



County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Creating the finest EMS system in the country





Message from County Fire Leadership

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On behalf of the EMS Office and the entire team at County Fire, we are pleased to present the EMS Strategic Plan. The plan provides a bold framework for significantly enhancing the emergency medical care system in San Diego County.

In July of 2021, the EMS Office moved from the Health and Human Services Agency to County Fire, creating an opportunity for County Fire to reassess its organizational structure and priorities and revamp its mission, vision and values. To meet this goal, a blueprint needed to be developed, which would be the first of its kind for the EMS Office. Given the complexity of the EMS system and the vast and diverse number of agencies, providers and organizations, the Strategic Plan couldn't be developed in isolation. An extraordinary level of participation and input from stakeholders in the hospital and pre-hospital community complimented the valuable contributions and expertise from the EMS Office team. The result is a Strategic Plan that was built through collaboration and essential insight on the needs of the personnel, patients and partner agencies.

The addition of the EMS Office also created an opportunity for County Fire to reassess its organizational structure and priorities, and revamp its mission, vision and values. We operate as One Team, One Mission, and the EMS Office is now a core function of County Fire.

Our mission:

Provide coordinated, sustainable, and equitable fire protection and emergency medical services to save lives, protect property, and promote the highest quality of living.

Our vision:

San Diego County will have the finest system of fire protection and emergency medical care through regional leadership, collaboration, and innovation.

Our values:

Integrity

We are committed to honest and ethical behavior and will lead through an ability to be trusted.

Competency

We strive for excellence and demonstrate a high level of professionalism, with training and education as our foundation.

Customer-focused

We will effectively and thoughtfully respond to the needs of internal and external customers.

Accountability

We hold ourselves and others to the highest standards through evaluation, transparency and responsibility.

Well-Being

We will place the highest priority on protecting the health and safety of our team and those we serve.



EMS Strategic Plan Goals



Organizational Effectiveness & Investing in Employees



Epidemiology, Data Management & Analytics



EMS System Innovation & Excellence

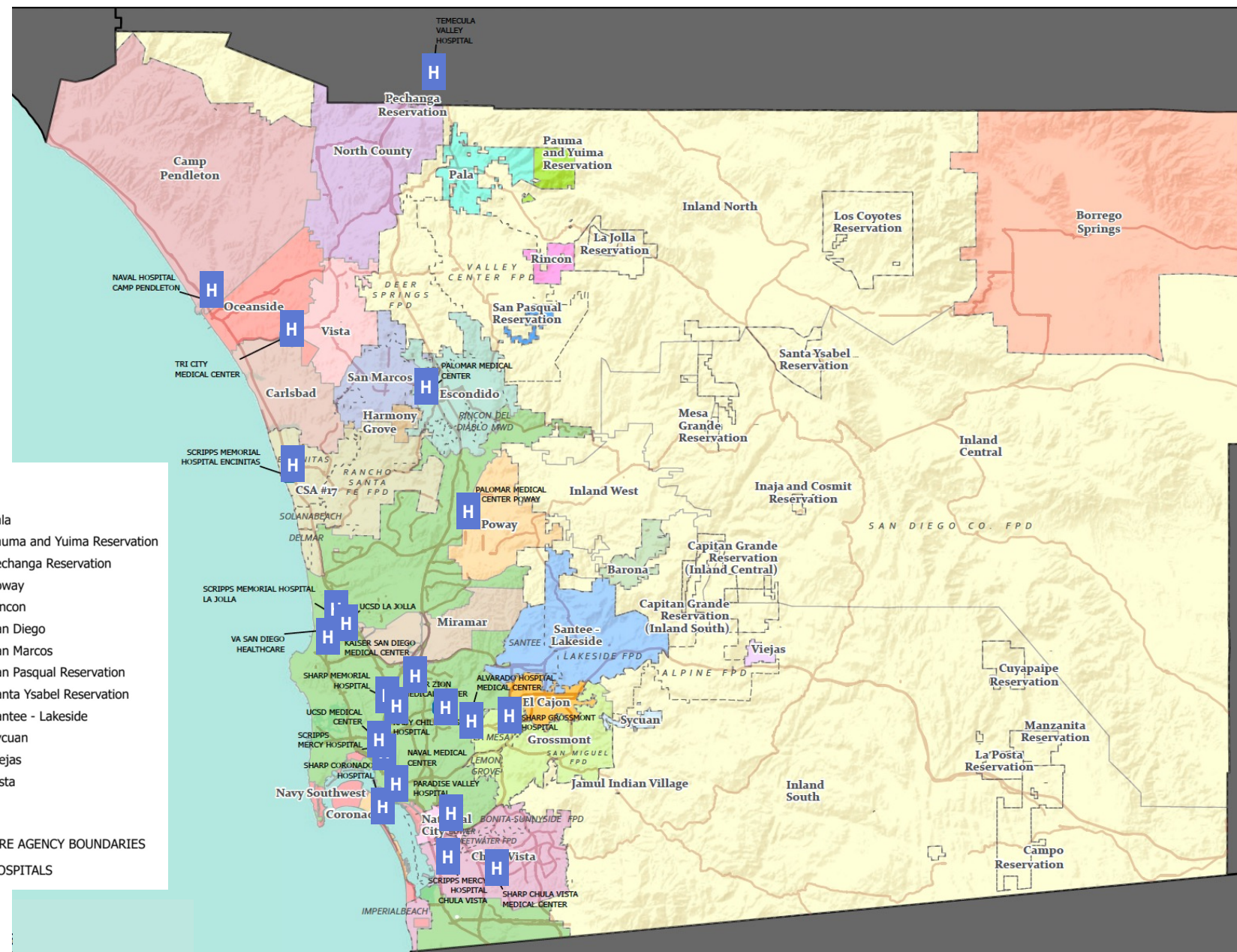
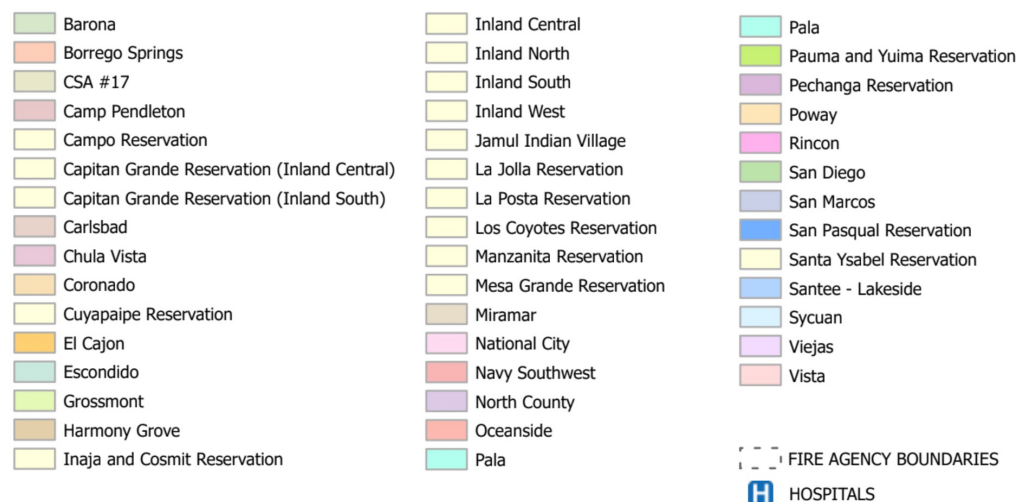


Community Engagement & Communication

San Diego County Emergency Medical Resources

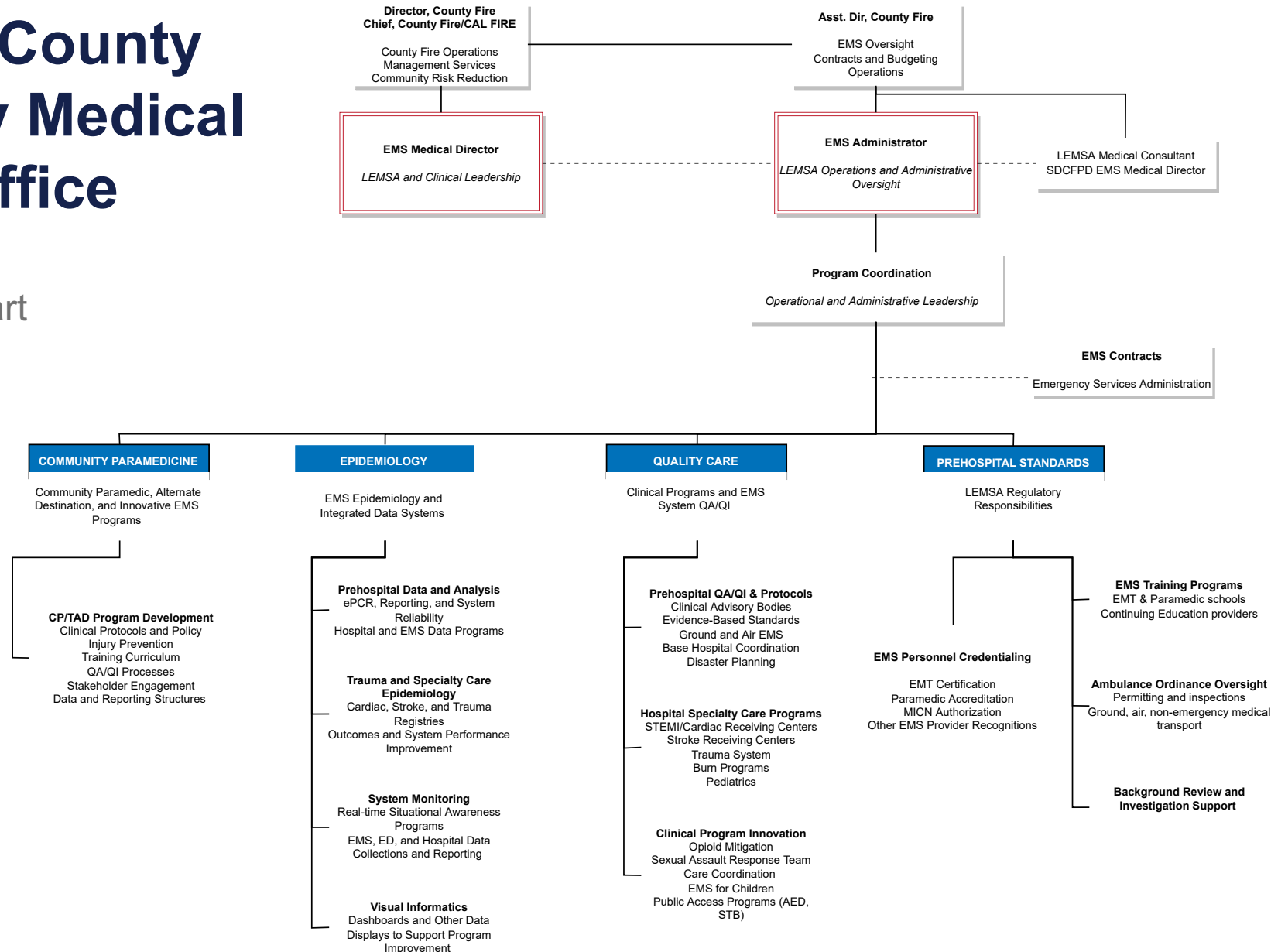
San Diego County is home to a sophisticated and complex emergency medical care system. Medical facilities, ambulance operating areas, and fire districts are displayed for a geographic snapshot of the 2022 EMS resources

Ambulance Service Areas



San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office

2022-2023
Organizational Chart





By the Numbers: 2021 Snapshot

9,000

active EMS
personnel in the
region

21

ED-licensed
hospitals

6

trauma
centers

14,000

trauma
patients

1,153,654

emergency
room visits

255,000

EMS responses
in the region

220,432

transports in
the region

32

fire agencies
providing EMS
response

46

ground and
air private
ambulance
providers





The Strategic Planning Process

Our strategic planning process used a highly collaborative, multi-phase approach which allowed us to hear from our stakeholders, evaluate our internal capacity and external context, and strategize future goals, objectives and activities. The initial steps focused on gathering and analyzing data and feedback to identify critical issues. We then focused on strategic workshopping that culminated in specific and relevant goals and objectives in the form of a roadmap that the County Emergency Medical Services Office will use to implement and monitor our future activities.

We acknowledge the valued assistance of our partners in EMS from the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association, the Hospital Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties and the Ambulance Association of San Diego County.



7 Steering Committee Meetings



3 CoEMS Staff Workshops



27 Interviews with key stakeholders



6 Focus groups with base hospitals



35 Fire Chiefs/Hospital COO/Private Provider CEO Survey Responses



943 Paramedic/EMT Survey Responses



Emergency Medical Services Goals and Objectives



Organizational Effectiveness & Investing In Employees

Create an effective and capable organization with experienced staff to guide and support our mission and vision for the future



Objective 1:

Cultivate staff resources

- Promote staff mentorship opportunities and training practices to invest in the professional development of existing staff and new hires
- Strengthen onboarding, highlight ethical standards and enhance preparedness training for external new hires
- Identify continuous educational opportunities for EMS Office personnel, including those who do not have Emergency Medical Technical licenses
- Continuously evaluate annual training opportunities for EMS Office staff to achieve their full potential

Objective 2:

Position the EMS Office to lead emergency medical services in our region

- Develop positive relationships and dedicated staff liaisons to regional stakeholders to enhance communication and promote EMS best practices
- Focus EMS outreach efforts with stakeholder groups, provide accurate information, and respond to questions
- Increase collaboration with EMT and Paramedic training academies to ensure the region's staffing needs are met
- Ensure County Board of Supervisors Advisory Boards, including Emergency Medical Care Committee (EMCC) and County Service Area (CSA) 17, are effective, inclusive, and innovative in supporting a region that accounts for patient well-being

Objective 3:

Strengthen internal culture of collaboration

- Complete the full integration of the EMS Office into County Fire and promote collaboration within the Department
- Fully implement a hybrid telework model that supports the office mission, while promoting a work-life balance and supporting employee success
- Ensure the in-office experience supports camaraderie through team building and strong professional relationships
- Champion inclusive and equitable hiring practices with the aim to have the EMS Office team reflect the communities we serve

Objective 4:

Bolster EMS Office structure and operations

- The County EMS Office will have the resources to promote workforce readiness during emergency situations
- Establish a system for timely EMS personnel response to medical questions and regulations
- Ensure the background review process is efficient for staff and EMTs



GOAL 2



EMS System Innovation & Excellence

Enhance EMS patient care in San Diego County by pursuing strategies and actions that improve processes, advance policies and procedures, support data collection, and streamline system logistics

Objective 1:

Improve EMS capacity challenges and streamline patient routing

- Optimize resource use and patient routing with integrated, real-time data
- Promote an EMS system grounded in patient-centered care and well-being
- Improve visibility of emergency department resources and availability
- Strengthen specialty care resources to ensure all patients receive prompt and proper EMS and in-hospital care

Objective 2:

Enhance system coordination and patient care

- Develop an EMS system of care that equips personnel with the latest medicines, technology, and equipment
- Deploy regular stakeholder community workshops to identify, share, and implement best practices across agencies and sectors
- Support the establishment of an Emergency Medical Dispatch program that is cost-effective and supported by medical best practices for the entire region
- Enhance communication between the EMS Medical Director, fire agency medical directors, and dispatch agencies to promote patient care and well-being
- Improve cross-border patient coordination to facilitate EMS patient care for those transiting the international border ports of entry
- Ensure excellent Special Event coverage, including standards for cover

Objective 3:

Optimize EMS system performance to reduce the impacts on the pre-hospital system

- Support the regional implementation of Community Paramedicine and other new methods for paramedics to meet the needs of specific underserved populations, including better patient-centered access to care at appropriate destinations, focused care coordination, and other innovations to enhance healthcare delivery
- Promote a system of care that minimizes the wait time for ambulances to transfer patients to hospital staff
- Support pilot programs in the community that improve the options for non-urgent patients seeking medical treatment through the 911 system

Objective 4:

Strengthen workforce development efforts for EMS professionals

- Support and facilitate Local Optional Scope of Practice (LOSOP) requests and scope of practice expansions for San Diego County EMS providers, as approved by the EMS Medical Director
- Align the EMS system's workforce to reflect our region's diversity
- Promote mental health resilience and support initiatives that remove barriers to care

Objective 5:

Bolster EMS training initiatives

- Expand training and engagement opportunities with the existing EMS workforce
- Enhance engagement between the EMS Office and training agencies
- Support efforts to promote current workforce training, resilience and retention
- Improve new EMT competencies and advance practical EMT education that ensures field readiness
- Support regional collaboration to prepare the new EMS workforce with best practices and quality patient care
- Help external users understand and interpret the training and credentialing standards and rules





Epidemiology, Data Management & Analytics

Collect, maintain, and evaluate high quality, actionable data in order to optimize EMS system performance, encourage internal and external stakeholder participation, and enhance the quality of life in our community

Objective 1:

Support an EMS system of care that fosters equitable outcomes through the use of data-driven decision making

- Develop and promote the County EMS IT system to optimize resource use in the region
- Support local agencies in sharing data with state and national programs in real-time to provide high-quality patient care
- Foster the use of custom dashboards and data reports to support County departments and regional partners with relevant information
- Identify long-term data operational supports and software upgrades to support long-term growth opportunities

Objective 2:

Support quality assurance data in all emergency medical services functions

- Foster the creation of countywide EMS relevant in-hospital/specialty care performance improvement programs
- Track programs and services with a focus on equitable outcomes for traditionally underserved communities
- Improve data integration and interoperability
- Support the long-term development of a Health Services Capacity Task Force that includes system leaders prioritizing the operational needs of the prehospital and hospital system
- Improve data collection for whole person/timeline data and patient profile data

Objective 3:

Use EMS epidemiological data to inform community and EMS system education

- Use data for predicting and forecasting EMS trends to improve systemwide decision-making
- Work with stakeholders to ensure available data is appropriate to their needs
- Develop and maintain public and agency-accessible dashboards
- Use epidemiological data to inform system education
- Use data to inform policy and advocacy
- Provide data stewardship

Objective 4:

Provide system monitoring with real-time situational awareness for County and other agency participants

- Maintain and improve surveillance reports
- Promote technology improvements and automation
- Pursue methods to push surveillance products to field users
- Support efforts for EMS duty officer access to real-time, actionable data and communications





Community Engagement & Communication

Advance emergency medical care in San Diego County through proactive engagement of both the EMS provider community and citizens in a clear, effective, and inclusive interaction



Objective 1:

Establish outreach, support, and engagement with EMS workforce in San Diego County

- Support the implementation of an EMS training cadre that is focused on trends and analysis identified by the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency in their Quality Assurance role
- Ensure our nurses, paramedics, and EMTs receive annual recognition for their contribution to a safe and healthy region
- Promote physical and emotional well-being for the EMS workforce to support retention rates in San Diego County
- Establish regular communication with the EMS workforce to keep them connected with peers and employers

Objective 2:

Expand community engagement and public involvement in the EMS system

- Create a digital footprint that is easy for the public and EMS workforce to navigate
- Distribute regular surveys for feedback from EMS partners and the workforce, through the County EMS IT system, to promote a system that is responsive to changing needs
- Develop stakeholder feedback process and explore communication channels

Objective 3:

Strengthen communication and collaboration with EMS system partners

- Develop a communication plan including monthly stakeholder newsletter with a high rate of viewership
- Promote the development of strong working relationships between the EMS Office and system stakeholders
- Encourage positive engagement and interactions at public advisory group meetings to support the implementation of best practices that focuses on patient care and well-being
- Include system partners in EMS Office service delivery efforts to foster consensus

Objective 4:

Broaden partnerships with non-EMS providers to supports residents in our region

- Increase collaboration with law enforcement and behavioral health providers to support patients with resources outside of the hospital system for mental health and substance use disorder treatment
- Establish linkages with community-based organizations and public agencies to reduce the impact on the prehospital system for primary care services
- Support patient care and well-being by championing healthier living and safer home environments
- Establish joint training opportunities with non-traditional EMS partners to support coordination and reduce gaps between systems

