



Virginia Standards of Excellence Program - Pilot Phase

Introduction

Whether an EMS agency is career, for-profit or volunteer-based, it's still a business. EMS agencies are in the "business" of providing quality pre hospital patient care to millions of Virginians on a daily basis.

Additionally, all EMS agencies in Virginia are required to conform to the Virginia EMS Regulations (12VAC5-31) in order to operate, and provide service to it's community.

The purpose of the Virginia Standards of Excellence (SoE) program is to identify and recognize EMS agencies that strive to operate above the standards and requirements of the Virginia EMS Regulations (12VAC5-31). The evaluation addresses several areas that collectively make up the operations of an EMS agency from several perspectives.

Areas of Excellence

The critical areas addressed in this program are called 'Areas of Excellence'. Each area outlines criteria based on best practices that are used to assess and measure the performance of an EMS agency. The SoE program has eight Areas of Excellence:

- Leadership/Management
- Emergency Medical Dispatch
- Clinical Care Measures
- Operational Medical Direction
- Life Safety
- Community Support and Involvement
- Recruitment & Retention
- Performance and Risk

Each of the Areas of Excellence are reviewed using an assessment document that details optimal tasks, procedures and guidelines that are necessary to successfully maintain the business of managing an EMS agency and be recognized as an Agency of Excellence.

This program provides information to agencies in an unbiased way through a voluntary process that identifies how the agency is performing based on criteria outlined in the SoE survey. If requested, technical assistance is available to improve the areas that the agency has identified as not meeting the criteria for a particular area.

After the self-evaluation process is completed, an EMS agency (if they chose) may submit their SoE documents to the OEMS for review. Resources and information will be provided as needed.

On site assistance is also available (if requested) during this improvement process, from the SoE Technical Assistance Teams (TATs), which are comprised of subject matter experts.

Pilot / Beta Testing

The SoE program has been developed by the EMS Workforce Development Committee (WDC) of the State EMS Advisory Board. The program has reached a stage where the proof of concept needs to be tested. A variety of EMS agencies and departments have been asked to participate and complete a SoE self assessment and site visit as part of a pilot of the program

The EMS agencies participating in the pilot represent a true cross section of Virginia's EMS delivery, and range from full time career agencies, through volunteer rescue squad (VRS) to rural paid / volunteer mixed departments. A commercial for profit service has also volunteered to take part in the pilot phase of this project.

Findings from an initial SoE survey / site visit beta test with EMS agencies and departments found the process to be very beneficial. Beta test EMS agencies offered commentary on the areas of excellence and the question sets, which lead to refining the measures utilized to assess performance.

Next Steps

Results from beta test EMS agencies have been shared with the WDC project team and each individual agency leads / Chiefs. (Completed sheets from each agency will not be published, released to other participants, or used for any other purpose). A feedback/interview session will be arranged with pilot EMS agencies to test and adjust the questionnaires for substance, content and format.

The overall results and progress of SoE will be reported and updated at each EMS Workforce Development Committee meeting. For EMS agencies that participate in the program, an opportunity exists to convert the results of the pilot to a SOE award – further details will follow on this.

EMS agencies may also wish to add their own 'Subject Matter Experts' (SME) to either be part of a site visit team in their own geographic area as the program develops or be on hand as a mentor/point of referral/expertise as the program continues. It is the goal of the EMS Workforce Development Committee to increase its pool of SMEs as the program progresses in order to assist the entire state.

Conclusion

The pilot phase of the SoE will begin in 2015, and agencies have already volunteered to pilot the project. At the conclusion of the pilot phase, the next steps in the process and feedback from participating agencies will propel the program to roll out to all interested agencies.

