EMS Customer Service- Your Best Defense

CUSTOMER SERVICE
Your Best Defense!

University Hospitals
EMS Training & Disaster
Preparedness Institute

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Disclaimer

• The consultant is not an attorney and does not provide legal advice. The information contained in this presentation is not intended and should not be construed as legal advice or direction.

• The consultant plans to share knowledge and practical experience with the attendees.

• All attendees are advised to obtain professional legal advice from an attorney before implementing any material change in their billing, administrative or operational policies or any other matter which is governed by law or regulation.

Seminar Topics and Agenda

• Welcome and Introductions
• Key Areas of EMS Liability
• What is Customer Service?
• How does it apply to Emergency Services?
• How important is it in your organization?
• Case Reviews and Best Practices
• Questions and Answers

Maxim #1

Everyone that we deal with is having a Bad Day!

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How about all the patients who call 911….?  
• Who call when they are lonely?  
• Right as you sit down to eat or sleep?  
• 911 System Abusers  
• Intox and Psychiatric Patients  
  .. And all those other BS*#@ Calls we receive every day!

How about those….?  
• Nurses who call for a STAT transport only to have us wait for 45 minutes!  
• *&*%^ Dispatchers who gave us the wrong address or wrong patient information!

Everyone that we deal with is having a Bad Day!

We are in a Service Business!!!

Treat everyone (including patients) like they are your:  
Brother, Mother, Sister; Aunt or Uncle!

Exactly what is Good Customer Service?  
How does it apply when providing emergency services?
EMS Customer Service- Your Best Defense

Definitions

Customer service - the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase of an item or service.

Definitions

- customer - One who buys goods or services; One with whom one must deal
- client - One for whom professional services are rendered

Who are your customers and / or clients?

- Employees, Volunteers and Staff
- Patients and their families
- Municipal Residents and Visitors
- Employees of other Public Safety Entities
- Healthcare Professionals
- Many others....

Successful organizations and people maintain and build relationships with all of our clients and customers!

You're only as good as; THEY think you are!
Vehicle Accidents

Key Areas of EMS Liability

- Patient Care Issues
  - Airway management issues
  - Spinal immobilization issues
  - Equipment failures
  - Inadequate training and policies
  - Refusals (Abandonment)
  - Billing (Fraud and Abuse)

However, 80% of all EMS lawsuits are not directly related to patient care!

Vehicle Accidents

Standard of Care

- What is the standard of care?

Did you perform your duties in the same manner as other prudent providers?

Standard of Care

We run into many unusual situations and challenges which are not covered in our standard training programs (Refusals, Consent, Irate Family members, etc)

Standard of Care

It takes more than clinical skills to be a good Paramedic or EMT!!!

Be Nice!

Your Best Risk Management Tool!!!
Most often, people will not choose to sue – if they like you!

Pittsburgh EMS Worker Fired In Hazelwood Snowstorm Death

April 2, 2010

PITTSBURGH -- Pittsburgh has fired a paramedic as part of a disciplinary action following the death of a Hazelwood man who waited 30 hours for an ambulance during a powerful snowstorm in February.

Case Study - Refusal (under 18 years old)

• 16 y/o male CC: Leg Pain & Swelling while at an amusement park with 19 y/o sister and friends
• Friends went to get wheelchair to assist patient to car
• ALS personnel at park provide wheelchair and ask to examine the patient
• Upon arrival, limited patient history obtained, vitals and assessment performed
• Medic says that patient can’t leave since he is underage and no legal guardian is present
• Sister and friends all implore Medic to let the patient go home where meds and proper treatment can be administered by the mother

The Golden Rule: DO NO HARM !!!
Medically Unstable Patient

- Closest Facility is ~ 20 miles from residence
- Family insistent on further facility as a specialized physician is waiting
- BLS cancels ALS prior to their arrival !!!
- Family requests assistance to put patient into their family car
- BLS refuses to assist the patient into the car – that means “we would have initiated patient contact”
- BLS leaves without obtaining refusal form
- Trip sheet not written until 3 weeks post trip – after the patient’s WIDOW called in to complain!

Best Practices

- Everyone who calls us is having a “Bad Day”
- Treat every patient as they were your Mother, Brother, Sister, Aunt or Uncle!
- You are only as good as they think you are!

Best Practices

- Take care of the WHOLE patient and their families
- Remember they are most likely scared, excited, agitated and nervous!!!
- Do the Right Thing!
- “Service Above Self”

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