

WIRELESS 9-1-1 ROUTING

| Principle | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Health & Human Services | |
| Strategy | Target |
| Legislation & Advocacy | State |

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Our public safety and emergency medical response system is built on the premise that immediate action will save lives and property. For medical emergencies (e.g., strokes, heart attacks, cardiac arrest, drowning, choking, burns, trauma), research has clearly shown that a more rapid response improves outcomes, saves lives and reduces the cost of medical care.

9-1-1 calls are answered by Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), that dispatch law enforcement, fire, and ambulance services. For callers with medical emergencies' PSAPs can also offer telephone first aid and CPR instructions. When a 9-1-1 call is answered by a PSAP that is not responsible for that local area an unnecessary and potentially lethal delay is introduced. Unfortunately, in Santa Barbara County and throughout California, the wireless 9-1-1 system regularly routes calls to PSAPs outside the local area that do not have dispatching responsibility, a process that causes significant delays and other errors.

Many actions of the EMS system to improve response and treatment of patients are worthless if the EMS system is not made aware of a cardiac arrest until it is too late. Every link in the chain of survival has been strengthened in our system except one – the routing of wireless 9-1-1 call to the correct PSAP. This link remains disorganized, inconsistent, and dangerously slow - and patients are dying as a result. Santa Barbara County recently experienced a high profile death that is directly attributable to this system issue and can point to many incidents in the past.

A system to analyze the routing of calls and to correct misrouting errors was put in place in 2008. The Routing by Empirical Data (RED) Project started in Santa Barbara and Ventura County. It was highly effective in getting 9-1-1 calls to our local PSAPs, who could quickly and accurately determine the caller's location, dispatch the appropriate emergency responders, and give telephone medical care instructions. Unfortunately this program was terminated after a brief but effective time, and the EMS system has no way to evaluate or improve this critical link in the chain of survival.

REQUEST STRATEGY AND ACTION

Strategy:

- Funding Request
 Legislative Proposal
 Targeted Advocacy

Action:

- Initiate legislative assessment of the system and implementation of changes to the system for response by local primary PSAP's.
- Support all efforts, legislative or departmental, to ensure that 9-1-1 calls be routed, when appropriate and practical, to the local primary PSAP.
- Direct the EMS Agency to work with local and State officials to advocate for correction in how wireless 9-1-1 call are routed, to include an evaluation of the RED Project and to consider resuming and expanding it.

PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

There will be a decrease in morbidity and mortality among residents and visitors in Santa Barbara County

COST TO GOVERNMENT

There is no immediate or additional cost incurred directly.

CONTACT

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