
Community Paramedic Offers Solution to ER Overcrowding



Hospitals & Health Networks reports that paramedics will be expanding their roles in some communities. Instead of responding to medical emergencies, paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) will also fill in community care gaps by treating patients on the scene when they are not sick enough to warrant an emergency department visit. The new and expanded service is called Community Paramedicine or Mobile Integrated Healthcare Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP).

The objective of this expanded service is to reduce the inappropriate use of local emergency care resources as well as improve the overall health of communities.

A survey conducted by the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians shows that 8 out of 10 MIH-CPs have reduced costs associated with frequent 911 callers. Community Paramedics have reduced ED admissions by triaging patients, checking their vital signs and determining whether they need to go to the hospital or not. Based on their evaluation, EMTs can simply call the patient's primary care physician and determine an in-home treatment plan.

The UCLA Center for Prehospital Care, along with the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency and the Glendale and Santa Monica fire departments have already launched two community paramedicine pilot programs this year. North Memorial Health System in Minneapolis began to send out community paramedics to patients who had visited the ED at least nine times per year. Some places like Arizona are also using transitional vehicles with a paramedic and a nurse practitioner or physician assistant to provide in-home primary care. Community paramedics can make house calls and proactively manage patients with chronic conditions.

It is believed that the expanded paramedic service will not only help reduce ED visits and readmissions but will also benefit patients by improving their overall health and ability to take care of themselves.

Source: [Hospital & Health Networks](#).

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