

Division of Emergency Medical Services



2003 Supplemental Plan to the 2002 Strategic Plan Update

June 2003

Introduction

The **1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan** was designed to 'define the future roles and responsibilities of EMS providers in King County and establish a framework for moving the County's EMS system into the 21st century.' The document was drafted in early 1997 by a task force of EMS representatives and was approved by the King County Council in September 1997. The 1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan created four major new Strategic Directions to assist in accomplishing the identified goals. Although a number of exceptional EMS programs already existed, twelve Strategic Initiatives were established to further describe the mechanism for carrying out the Strategic Directions. Specific budget allocations were also identified to support the effort. This level of detail greatly contributed to the success of the Strategic Initiatives by facilitating the process for garnering support for pilot projects, soliciting participation by EMS agencies, and authorizing the expenditure of funds.

The **2002 Strategic Plan Update** followed this earlier planning effort by examining the regional EMS system and recommending a 'continuation with the major directions from the 1998-2003 Strategic Plan to impact patient care, cost containment, and manage the growth in call volume. ' The Strategic Directions were amended slightly from the original version in the 1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan and now consist of the following:

- Enhance existing programs and add new programs to meet emerging community needs to maintain or improve current standards of patient care;
- Manage the rate of growth in the demand for EMS services; and
- Use existing resources more efficiently to improve operations of the system to help contain costs.

Using the continued support of these Strategic Directions as a basis of development, three areas of interest were identified in the 2002 Strategic Plan Update as appropriate for future initiatives and system improvements, including:

- Dispatch: Develop initiatives to invest in the training and education of dispatchers and provide continued quality improvements to enhance the effectiveness and efficiencies of the EMS dispatch.
- Medical/System Data Collection and Evaluation: Continue collection and consolidation of medical data via electronic means to improve the accuracy and completeness of the data, and provide access to the aggregate data by individual provider.
- Injury Prevention/Public Education: Continue to invest in public education prevention activities to assist in the management of rate of growth in demand for EMS services.

Although the 2002 Strategic Plan Update provides some detail for implementing future initiatives, the 2003 Supplemental Plan is designed to expand on the already cited areas of interest in an effort to provide a similar level of detail as documented in the 1998-2003 Strategic Plan. However, success of the overall strategic plan depends very much on continued support of the many EMS projects and programs that are extremely integrated into each layer of response to calls for medical assistance.

New and Ongoing Strategic Initiatives

I. Background

The Emergency Medical Services system in King County provides an outstanding public service to its citizens. The EMS Division coordinates development of the regional strategic plan, in conjunction with EMS providers, EMS partners in providing services, and elected officials, to help maintain this high quality service. In the most recent document, the 2002-2007 EMS Strategic Plan Update continues to support both current projects and the development of new projects in order to meet the identified objectives. The 2003 Supplemental Plan provides a more detailed vision of how the directions may be implemented, although it is not intended to provide a comprehensive description of the project designs, performance measures, or budget details. These will be developed within the designated project work groups.

A thorough process of review and discussion by EMS Division senior staff, the EMS Advisory Committee, and EMS agency representatives regarding existing Strategic Initiatives and the development of new Strategic Initiatives for the current levy period was completed in spring of 2003. During these discussions, several broad themes emerged, reflecting a variety of approaches to the continued realization of the Strategic Directions. They include the following three areas of interest:

- Dispatch Enhancements
- Advanced Technology Projects
- EMS System Efficiencies

II. Strategic Initiative Descriptions

In the 1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan, the term 'Strategic Initiative' was used almost exclusively to describe a handful of new and innovative approaches to improving the EMS system in King County, including for example, the Telephone Referral Program and the Regional Purchasing Program. The 2003 Supplemental Plan, however, attempts to broaden the 'Strategic Initiative' definition by including already existing programs that are thought to have significant impact on the success of the Strategic Directions.

In aggregate, this list of Strategic Initiatives highlights an array of new and ongoing projects and programs designed to meet the objectives of the Strategic Directions. Where needed, Strategic Initiatives have dedicated Strategic Initiative funds to ensure adequate financial support. Once the particular program objectives have been achieved and the program is ready for ongoing maintenance and oversight, financial support will be provided by Regional Services funds.

The following is a brief description of each currently identified Strategic Initiative and the expected impact on the Strategic Directions. Please refer to the 2003-2007 Budget (page 10) for specific budgeted amounts associated with each Strategic Initiative. These allocations do not

include anticipated Regional Services support, including supervisory oversight, incidental supplies and equipment, and regular full-time personnel.

A. Dispatch Enhancements

As indicated in the 2002-2007 EMS Strategic Plan Update, dispatch is the access point to emergency medical services and thus 'plays a critical role in managing the use of the high cost advanced life support (ALS) resources'. Strategic Initiatives directed towards investing in the training and education of dispatchers and enhancing quality improvement practices would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ALS dispatch. Strategic Initiatives funds are expected to support these activities.

Continued Review and Revision of the Criteria Based Dispatch (CBD) ALS Triage Criteria: One of the Strategic Directions identified in the 1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan was to determine ways to decrease the rate of growth of ALS calls in our system. A major component of this effort was to revise the CBD guidelines that determine the level of ALS care required by patients. During the year 2000, revisions were made to dispatch protocols. Impacts of these changes have been evaluated and the process for developing recommendations for further changes to the criteria in 2003 has begun. The 2002-2007 Strategic Plan Update supports this effort.

EMD Quality Improvement: The 2002-2007 Strategic Plan Update supports a new component of the effort to reduce the rate of growth of ALS calls through enhancements to the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) quality improvement process.

Enhanced CBD Basic Training and Continuing Education Curricula: Another new component of the effort to reduce the rate of growth of ALS calls through dispatch-focused projects is to enhance the basic and continuing education training of dispatchers.

B. Advanced Technology Projects

The development of projects that incorporate advancements in technology offers a variety of opportunities for improved efficiencies in the EMS system. This includes data collection and training of personnel. Current technologies allow for rapid and direct communication between EMS agencies, accurate and secure transmission of information, and simplified management and oversight of EMS activities.

Continued Implementation of the Regional Electronic Data Collection Project: One of the Strategic Initiatives identified in the 1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan was the development of an enhanced EMS monitoring system that would allow for improved oversight of the EMS system. The Regional Data Collection Project developed a standardized data collection set, identified a standardized set of performance measurements and reporting mechanisms, and developed an electronic data transmission network. The 2002-2007 Strategic Plan Update supports the continuation of this effort. Strategic Initiative funds are expected to support this

activity through 2004 and will be transferred to Regional Services funds for ongoing maintenance of the program.

Web-based Training for Dispatchers, EMS personnel, and AED Users: Development of training programs that utilize current web-based technologies allows for expedient and cost-efficient delivery of training services for dispatch, EMS personnel, and other targeted public populations. The web-based training Strategic Initiative targets the development of basic and continuing education modules for dispatchers, continued development of continuing education modules for EMTs, and development of AED training for seniors. New Strategic Initiative funds are expected to support this activity.

C. EMS System Efficiencies

The Emergency Medical Services system provides an internationally regarded regional service to the citizens of King County. However, improvements and innovations regarding the management and financing of the three levy-supported ALS, BLS and Regional Services sub-funds, review of EMS standards of practice, continuation of injury prevention programs, and analysis of particular EMS populations that could benefit from enhanced care are integral to the provision and maintenance of any high quality EMS system.

Financial Review of EMS Sub-Funds: The EMS levy in King County provides full support for Advanced Life Support (ALS) services, Regional Services, and Strategic Initiatives, and contributes to Basic Life Support (BLS) services. When the 1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan was updated, a committee of elected officials, representatives of cities and unincorporated areas reviewed each of these sub-funds extensively. This process of review was useful in identifying areas for improvement, assisting in the prioritization of projects, and providing flexibility in responding to program needs. Quality review of the EMS levy funding contributes indirectly to all three directions in the strategic plan by supporting programs that reduce ALS call volumes, highlighting program efficiencies, and advocating for innovative program practices. No specific Strategic Initiative funds are expected to support this activity.

Paramedic and EMT Procedure and Patient Treatment Evaluations: Provision of the highest level of patient care is the primary objective of the EMS program in King County. Ongoing review of paramedic procedures and patient treatment plans is essential to maintaining a quality EMS system. New Strategic Initiative funds are expected to support this activity.

Injury Prevention Programs: One of the Strategic Initiatives identified in the 1998-2003 EMS Strategic Plan was investment in injury prevention activities through public education to help manage the rate of growth in EMS calls. This includes bicycle helmet safety programs, fall prevention in senior populations, and nursing home education. The 2002-2007 Strategic Plan Update supports continuing this effort and allocates Strategic Initiative funds for this purpose.

Enhanced Care for Specific Populations: Although the management of emergency medical services usually includes the development and implementation of programs that target a unique subset of EMS patients, highlighting these programs does not often occur. Providing a focal point for the development and implementation of programs that target specific users

of EMS would provide more appropriate patient care and contribute to the overall efficiencies of service. New Strategic Initiative funds are expected to support this activity.

Assessment of the Impact of State Budget Cuts on the EMS System: The current financial crisis in Washington State has created unprecedented budget cuts to critical health care programs for children and families. This includes support of the Basic Health Care program and Medicaid reimbursements. The EMS Division would like to evaluate the impact of these cuts on the EMS system in King County in order to provide appropriate and adequate response. No specific Strategic Initiative funds are expected to support this activity.

D. Next EMS Strategic Plan

Developing a Strategic Plan for the next EMS levy period will require coordination and collaboration with EMS agencies and elected officials. Identifying this as a separate strategic initiative with associated funding will expedite the process.

Budget and Financing

The **2002 Strategic Plan Update** sets aside funding specifically for support of the Strategic Initiatives in the current 2002-2007 levy period. The intent for providing dedicated funds is to support initiatives that will improve and benefit the system, both for the immediate future and in the long term. These specific funds pay for costs associated with hiring temporary staff, contracts, and other project-related expenditures. Full-time employees and overhead expenditures are not included. For the current levy period, total projected spending on Strategic Initiatives is less than one percent of anticipated revenue.

The **2003 Supplemental Plan** provides budget estimates for the already identified Strategic Initiatives and allocates additional funding for the newly identified initiatives. Funds for the new projects will be provided through a combination of funds reallocated from existing Strategic Initiatives and the EMS fund reserve. A significant portion of the reallocated funds is due to personnel funding originally budgeted in the Dispatch Strategic Initiative moving into the Regional Services sub-fund.

The 2002 EMS Strategic Plan Update included dedicated funds of \$1,659,000 between 2003 and 2007 for Strategic Initiatives. The 2003 Supplemental Plan budgets \$1,760,300 for Strategic Initiatives during the same period. The \$1,760,300 budget includes support for the EMS Data Collection Project, including \$208,000 for maintenance and \$72,000 that was originally budgeted in the year 2000. The total increase in budget over the previous plan is \$29,300. This increase will come from the EMS fund balance.

Following a review of the Regional Services sub-fund budget, funds for the salary of one position and maintenance for the Telephone Referral Project will be absorbed by the Regional Services sub-fund. Funds for maintenance of the Regional Data Collection Project will be transferred from Strategic Initiatives to the Regional Services budget. Long-term maintenance costs will need to be considered for any future Strategic Initiatives.

Summary of Strategic Initiatives

Topic	Initiative	Lead
Dispatch Enhancements	Continued Review and Revision of the Criteria Based Dispatch (CBD) ALS Triage Criteria	Community Programs and Education
	EMD Quality Improvement	Community Programs and Education
	Enhanced CBD Basic Training and Continuing Education Curricula	Community Programs and Education
Advanced Technology Projects	Web-based Training for EMS Personnel, Dispatchers, and AED Users	BLS Training and Education, Community Programs and Education, and CEEMS
	Continuation of the Regional Electronic Data Collection Project	Strategic Planning & Data Management
EMS System Efficiencies	Financial Review of EMS Sub-Funds	Finance
	Paramedic and EMT Procedure and Patient Treatment Evaluations	Medical Director
	Injury Prevention Programs	Community Programs and Education
	Enhanced Care for Specific EMS Patients	Medical Director
	Assessment of the Impact of State Budget Cuts on the EMS System	Strategic Planning & Data Management
Strategic Plan	Development of Strategic Plan for Next Levy Period	Strategic Planning & Data Management

Strategic Initiatives	2003-2007 Budget					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Dispatch Initiatives: Review and Revision of the Criteria Based Dispatch (CBD) ALS Triage Criteria ¹	\$58,000			\$20,000		\$73,000
EMD Quality Improvement	\$24,000	\$31,000	\$32,000	\$33,000	\$34,000	\$154,000
Enhanced CBD Basic Training and Continuing Education Curricula	\$90,000	\$92,000	\$95,500	\$98,400	\$101,400	\$477,300
Technology Related Projects: Web-based Training for Dispatchers	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$105,000
Web-based Training for EMS Personnel	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$135,000
Web-based Training for AED Users	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Regional Electronic Data Collection Project ²	\$172,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$172,000
EMS System Efficiencies: Financial Review of EMS Funding (ALS, BLS, Regional)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Paramedic and EMT Procedure and Patient Treatment Evaluations	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$21,000	\$22,000	\$23,000	\$96,000
Injury Prevention Programs ¹	\$35,000	\$36,000	\$37,000	\$38,000	\$39,000	\$185,000
Enhanced Care for EMS Patients	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
Assessment of the Impact of State Budget Cuts on the EMS System	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Strategic Plan: Development of Strategic Plan for Next Levy Period	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
TOTAL 2003 – 2007 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	\$439,000	\$259,000	\$235,500	\$316,400	\$302,400	\$1,552,300
Transfer EMS Data Collection Maintenance to Regional Services		\$50,000	\$51,000	\$53,000	\$54,000	\$208,000
Total w/Maintenance Transfer²	\$439,000	\$309,000	\$286,500	\$369,400	\$356,400	\$1,760,300
Original 2002-2007 Strategic Plan Update Amount	\$367,000	\$309,000	\$319,000	\$334,000	\$330,000	\$1,659,000
Difference²	\$72,000	0	-32,500	35,400	\$26,400	\$101,300

¹Identified as a 1998-2003 Strategic Initiative and now considered an ongoing EMS program

²\$72,000 carried over from 2002