



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT**  
*of* **HEALTH SERVICES**



**2018–2020**

**WISCONSIN  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
PLAN**

## 2018-2020 WISCONSIN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES STATE PLAN

The 2018–2020 Wisconsin Emergency Medical Services Plan is prepared in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 256.08, which directs the Department of Health Services (DHS) to prepare a state emergency medical services (EMS) plan and to identify priorities for changes in the state’s emergency medical services system for the two years following preparation of the plan. Under Wis. Stat. § 13.172(2), DHS shall provide a copy of the state emergency medical services plan biennially to the legislature.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) national *EMS Agenda for the Future*, and the Wisconsin State Health Plan, *Healthiest Wisconsin 2020*, provided the guidance and vision for the 2018–2020 Wisconsin Emergency Medical Services Plan. The plan supports Wisconsin’s overall goal for the future, to achieve an effective, efficient, and integrated EMS system for the state.

There are 10 essential components of an optimal EMS system. Listed below are each of those components, a description of each component, and the plan for priorities to improve Wisconsin’s EMS System. Issues identified as priorities in earlier plans but not yet resolved are incorporated in this plan for continued attention.

The following plan is based on an NHTSA assessment conducted in June of 2012. This assessment identified 53 recommendations for improvement of the EMS system. These recommendations were then reviewed by DHS, the EMS Board, and stakeholders throughout the state to identify the most important recommendations. This 2018-2020 plan incorporates these priorities.

### 1. REGULATION AND POLICY

#### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Each State should have in place comprehensive enabling legislation, regulations, and operational policies and procedures to provide an effective statewide system of emergency medical and trauma care.”<sup>[1]</sup>

#### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Identify sources of funding for the EMS and trauma system to help ensure sustainability.
- Provide authority to establish minimum standards related to system elements such as personnel, services, specialty care facilities, and regional systems and identify penalties for noncompliance.
- Provide for injury and trauma prevention and public education programs; continue to develop, in cooperation with EMS stakeholders and DHS, an initiative to support a stable infrastructure of the Wisconsin EMS system.
- Develop procedures for EMS services to use when a hospital becomes undesignated.
- Continue to educate system users regarding current legislation and regulations.
- Ensure all EMS agencies have current operational policies and procedures on file with DHS.
- Provide education programs to onboard new EMS agency service directors, medical directors, Wisconsin Ambulance Run Data System contact, training officer and continuous quality improvement contact.

- Provide authority to establish minimum standards related to system elements such as personnel and services, and identify penalties for noncompliance.
- Provide authority to establish standards related to specialty care facilities and regional systems and provide EMS guidance on appropriate utilization of designated versus undesignated facilities.
- Provide regional protocols that may be used by EMS services and medical directors.

## 2. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Each State EMS lead agency should identify, categorize, and coordinate resources necessary for establishment and operation of regionalized, accountable EMS and trauma systems.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Develop programs for continuing the recruitment and retention of volunteer EMS personnel.
- Provide resources for EMS agencies to assist with local recruitment and retention activities.
- Provide an EMS provider-based training aid on topics such as adverse childhood experiences (ACE) for EMS issues.
- Verify all ambulance service operational plans through on-site evaluations.
- Collaborate with the preparedness and trauma programs and healthcare coalitions to include all EMS agencies in the region for participation.
- Explore and assist areas of the state that have difficulty staffing ambulance calls and explore regionalization options and other identified issues to support the stability of EMS agencies.
- Identify best practices that may be used to establish, maintain, and promote recruitment and retention and provide these resources to EMS agencies.

## 3. HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Each State should ensure that its EMS system has essential trained and certified/licensed persons to perform required tasks. These personnel include: first responders (e.g., police and fire), prehospital providers (e.g., Emergency Medical Responders, (EMR) Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians (AEMT), Intermediate and Paramedics, communications specialists, physicians, nurses, hospital administrators, and planners. Each State should provide a comprehensive statewide plan for assuring a stable EMS workforce including consistent EMS training and recruitment/retention programs with effective local and regional support.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Ensure statutory authority, rules, and regulations to support a system of EMS personnel licensure that meets or exceeds the national EMS Scope of Practice Model, National Education Standards, and other aspects of the EMS Education Agenda for the Future.
- Continue to investigate and prepare recommendations on the concept of minimum competencies versus curriculum adherence.
- Update all [Wisconsin curriculum](#) and [EMS Standards and Procedures Manual](#).
- Develop a strategy for evaluating success rates of students that complete the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians.
- Develop a strategy for evaluating success rates of EMS instructors.
- Work with the Wisconsin Technical College System to identify alternative clinical locations or work with other training centers to help offset training shortfalls or needs.
- Develop and deploy an instructor evaluation system that involves both the EMS office and the Wisconsin Technical College System Office.
- Continue working to establish National Educational Standards for training and education.
- Define a process on how to update scope of practices when updates are required.
- Ensure scopes of practice are updated when advancements are necessary for the state EMS system.
- Ensure course learning objectives are standardized for each level of EMS education based on Wisconsin curriculum.
- Provide standardized syllabus for each level of EMS education based on Wisconsin curriculum.
- Provide educational resources for Wisconsin EMS instructors at state-called instructor meetings.
- Identify all Wisconsin EMS education and training preceptors and develop training on the EMS Standards and Procedures Manual for standardized EMS training.
- Provide information and resources for EMS agencies for continuing educational requirements for licensure renewal.
- Provide specific education programs to onboard new EMS training center program directors.

## **4. TRANSPORTATION**

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Each State should require safe, reliable EMS transportation.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Ensure coordination of all emergency transports within the EMS system, including public, private, or specialty (air and ground) transport and including center(s) for regional or statewide EMS transportation coordination and medical direction if appropriate.
- Develop regulations to ensure ambulance drivers are properly trained and licensed.
- Continue to work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) to revise Wis. Admin. Code ch. Trans 309 to adjust the ambulance equipment standards.
- Investigate the effects of the implementation of emergency vehicle operation and driver safety training policy as required in Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 110.35(2)(a) and whether this has improved ambulance driver safety and reduced ambulance crashes.

- Coordinate regular meetings between the DOT Ambulance Inspector and regional coordinators to review and discuss issues.
- Coordinate regular meetings between the DOT Ambulance Inspector and EMS Director to review and discuss issues.
- Convert DOT inspections into the EMS E-Licensing system to crosscut efforts and to streamline resources.

## 5. FACILITIES

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“It is imperative that the seriously injured (or ill) patient be delivered in a timely manner to the closest appropriate facility.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Continue to foster development of specialty care systems of care such as stroke, S-T elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), and trauma.
- Assist services with developing transport priority guidelines that would include an advanced life support intervention.
- Develop a sample protocol for auto launch procedures for air transports.
- Provide EMS providers with a list of capabilities and overall designation.
- Work with services to determine best practices to develop mutual aid agreements, intercept agreements, and coverage agreements.
- Provide resources to rural agencies and education on triage and transport guidelines.
- Clearly define and promote all designated trauma facilities to all EMS providers in the system and regionally.

## 6. COMMUNICATION

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“An effective communications system is essential to EMS operations and provides the means by which emergency resources can be accessed, mobilized, managed, and coordinated. Each State should assure a comprehensive communication system.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Continue to help develop an interoperable system that enables communications from dispatch to ambulance, ambulance to ambulance, ambulance to hospital, hospital to hospital, and ambulance to public safety communications.
- Develop dispatcher training and certification standards.
- Update the state EMS communication plan and disseminate to EMS providers.
- Continue to support the implementation of dispatch training and certification.
- Develop a process for reporting communication issues that can be evaluated at a local, state, and federal level.
- Establish a FirstNet plan.

## 7. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Public awareness and education about the EMS system are essential to a high quality system. Each State should implement a public information and education (PI&E) plan.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Develop a broad-based public information and education plan that would target, in part, policy makers and the general public, to garner support for the Wisconsin EMS system. This should include EMS and trauma systems.
- Continue to develop the EMS website to be the primary source of information regarding Wisconsin EMS.
- Leverage data system reports to create fact sheets for public dissemination to help educate the public on the EMS system.
- Identify funding opportunities to promote and educate the public about Wisconsin EMS.
- Provide classes that train EMS agencies on developing reports that can best educate their local communities and stakeholders.
- Provide a focused educational webpage for recruitment and retention resources for EMS agencies.
- Enable EMS staff participation at regional EMS meetings (regional trauma advisory council, health care coalition, county, and local EMS) to assist with promoting and educating about the Wisconsin EMS system.
- Utilize web-based social media opportunities.

## 8. MEDICAL DIRECTION

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Physician involvement in all aspects of the patient care system is critical for effective EMS operations. EMS is a medical care system in which physicians oversee non-physician providers who manage patient care outside the traditional confines of the office or hospital. States should require physicians to be involved in all aspects of the patient care system.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Continue to enhance the required credentials of EMS medical directors, based on the level of the EMS programs involved.
- Discuss continued development of regional EMS systems and the regional medical director’s role in the system.
- Develop periodic, statewide, and regional forums for local EMS medical directors to meet with the state EMS medical director and other DHS staff to discuss common issues, share solutions, and utilize electronic options for facilitating continual interaction among EMS medical directors.
- Create an onboarding process for medical directors.
- Create a survey for outgoing medical directors.
- Promote regular communications with the EMS medical directors through EMS agency communications.
- Translate the current medical director course into an interactive and measurable program that can generate a course completion certificate.

- Collaborate with EMS for Children on issues related to children.
- Ensure the state medical director meets with new medical directors to provide guidance and assistance.
- Hold a Wisconsin EMS medical director meeting with the DHS EMS section, Physician Advisory Committee, and state medical director as an educational, informational outreach.
- Develop protocols that can be used regionally and are accessible to medical directors.
- Create education for WARDS contacts to run continuous quality improvement reports for EMS agencies.

## 9. TRAUMA SYSTEMS

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Each State should maintain a fully functional trauma system to provide a high quality, effective patient care system. States should implement legislation requiring the development of a trauma system.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Support the state trauma system with the promotion of the updated triage and transport guidelines.
- Support continued collaboration with the Wisconsin trauma system.
- Manage better dissemination of EMS data between services and hospitals to increase efficiencies in patient care and treatment.
- Identify strategies for dissemination of information from the trauma system. Foster a collaborative effort for hospitals and services to evaluate the system and the outcome for their patients.

## 10. EVALUATION

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“Each State should implement a comprehensive evaluation program to assess effectively and to improve a statewide EMS system.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Provide summary feedback information, derived from submitted data, to the state’s EMS agencies.
- Develop a process (evaluation tools) to evaluate all EMS system activities and incorporate into existing committee work.
- Create standard reports of system data to be used as indicators of the EMS system status.
- Publish statewide EMS data that can be utilized by stakeholders, providers, and services.
- Identify the use of data to help promote support for the Wisconsin EMS system.
- Continue to provide courses that will help promote the use and application of WARDS Elite to support continuous quality improvement for optimal patient outcomes.
- Create a guidance document to assist in clean data being entered into the WARDS Elite system.
- Create an EMS system sample continuous quality improvement/policy improvement plan for EMS agencies to learn and implement in their agencies.
- Develop a patient-at-risk program that can be utilized statewide by EMS services through the use of WARDS Elite.

## **SPECIAL COMPONENT - PREPAREDNESS FOR LARGE SCALE EVENTS (PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY)**

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Standard:**

“EMS is a critical component in the systematic response to day-to-day emergencies as well as disasters. Building upon the day-to-day capabilities of the EMS system, each state should ensure that EMS resources are effectively and appropriately dispatched and provide prehospital triage, treatment, transport, tracking of patients, and documentation of care appropriate for the incident, while maintaining the capabilities of the EMS system for continued operations.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Priorities for Improvement**

- Ensure state and regional involvement of EMS in emergency response plans and exercises.
- Prepare and disseminate proper guidance to the EMS community in response to any declared public health emergency. Ensure continued involvement in after-action planning activities that result from evaluations of operations to better prepare for future events.
- Ensure EMS services are involved in disaster and emergency response, including involvement in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS).
- Work with MABAS to develop a box card that can be used for evacuations of health care facilities.
- Develop a work group that will review patient transport plans that may be used during a hospital evacuation.
- Encourage EMS services to participate in their regional healthcare coalition to assist with the development and drilling of emergency response plans that EMS would be involved in during and after a local and/or state emergency event.
- Provide EMS trainings at healthcare coalition and regional trauma meetings.
- Develop funding strategies to support and encourage EMS agency participation in the healthcare coalitions and regional trauma coordination.
- Provide regional trainings for mass casualty incident events.
- Provide regional training for patient tracking.

<sup>[1]</sup> National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. (2010). *Statewide EMS Reassessments Program Guide*.