



Briefing Document: Pecos Valley Public Services - Community EMS Initiative

Date: February 04, 2024

Subject: Review of Pecos Valley Public Services Community EMS Model

1. Executive Summary:

Pecos Valley Public Services (PVPS), a volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) organization in Roswell, NM, is pioneering a "Community EMS" approach that is distinct from both traditional EMS and community paramedicine. Their model emphasizes a *protective* approach, focusing on proactive engagement in the community, including vulnerable populations, to identify and address medical issues *before* they become emergencies. The goals are to improve public health, reduce healthcare costs, and build a more resilient community. This document outlines their experience, challenges, and plans for the future, and seeks support from the State of New Mexico to expand and replicate their model.

- **Key Quote:** *"We are sharing our experiences, ideas, and goals in establishing what we refer to as a "Community EMS" agency. Community EMS is distinct from community paramedicine, though both approaches address the same objective: improving public health while reducing associated costs."*

2. Core Concepts:

- **Protective Approach:** PVPS operates proactively, embedding itself in community events and engaging with the community including vulnerable groups (unhoused, elderly) rather than primarily responding to emergency calls. They focus on early detection and intervention for potential health issues.
- **Volunteer-Driven:** PVPS is entirely volunteer-based; no directors or volunteers receive financial compensation.
- **Free Services:** All services, including health checks, training (CPR, AED, Stop the Bleed), and medical standby at events, are provided free of charge.
- **Community Focus:** PVPS prioritizes community well-being, actively engaging with local organizations, and building trust with community members.
- **Cost Reduction:** The core philosophy is that early detection and preventative care significantly reduce healthcare costs by preventing costly emergency situations.



3. Key Initiatives:

- **Community First Responders (CFRs):** A training program to develop a new tier of volunteer responders to assist EMTs by performing non-invasive assessments and stabilization tasks. The CFR Institute is a related revenue generating effort.
- **Key Quote:** *"Community First Responders play a crucial role in delivering protective care in the field, easing the load on licensed medical professionals, strengthen to community to better help itself and enhancing the resilience and responsiveness of community EMS services."*
- **Advanced Care Free:** A voucher system and telemedicine initiative to provide free physician exams and remote consultations to individuals without a primary care physician, with plans for direct transport and on-site advanced medical exams in the future.
- **Key Quote:** *"Our goal is to offer prepaid exams to patients who lack health insurance, do not have insurance information readily available, or are concerned about costs...we will provide vouchers that grant access to a free exam by a physician, without requiring additional personal information."*
- **Doctor on the Street:** Equipping their Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) with telemedicine capabilities to facilitate real-time consultations with higher-level medical professionals, reducing the need for costly and sometimes unnecessary ER transports.
- **Key Quote:** *"To provide a more practical and cost-effective alternative, we are equipping our Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) with telemedicine capabilities. This will allow patients to consult with a higher-level medical professional—such as a physician, nurse practitioner, or community paramedic—right on the scene, in real-time."*



4. Challenges Faced and Overcome:

- **Transition from HOME Project:** PVPS is the only participant to continue providing services after the state-funded HOME project ended.
- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Navigating the EMS environment as an NGO, which involved obtaining licenses, medical direction, and a pharmacy license, proved challenging due to the system being structured for traditional services.
- **Resistance from Established Entities:** Facing initial resistance from local first responders and the Chaves County Medical Board, which denied membership.
- **Lack of Dispatch Radio Access:** The denial of access to the Pecos Valley Regional Communications Center dispatch radio network, which is considered critical for safety and effective operations. This is a major unresolved issue.

5. Funding and Sustainability:

- **Current Funding:** Limited funding from the HOME grant, community foundations, and local businesses allows them to operate on a limited scale.
- **Funding Needs:** Seeking \$400,000 in funding to expand services, purchase reliable vehicles, upgrade their EMS license, meet pharmacy requirements, and ensure sustainability.
- **Program Service Revenue:** Exploring two models for sustainability:
- **Negotiations with health insurance providers** for per-patient funding, thereby avoiding the complexities of Medicare/Medicaid billing.
- **State funding** based on the percentage of the population served, which would be provided in advance.

6. Replicability:

- The PVPS community-based protective EMS model is attracting interest from other communities.
- The document emphasizes the scalability of their model and the potential to replicate it in other areas, particularly with state support.



7. Suggestions for Legislative Support:

- **Regulatory Flexibility:** Streamlining and adapting the EMS licensing process for volunteer community EMS agencies, without compromising patient safety, is needed.
- **Statewide Digital Trunked Radio System (DTRS) Access:** Free access for volunteer community EMS to the DTRS is needed.
- **Broader Scope of Operations:** Allowing community EMS to operate outside of exclusive provider contracts in cities and counties when services are free.
- **Volunteer Appreciation:** Incentives and support for volunteer first responders.
- **Green Lights:** Permitting the use of green flashing lights for on-scene identification.
- **Community First Responder Protocols:** Establishing clear guidelines for CFR roles and training.

8. Summary and Call to Action:

- PVPS is providing a valuable community service by addressing the shortcomings of traditional EMS systems.
- Their approach has significant potential to improve public health, reduce healthcare costs, and empower communities.
- **Call to Action** includes requests for:
 - Flexibility in licensing and scope of practice for community EMS.
 - Clear guidelines for the Community First Responder program.
 - Permission to use green flashing lights on vehicles.
 - Access to the state radio network.
 - The ability to operate outside of exclusive contracts.
 - Incentives for volunteers.
 - Initial funding to expand their services and develop a replicable model.

9. Key Quote on Preventative Care:

- *"Benjamin Franklin once said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Although he spoke these words in 1736, they are more relevant than ever in today's overburdened and costly healthcare system."*



10. Take Away:

The document concludes by emphasizing the beneficial impact of supporting a Community EMS program on the following:

- Preventative Care and Public Health
- Saving public healthcare expenses
- Community Education and Empowerment
- Supporting the State's Health and Safety Goals
- Addressing Health Disparities

Conclusion:

Pecos Valley Public Services' Community EMS model represents an innovative approach to healthcare delivery that prioritizes proactive, community-based care. Their dedication, volunteerism, and emphasis on early intervention demonstrate the potential to address healthcare gaps and improve public health outcomes. This document clearly outlines the rationale for legislative support and funding.

This briefing document summarizes the main ideas and facts from the provided document. It is clear that Pecos Valley Public Services is a unique organization with a strong vision, and they face real challenges in their efforts to make a difference in their community.