



**PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP
SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE**

SAN DIEGO COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OFFICE
5560 OVERLAND AVE, SUITE 400, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92123-1204
www.SanDiegoCountyEMS.com

JEFF COLLINS
DIRECTOR
San Diego County Fire
(619) 339-0283

ANDREW (ANDY) PARR
EMS ADMINISTRATOR
Deputy Director, Departmental Operations
(619) 285-6429

December 22, 2025

EMS QUALITY MANAGEMENT POLICY: PROVISIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ON JANUARY 6, 2026

Effective January 6, 2026, the following County of San Diego, Emergency Medical Services (CoSD EMS) policies will sunset and become inactive:

- S-004 EMS System Quality Improvement
- S-006 Prehospital Audit Committee
- S-409 Reporting of Issues in Patient Care Management

To maintain our quality management program, provisional CoSD EMS Policies S-012 *EMS System Quality Management* and S-013 *Quality Care Consortium* will become effective on January 6, 2026. Policies S-012 and S-013 support the implementation of the final draft of the [Quality Management Plan](#), as released on November 25, 2025. The Plan was developed through collaborative efforts of the EMS Delivery System Redesign Steering Committee and Quality Management Task Force.

The Quality Management Plan, referenced in Policy S-012, establishes a patient-centered, modernized, systemwide framework designed to enhance prehospital care across the EMS delivery system. EMS service providers are primarily responsible for quality assurance, with CoSD EMS oversight. System participants, including receiving hospitals, shall report prehospital clinical care concerns by email to EMSNotifications@sdcounty.ca.gov.¹ Email reporting will be replaced by direct access to a PHI-protected, centralized database administered by CoSD EMS, once credentials are available and distributed to system participants.

The Quality Care Consortium (QCC), described in Policy S-013, will assume responsibilities previously performed by the Prehospital Audit Committee. QCC attendance requires submission of a new confidentiality agreement to CoSD EMS.

Beginning January 20, 2026, the QCC will convene meetings in coordination with the EMS Medical Director's Advisory Committee. We invite participation from all EMS system stakeholders.

We look forward to your collaboration as we implement this best-practice Quality Management Plan in 2026.


Sincerely,

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director
San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office
San Diego County Fire

Andrew Parr, EMS Administrator
San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office
San Diego County Fire

Enclosure(s):
CoSD EMS Policy S-012 EMS System Quality Management
CoSD EMS Policy S-013 Quality Care Consortium
Quality Care Consortium Confidentiality Agreement

¹ Ideally, reports will include the date/time of the event, EMS incident number, and details of the incident, kudos, or concern. Do not include PHI in email referrals.

 COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	SYSTEMS		S-012
	EMS SYSTEM QUALITY MANAGEMENT		
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I. PURPOSE

- A. To identify primary responsibilities of all participants in the County of San Diego, Emergency Medical Services (CoSD EMS) system for the achievement of optimal quality of prehospital care for patients who access the system.
- B. To improve the quality and effectiveness of the EMS system through ongoing review and evaluation.

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- II. **AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.204, 1797.220, 1798, 1798.100, and 1798.102.
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III. DEFINITION(S)

Quality Management (QM): A systematic, continuous process for evaluating and improving the quality of prehospital care. It encompasses both quality assurance and quality improvement activities, focusing on the structure, processes, and outcomes of care delivery. Quality Management aims to ensure high-quality, equitable, and evidence-based patient care by identifying deficiencies, analyzing root causes, implementing corrective actions, and supporting data-driven system improvements.

Emergency Medical Services System Quality Management Program (EMS QM Program): Methods of evaluation that are composed of structure, process, and outcome evaluations which focus on improvement efforts to identify root causes of problems, intervene to reduce or eliminate these causes, and take steps to correct the process and recognize excellence in performance and delivery of care.

Emergency Receiving Center: A general acute care hospital that receives patients from EMS service providers through the 9-1-1 system or interfacility transfers.

Quality Assurance (QA): A systematic process for reviewing individual patient care encounters to identify, analyze, and address potential or actual deviations from expected clinical standards, with the goal of ensuring safe, effective, and consistent prehospital care.

Quality Improvement (QI): A continuous, data-driven process that monitors, evaluates, and enhances clinical performance through the analysis of key performance indicators and implementation of evidence-based system improvements.

IV. POLICY


- A.** CoSD EMS is responsible for the oversight and supervision of EMS system quality management.
- B.** CoSD EMS serves as the administrator of the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan, which objectives include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Providing high-quality, equitable care to residents and visitors of San Diego County through continuous quality improvement processes.
 - 2. Fostering a non-punitive, collaborative culture amongst all EMS system participants.
 - 3. Developing a culture of life-long learners amongst EMS clinicians.
 - 4. Maintaining a data-driven approach to clinical education, policies, and protocols.
 - 5. Collaborating with all stakeholders to ensure quality inputs.
- C. Responsibilities**
 - 1. CoSD EMS shall:
 - a. Comply with California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 10: Data and Quality Assurance.
 - b. Develop and implement, in cooperation with other EMS system participants, a system-wide written EMS QM program.
 - c. Coordinate the Quality Care Consortium (see CoSD EMS Policy S-013 Quality Care Consortium).
 - 2. An EMS service provider shall:
 - a. Comply with California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 10: Data and Quality Assurance.
 - b. Participate in the CoSD EMS QM Program, as defined in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan.
 - c. Participate in the Quality Care Consortium.
 - d. Report prehospital clinical care issues, or unexpected or adverse outcomes to the CoSD EMS Medical Director through the process outlined in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan.
 - 3. An emergency receiving center shall:
 - a. Participate in the CoSD EMS QM Program, as defined in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan.

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- b. Participate in the Quality Care Consortium (see CoSD EMS Policy S-013 Quality Care Consortium).
 - c. If designated as a specialty care facility, participate in the CoSD EMS advisory committee(s) specific to its specialty designation(s).
 - d. Report prehospital clinical care issues, or unexpected or adverse outcomes to the CoSD EMS Medical Director through the process outlined in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan.
 - e. Submit patient outcome information for all patients received through the 9-1-1 system from an EMS service provider.
4. An EMS dispatch center shall:
- a. Participate in the CoSD EMS QM Program, as defined in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan.
 - b. Participate in the Quality Care Consortium.
 - c. Report prehospital clinical care issues, or unexpected or adverse outcomes to the CoSD EMS Medical Director through the process outlined in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan.

D. Agreements

- 1. CoSD EMS shall maintain agreements with EMS service providers and emergency receiving centers requiring, but not limited to:
 - a. Compliance with all the provisions listed in the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9.
 - b. Compliance with all CoSD EMS system policies, procedures, and protocols.
- 2. These agreements provide the authority for CoSD EMS to:
 - a. Perform announced and unannounced site surveys of EMS provider agencies and emergency receiving centers.
 - b. Review patient care records necessary to investigate medical QI issues.

 COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	SYSTEMS		S-013
	QUALITY CARE CONSORTIUM		
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I. PURPOSE

- A.** To establish an advisory committee to the County of San Diego, Emergency Medical Services (CoSD EMS) to monitor, evaluate, and report on the quality of prehospital medical care.
- B.** To promote countywide standardization of the quality management process with an emphasis on just culture, education, and improvement.
- C.** To review issues and matters of a systemwide nature and serve functions in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan. It shall not be the function of this committee to become directly involved in the disciplinary action of any specific individual. The authority for actual disciplinary action rests with the CoSD EMS Medical Director and/or the State EMS Authority in accordance with Section 1798.200 of Division 2.5 of the Health and Safety Code.

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- II. AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.122, 1797.204, 1797.220 and 1798; and Evidence Code, Sections 1040 and 1157 *et seq.*
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III. DEFINITION(S)

Quality Management (QM): A systematic, continuous process for evaluating and improving the quality of prehospital care. It encompasses both quality assurance and quality improvement activities, focusing on the structure, processes, and outcomes of care delivery. Quality Management aims to ensure high-quality, equitable, and evidence-based patient care by identifying deficiencies, analyzing root causes, implementing corrective actions, and supporting data-driven system improvements

IV. POLICY

- A.** CoSD EMS is responsible for the oversight and supervision of the EMS system quality management process and communicating with all involved participants.

- B.** CoSD EMS is responsible for establishing, collecting, and analyzing data to support quality management activities. This includes, but is not limited to, dispatch, hospital, and EMS records, as well as the development and selection of quality management metrics across the full range of EMS care to analyze, summarize, and share QM data for quality improvement purposes.

C. Responsibilities

The CoSD EMS Medical Director's Quality Care Consortium (QCC) is established to provide review and advice for QM activities. The QCC responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Collaborating with CoSD EMS to implement, review, and monitor quality metrics in the CoSD EMS Quality Management Plan.
2. Selecting quality indicators, items for review and monitoring, creating action plans, and monitoring performance.
3. Serving as a forum to identify and discuss trends in prehospital care.
4. Promoting quality training throughout the EMS system.
5. Providing recommendations to the EMS Medical Director for enhanced EMS personnel training.

D. Membership

Membership shall be comprised of representatives from the various EMS system participants, including but not limited to CoSD EMS, EMS service providers, EMS training providers, EMS dispatch centers, emergency receiving centers, and designated specialty care programs.

E. Attendance

1. The CoSD EMS Medical Director may approve the attendance of guests during regular or ad hoc meetings of the QCC.

F. Meetings

1. The QCC shall meet monthly or at a frequency as determined to be appropriate by the CoSD EMS Medical Director, but no less frequently than quarterly.

G. Confidentiality

1. All proceedings, documents, and discussions of the QCC are confidential and pursuant to Sections 1040, 1157, 1157.5, and 1157.7 of the Evidence Code. The prohibition on discovering testimony provided to the committee applies to all proceedings and records of the QCC, which is established by a local government agency with the responsibility of evaluation and improvement of the quality of care rendered by prehospital and hospital personnel under the meaning of Evidence Code Section 1157 and Health and Safety Code Section 1797.188. It is organized to provide professional competence to monitor, evaluate, and report on the necessity, quality, and level of specialty health services, including but not limited to prehospital care services.

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2. Guests may be invited to discuss specific cases and issues to assist the QCC in making final case or issue determinations. Guests may only be present for the portions of the meeting related to those cases or issues they have been asked to review and testify about. Guests are bound by the same confidentiality provisions listed above.
3. All attendees shall sign a confidentiality agreement not to divulge or discuss information that would have been obtained solely through QCC attendance. Prior to new attendees participating in the meeting, CoSD EMS is responsible for explaining and obtaining a signed confidentiality agreement for invited guest(s).



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QUALITY CARE CONSORTIUM
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

As a member/guest of the Quality Care Consortium (QCC), involved in the evaluation and improvement of the quality care rendered in the prehospital system, I recognize that confidentiality is vital to the free and candid discussions necessary for effective audit and review activities. Therefore, I agree to respect and maintain the confidentiality of all discussions, deliberations, records, and other information generated in connection with these activities, and to make no voluntary disclosures of such information except to persons authorized to receive it in the conduct of QCC affairs.

Furthermore, my participation in the QCC review and quality management activities is in reliance on my belief that the confidentiality of these activities will be similarly preserved by every other member of the QCC or other individual involved. I understand the QCC members and the County of San Diego are entitled to undertake such action as is deemed appropriate to ensure that this confidentiality is maintained, including action necessitated by any breach or threatened breach of this agreement.

NAME: _____
ORGANIZATION: _____
DATE: _____
SIGNATURE: _____