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Standard Guide for Structures and Responsibilities of Emergency Medical Services Systems Organizations¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide establishes optimum guidelines for the structures and responsibilities that will facilitate development, delivery, and assessment of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on state, regional, and local levels.

1.1.1 *State Level*—At the state level, this guide sets forth a basic structure for the organization and management of a state emergency medical services program and outlines the responsibilities of the state in the planning, development, coordination, and regulation of emergency medical services throughout the state.

1.1.2 *Regional Level*—At the regional level, this guide addresses the planning, development, and coordination of a functional and comprehensive EMS system which consists of all personnel, equipment, and facilities necessary for the response to the emergently ill or injured patient, according to national and state lead agency standards.

1.1.3 *Local Level*—At the local level, this guide sets forth a basic structure for the organization and management of a local EMS system and outlines the responsibilities that a local EMS should assume in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluating of its EMS system.

2. Significance and Use

2.1 This guide is not meant to mandate a specific structure or responsibility at the various levels but rather to suggest a means or method that will allow for the creation or further development of a state, regional, or local EMS system.

2.2 This guide will assist state, regional, or local organizations in establishing EMS systems or refining existing EMS systems.

3. Descriptions of EMS Systems

3.1 *State EMS System*—A state EMS system includes all of the components of all EMS systems within the state, however, particular emphasis is placed upon the following:

3.1.1 Legislation establishing authority and responsibility for EMS systems.

3.1.2 Development and enforcement of minimum regulations and standards.

3.1.3 Development and dissemination of a statewide plan and goals for EMS systems.

3.1.4 Provision of technical assistance.

3.1.5 Funds for the development, maintenance, and enhancement of EMS systems.

3.1.6 Supportive components, including training, communications systems, record keeping and evaluation, public education, and acute care center designation.

3.1.7 Overall coordination of EMS programs within the state and in concert with other states or federal authorities as needed.

3.2 *Regional EMS System*—A recommended method of structuring substate EMS systems to provide for EMS planning, development, and coordination is to delineate specific geographic areas within which one organization is designated as responsible for the arrangement of personnel, facilities, and equipment for the effective, coordinated, and expeditious delivery of health care services in a region (3.2.1) under emergency conditions occurring as a result of the patient's condition or because of accidents, natural disasters, or similar situations.

3.2.1 *Region*—To implement a regional EMS system, the state lead agency will identify the geographic or demographic area that is a natural catchment area for EMS provision for most, if not all, patients in the designated area. Since this cannot be a perfect definition from an EMS delivery point of view, administrative and coordinating efficiency considerations will have to be made in establishing boundaries. The state lead agency should determine and define the substate structure for planning, coordination, and provision of emergency medical services. When a regional EMS system lies near a state border such that appropriate and efficient care of patients will require cooperation of prehospital system in another state and medical centers in another state, the state lead agency will develop a plan with the adjoining state lead agency. This plan must provide for the triage and transfer of patients across the state border under supervision of the REMSO.

3.2.2 *Regional EMS Organization (REMSO)*—A REMSO is a staffed organization responsible and accountable to the state EMS lead agency for coordinating the system in a region

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