



UNIFORM PRE-HOSPITAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DATA CONFERENCE

The goal of emergency medical services (EMS) is to match appropriate medical resources to the needs of an emergency patient in a timely, systematic manner. EMS data collection is critical to the continual development and refinement of these systems. While the primary goal of prehospital data collection is to document the care provided to individual patients, a standardized EMS data collection system also permits retrieval of information on the type and quantity of prehospital care, and provides an effective starting point for EMS system evaluation.

Statewide EMS data can be used to monitor trends throughout the state over time. When linked with other prehospital information and with clinical treatment and outcomes, EMS data are valuable for research, epidemiological studies, and for developing prevention programs. However, even within a single state, there is often a lack of consensus about the items that should be included in an EMS data system. This lack of uniformity has presented a significant barrier to EMS data system development.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and eight other Federal agencies sponsored a Uniform Pre-Hospital EMS Data Conference in August 1993. The purpose of the conference was to evaluate available information on prehospital data elements and to recommend data elements for uniform use on a national level. A preliminary report describing the conference proceedings, *The Uniform Pre-Hospital Data Conference Summary Report*, is now available. This report summarizes the background, planning, operation, and products of the consensus development conference.

The Uniform Prehospital EMS Data Conference was conducted according to the National Institutes of

Health Guidelines for Consensus Development Conferences. An expert panel reached consensus on identifying and defining 49 *essential* and 32 *desirable* data elements that should be recorded on prehospital EMS responses. This consensus panel consisted of 12 EMS experts who represented a broad range of EMS data users including:

State EMS directors	EMS medical directors
Emergency physicians	Emergency nurses
Trauma system directors	EMS researchers
Epidemiologists	State EMS training coordinators
Private ambulance service managers	Regional-county EMS managers
Public, fire-based ambulance services managers	

The conference panel listened to public commentary and discussion by the conference participants about a set of proposed EMS data elements and produced consensus statements in private session. The summary report documents the consensus opinions and discusses the need for uniform prehospital data elements, uniform definitions for essential and desirable data elements, and the necessity and feasibility of linking prehospital and other emergency medical records for EMS system evaluation.

This report will be useful to EMS professionals responsible for developing and implementing prehospital data systems.

For more information about the conference or for a copy of *The Uniform Pre-Hospital Data Conference Summary Report*, contact Emergency Medical Services Division, NHTSA, NTS-42, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366-5440, or send a fax to (202) 366-7721.



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