

About Iowa's EMSC

A Profile of the Emergency Medical Services for Children Program in the State of Iowa

What is the Iowa EMSC project?

The Iowa Emergency Medical Services for Children project is part of a federal initiative which aims to improve the level of pediatric emergency care. The EMSC recognizes that caring for children presents a special challenge to all providers. Emergency medical services is broadly defined as everything from injury prevention and accessing emergency services through out-of-hospital providers, emergency room, hospital, and rehabilitative services. Children are broadly defined as all patients under 21 years of age.

At the inception of the coalition four task forces were formed to address the projects specific activities as follows:

1. Protocols and Standards Task Force
Incorporates pediatric issues into the existing statewide non-mandated EMS protocols. Representation from the Iowa Chapter of the Academy of Pediatrics currently now exists on the state's Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council to help insure pediatric disciplined input.
2. Education Task Force
This group continually looks at the ever-changing educational needs of providers of pediatric care. Adaptation of existing national pediatric curricula to fit the needs of Iowa's EMS structure will be an ongoing process for this group. They are charged with insuring that pediatric education is made available at all levels of EMS as well as provide materials for communities, school nurses, and civic organizations.
3. Love Our Kids Injury Prevention Task Force
This group will look at a wide variety of injury prevention issues from curricula to information dissemination. They will serve as the state's resource for input on injury prevention programs and initiatives. The "Love Our Kids" state's special license plate grant program will also be monitored by the efforts of this task force. The task force will also strive to enhance current data collection and analysis of pediatric injury patterns.

Currently the coalition has integrated its efforts into the existing state EMS governing bodies. The "Love Our Kids" Injury Prevention task force will remain a free standing entity as there are no other state programs that have as their mission the functions that this task force is charged with.

Why is there a need for EMSC in Iowa?

Children are our state's most precious resource, they may only comprise 3-5% of our out-of-hospital calls per year yet they are 100% of Iowa's future. We must realize that-

- Many children require emergency care, Emergency Medical Service systems are not always prepared to take care of the critically ill or injured child.
- Emergency Medical Service systems were originally designed for adult cardiac and trauma patients. The needs of pediatric patients are vastly different from those to which the system was put into place for over 30 years ago.
- There is a higher mortality rate for critically ill and injured children in communities without access to specialized pediatric services and resources.

Childhood injury and illness is expensive. The cost of a lifetime of custodial care for one child with a disabling injury is estimated at \$2,500,000.00. With injuries being the leading cause of death for Iowa's children it is evident that continual support is needed from the EMSC project to help enhance current statewide injury prevention programs.

The mission of the Iowa Department of Public Health is to promote and advance healthy behaviors and environments to reduce and interrupt the risk of disease, injury, disability, and premature death. Iowa's EMSC project will be working towards this mission for adults and pediatric citizens alike.