Washington, DC
Quality Improvement
Quality Improvement

“Continuous and ongoing efforts to achieve measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes, and other indicators of quality services or processes which achieve equity and improve the health of the community.”

Riley et al., Defining Quality Improvements in Public Health (2010)
Quality Improvement

• Understand your **systems and processes**
  • Both resources (inputs) and activities (processes) must be addressed to improve quality of care (outputs)

• Focus on **patients** (i.e., patient-centered care)
  • Needs and expectations of patients and the community

• Focus on being part of the **team**
  • Issues are complex, necessitating a team approach

• Focus on the use of **data**
  • Separates fact (what is actually happening) from fiction (what we think is happening)
  • Allows for monitoring of changes and benchmarking
Summary

• The jury is still out on whether we are professionals
• Professionalism is about more than just appearance
• EMS should develop professional norms and ethics
  • Preparedness
  • Competence
  • Personal accountability
  • Risk tolerance and safety
  • Evidence-based care
  • Performance measurement
  • Quality improvement
Questions?

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