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EMS Performance Measures Project Aims to Help Local Systems Improve
EMS Compass Initiative Looks To
Community For Input

SAN ANTONIO, Texas, April 23, 2015– “EMS Compass, an initiative to improve systems of care through meaningful performance measures, is underway and will soon be looking for input from the public,” said Nick Nudell, EMS Compass project manager, at Tuesday’s closing session of the National Association of State EMS Officials Spring Meeting.

The initiative launched earlier this year with funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) through a cooperative agreement with the National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO). EMS Compass brings together many of the nation’s leading minds in EMS, healthcare and performance improvement, including the expertise of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI).

“EMS Compass is a national initiative that will support local communities in providing high-quality emergency care to patients,” said Dia Gainor, executive director of NASEMSO.

“We hope that the name, EMS Compass, will serve to differentiate this initiative from previous performance measurement efforts and regional activities and that it will communicate the goal of setting a course for continued performance measure development and implementation,” Gainor continued. “Knowing what to measure and how to measure it is critical to helping our local and state EMS systems improve.”

Although funded as a two-year project, the goal of EMS Compass is not just to create and evaluate performance measures, but to develop a system for designing performance measures that can live on well beyond the timeline of the current initiative. Measuring the quality of care in EMS has become more critical not only for quality improvement efforts, but also because healthcare financing is changing rapidly.

The EMS Compass performance measures will be based on the latest National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) version 3.4 data points and will allow EMS agencies to use local and state data meaningfully to improve care. In addition to the performance measure design system, EMS Compass will develop a guidebook to assist EMS providers and agencies in efforts to measure performance and make improvements.

“The project will facilitate an inclusive and open development process, with participation from dozens of EMS and healthcare experts and organizations and multiple opportunities for input and public comment, including a call for measures later this spring,” said Nudell. “The call for measures, which is also used by the National Quality Forum (NQF) in its measurement design process, will allow anyone to submit performance measures to be considered by the EMS Compass committee members.”

Other ways to be involved in EMS Compass will include:

- A series of webinars to discuss the prioritization of performance measures and solicit feedback from the EMS community
- Opportunities for EMS agencies to beta test and comment on the draft measures
- Public comment at future community and stakeholder meetings

The EMS Compass initiative is led by a steering committee of a diverse group of veteran EMS and performance measurement experts and chaired by the esteemed Bob Bass, MD, who recently retired as director of the Maryland Institute for EMS Systems (MIEMSS).

“I am thrilled to be a part of one of the most important initiatives in EMS and excited to be working with some of the most thoughtful and innovative minds in the field,” Bass said.

For more about EMS Compass or to volunteer to be involved in the national effort, sign up to receive updates at www.emscompass.org, and follow the initiative on Facebook and Twitter (@EMSCompass).

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