

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

There is an increasing focus on "quality" throughout United States. When talking about "Total Quality Management", "Continuous Quality Improvement", or any other name given to the quality movement, the common thread is meeting the needs of those who pay for and use the services and products provided by an organization. All types of industries, including health care, have lowered costs and improved the quality of their operations and products by working to meet the needs of the people they serve.

EMS leaders must insure that all organizational and system processes focus on the needs of patients and other stakeholders.

Patients and other stakeholders can also be thought of as customers of the EMS system, and, depending on how they relate to the EMS system, as either internal or external customers of the system. External customers include those outside the actual operation of the EMS system, e.g., patients and their families, governmental entities, the community, and insurance companies and other third party payers. Internal customers, i.e., those who are involved in or with the operation of the EMS system, include the system's employees and volunteers, members of the leadership councils or committees that plan and coordinate the system; the variety of agencies that interact to form the ongoing, functioning EMS system; and other health care providers, including hospitals, that together with the EMS service, provide health care to ill and injured patients.

In New York State, the Public Health Law requires all EMS agencies to participate in CQI. This can be accomplished by developing an "in house" review process, or by taking part in a local or regional CQI program.

The common misconception of the CQI review process is that it serves as "the documentation police". CQI is meant to provide an objective review of all facets of EMS care including but not limited to documentation, patient care and operational procedures. CQI should be used to find ways to continuously improve the service we provide to our "customers".

You are encouraged to become involved in the CQI process your agency participates in and take an active role in providing the best service possible.

Resources / References on CQI

National Association of EMS Quality Professionals (NAEMSQP)

3717 South Conway Road
Orlando, Florida 32812-7607

Phone: 407-281-7396

Fax: 407-281-4407

Web: www.mhf.net/naemsqp

A Leadership Guide to Quality Improvement for EMS Systems

Can be downloaded from:

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/ems/leadershipguide/index.html

Or write to:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

EMS Division

400 7th Street, SW (NTS14)

Washington, DC 20590

National Institute of Standards and Technology
National Quality Program
Route 270 and Quince Orchard Road
Administration Building, Room A635
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899-0001

Phone: 301-975-2036
Fax: 301-948-3716
E-mail: nqp@nist.gov
Web: www.quality.nist.gov

The Empire State Advantage: Excellence at Work
Barbara Ann Harms, Executive Director
11 Computer Drive West, Suite 212
Albany, NY 12205

Phone: 518-482-1747
Fax: 518-482-2231
Web: www.esaprograms.org

Florida Emergency Medicine Foundation (FEMF)
3717 South Conway Road
Orlando, Florida 32812-6707