

Bill To Improve Delivery of EMS Services Now Law

By *PostEagle* on July 26, 2017

(TRENTON, NJ) – Legislation sponsored by Assembly Democrats Herb Conaway, Jr., M.D., Eric Houghtaling, Annette Quijano, Thomas Giblin and Wayne DeAngelo to improve the delivery of emergency medical services (EMS) in New Jersey by establishing certain data reporting requirements for EMS providers and dispatch centers has been signed into law.

Under the law (S-5/A-4925), basic life support ambulance services, mobile intensive care units, air medical services, and volunteer and non-volunteer first aid, rescue, and ambulance squads would be required to report certain data to the state Department of Health (DOH), which will create a system to evaluate the data to help improve outcomes.

“In the context of emergency medical services, enhanced data tracking and reporting can expedite a hospital’s receipt of EMS triage reports, helping to ensure that health care professionals at the hospital are aware of an incoming patient’s treatment needs and are better prepared to provide appropriate care upon arrival,” said Conaway (D-Burlington), a practicing physician. “This will provide a tremendous boost when it comes to the delivery of critical care.”

“Throughout both the nation and the health care industry, technological innovations have enhanced the ability to track and utilize patient care data to improve outcomes and efficiencies and realize cost savings,” said Houghtaling (D-Monmouth). “We should be capitalizing on these innovations as much as possible.”

“Enhanced data reporting can help identify trends in particular types of interventions, such as in the administration of opioid antidotes to overdose victims, which, in turn, will promote and foster improved emergency responses,” said Quijano (D-Union). “There is tremendous potential in capturing and analyzing this data, all of which can be used to protect and serve the people of New Jersey.”

“Enhanced EMS data tracking is essential to improving the emergency medical system of care in New Jersey,” said Giblin (D-Essex/Passaic). “The benefits to be reaped from this data in terms of lives saved and outcomes improved are enormous.”

“In addition to the analysis and recommendations that the Health Department will be required to provide, individual EMS squads can use their own data to optimize improvements internally in order to enhance their squad performance,” said DeAngelo (D-Mercer/Middlesex). “I know every squad strives for excellence and we should be supporting them in that quest.”

“There are an unbelievable amount of things that can be done with data analytics these days,” said Mukherji (D-Hudson). “If it can be used to streamline and improve EMS services in order to save lives and improve outcomes, we should be pursuing it as a state.”

Specifically, each EMS provider that provides pre-hospital emergency medical care to patients in New Jersey will be required to report certain information about each incident to DOH. This information is to be reported in the most current format used by the National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS) and is to include:

- the date, time, and location of the encounter;

- the nature of the medical emergency, including the number of persons requiring emergency medical services and their conditions;
- the nature and type of any emergency medical treatment or services provided;
- the name and certification or professional licensure of each professional staffing the EMS provider unit during the encounter;
- whether any other EMS providers responded to the request for services;
- the outcome of the encounter, including whether each person receiving services was treated, refused additional treatment, was transported to a hospital or other health care facility or transferred to another EMS provider for further treatment, or died; and
- any other particulars of the encounter as may be relevant or required by the Commissioner of Health.

Similarly, EMS dispatch centers will be required to report certain information to DOH concerning each request for emergency medical services that is received by the dispatch center. DOH will be required to furnish to EMS providers and dispatchers, without charge, any software or programs developed by the department for accessing and using the electronic reporting system.

The electronic reporting system is to record and track data concerning the types of medical emergencies for which emergency medical services are requested, patterns in the timing and location of requests for emergency medical services, patterns in the type or nature of emergency medical services provided, and patterns in dispatch and response activity. Additionally, the commissioner will have the option to track and record response times for EMS providers.

The commissioner, in consultation with the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council, shall be required to adopt rules and regulations establishing quality performance metrics and pre-hospital protocols for emergency medical services providers, which are to be based on the data tracked and recorded under the bill.

Additionally, the law requires DOH to establish the New Jersey Emergency Medical Services Task Force to support and enhance the provision of specialized response services, utilizing personnel and equipment to respond as requested, for both pre-planned and emergency events, including natural disasters, mass casualty incidents, and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive events, in order to reduce morbidity and mortality through appropriate triage, incident management, and coordinated pre-hospital care and transportation.

NJ Assembly Democrats press release