Integrated Patient Tracking Initiative (IPTI) Offers New Data Source

Decision-making for traffic safety is currently dependent in large part on information provided about fatal accidents. Yet, gathering information is slow and expensive. End to end information about all serious crashes, and their outcomes is generally not available. Maybe IPTI can help.

COMCARE's Integrated Patient Tracking Initiative (IPTI) brings together a diverse national group of over seventy organizations with the expertise to develop national consensus requirements, draft data standards, and a national tool-kit that communities and regions can use when deploying their own patient tracking programs. It is an open process driven by practitioners, and educated by technology experts, to track the injuries and treatment of patients in any form of incident, from car crashes to pandemic flu.

The Initiative has developed a set of national consensus requirements for patient tracking programs that integrate with existing systems and processes and address the information needs of the multiple emergency professions. It is launching a process to identify and fill gaps in the data standards arena so that legacy and new systems can exchange information. Demonstrations of interoperable systems are in the planning stages.

The goal is to shape patient tracking solutions so they can improve emergency response and preparedness capabilities by electronically capturing and distributing information about the incident and patients to various stakeholders, such as EMS, transportation, emergency managers and local hospitals, throughout the continuum of care.

From Mass Casualty to Day-to-Day

In response to the threat of intentional and natural mass casualty incidents, a few forward-thinking communities have recognized the need for tracking patients when a mass casualty incident (MCI) occurs. Some have already deployed systems. While the technology and design of these systems will be beneficial as a key reference point moving forward, it is now a common tenet that emergency response technologies will only be effective in responding to a mass emergency if they are a part of an every day routine.

Scaling an electronic patient tracking system from mass casualty to day-to-day use can be as easy as the flip of a switch. A system designed to collect a broad set of data elements on a patient under ordinary circumstance may be redefined in an MCI to collect a limited subset of the most necessary elements. By serving multiple functions, this kind of solution can increase the likelihood of use by practitioners as well as create incentives for sharing valuable information. In turn this information can significantly improve patient care, reduce emergency response times, and enable analysis and research that was never possible before.

A New Source of Data

From the first encounter with the patient through the continuum of care, this national initiative paves the way for the collection and analysis of data from all types of traffic accidents. Data from devices in cars and trucks, incident data and/or personal medical data can immediately be sent to those authorized to receive this type of information so that the ability to detect trends and threats can be improved.

Near real-time accident data from telematics providers, 9-1-1, predictive algorithms, law enforcement, fire and EMS, hospitals, emergency managers, and others, will help identify the

cause and outcome of an accident. When used on a day to day basis, traffic managers will know immediately when an emergency event has occurred. They can identify problem spots for better roadway management so that the possibility of secondary incidents will diminish.
These and other information needs are defined in the national consensus requirements developed in the first phase of the project. The system is designed to utilize standardized data sets and messages, including NEMSIS, HL7, and other standards. A process to identify and evaluate the applicability of existing standards and identify where no standards exist, will be a priority for Phase II of the project. The Draft Requirements Report is currently open for comment and feedback is encouraged.

For more information or to become involved in the initiative please email ipti@comcare.org.

COMCARE is a national non-profit alliance dedicated to advancing emergency response. We promote the adoption of modern, interoperable emergency systems and the development of new procedures, training, and tools to maximize their value for emergency responders. We encourage cooperation across professional, jurisdictional and geographic lines, seeking to improve effectiveness through solutions that integrate emergency response professions, government, the public, and private industry. COMCARE's 100+ organizational members represent the wide diversity of the emergency response community. For more information visit www.comcare.org.