



El Dorado County Emergency Services Authority

Policy Subject Matter: **Continuous Quality Improvement Program**

Revision date: **04.22.15**

Creation date: **09.08.10**

I. POLICY:

To implement a consistent Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Program that complies with California State law and the policies of the El Dorado County Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMSA) to improve the delivery of Emergency Medical Services. The focus of the Continuous Quality Improvement Program activities shall be on system improvement, not on an individual's performance.

II. PURPOSE:

To improve the quality of the El Dorado County EMS System by: 1) Continuing to improve the quality of patient care and patient outcome, 2) Improving the success rate of advanced and expanded scope of practice, and 3) Identifying training and medical equipment needs.

III. PROCEDURE:

JPA member agencies providing an advanced life support (ALS) service, and Cal Fire (providing emergency medical dispatch services) shall comply with the EMSA - Continuous Quality Improvement Policy. Key requirements of the policy include:

- a. Each agency will develop their own a CQI policy that complies with the EMSA CQI policy requirements. An annual review of this policy and the lessons learned shall be made for needed updates.
- b. A peer level representative from each agency will attend the monthly EMSA CQI Committee meeting.
- c. Comply with reporting and other quality assessment requirements as specified or determined by the CQI process, and/or EMSA.
- d. Patient confidentiality will be strictly maintained at all times during the CQI process.
- e. The CQI representative shall participate in ongoing committee discussions, audits, field research and studies. The goal is to collect and analyze data and share that data with other CQI representatives during monthly CQI meetings.
- f. Recommend training – education, policy and procedure revision for improved ALS service delivery. Training can be effectively and efficiently delivered through several means such as our annual Skills Training Day, Target Solutions, and in-service briefings.
- g. Provide feedback to system participants on deficiencies - quality indicators, “loop” closure and performance improvement.
- h. Improvement plans shall include clearly stated goals, objectives and strategies. Throughout the implementation of the plan it is necessary to measure and evaluate the progress being made to ensure the stated goals will be achieved.

IV. PERFORMANCE CONCERNS:

Potential or questionable violations of California Health and Safety Code 1798.200, and other applicable laws shall be reported without delay to the involved agency Fire Chief and EMSA Medical Director. These issues are to be handled separately from the EMSA CQI Committee, and in accordance with state law, regulations and local agency policies. The CQI process shall be conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations outlined in the California Code of Regulations Title 22, Social Security, Division 9, Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Services, Chapter 12, EMS System Quality Improvement.

V. RECORD RETENTION and STORAGE:

All records collected for the CQI process shall be stored under lock and key in a secure location. CQI records are to be retained for one year, with the start date beginning when a case review has been concluded. Documents collected as part of the CQI process are protected under California State Evidence Code 1157. Each agency will make their records available for audit by the EMSA Medical Director.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE CONFIDENTIALITY

As a member of the Quality Improvement Committee involved in the evaluation and improvement of the quality of care rendered to patients within the emergency medical services system, we recognize that confidentiality is vital to the free and candid discussion necessary to effectively conduct quality improvement activities and is required by Section 1157.7 of the Evidence Code of the State of California. Therefore, we shall respect and maintain the confidentiality of all discussions, deliberations, records and other information generated in connection with these activities and make no disclosures of such information except to persons authorized to receive it. It is expected that the confidentiality of all the EMS Quality Improvement information will be maintained by all committee members and members of its subcommittees. Additionally, a person who knowingly obtains or discloses individually identifiable health information in violation of the HIPAA Privacy Rule may face a criminal penalty of up to \$50,000 and up to one-year imprisonment. The criminal penalties increase to \$100,000 and up to five years imprisonment if the wrongful conduct involves false pretenses, and to \$250,000 and up to 10 years imprisonment if the wrongful conduct involves the intent to sell, transfer, or use identifiable health information for commercial advantage, personal gain or malicious harm. The Department of Justice is responsible for criminal prosecutions under the Privacy Rule In Accordance With Public Law 104-191, SEC. 1177.

We understand that all affected persons and agencies 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 thereof. Additional information on the County's Quality Improvement Program can be found at <http://www.emsa.ca.gov/pubs/pdf/emsa166.pdf>.