

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) LIAISONS

IMPROVING THE EMS-HOSPITAL RELATIONSHIP,
ONE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT A TIME

THE CHALLENGE:

Emergency medical services (EMS) plays a critical part in acute care, treating patients in the prehospital setting. EMS providers face many work challenges. Unfortunate issues at some hospitals include delays in EMS offloading patients from their stretchers and challenges in communication with hospital staff. In the stressed times of the COVID-19 pandemic, some relationships have become strained between EMS providers and hospital staff. As a result, when EMS providers can choose which hospital to deliver their patients, they may avoid hospitals with a poorer drop-off experience or where interactions are strained in search of better care for their patients.

THE SOLUTION:

US Acute Care Solutions (USACS) began piloting a new position called an "EMS Liaison" to address this issue in the fall of 2022, with the goal of optimizing relationships between local EMS providers and partner hospitals. USACS is piloting the program at four sites in Texas, Ohio, and Illinois.

Each site began by assessing its current relationship with EMS through an open-ended survey of EMS providers. This uncovered important concerns in the EMS-hospital relationship and experience. Following the survey, interventions were implemented to address issues that were identified. This included enhancing education for EMS staff, increasing communication between the ED and EMS, increasing amenities on site (e.g. food and beverage areas), streaming restocking, and working to optimize interactions between EMS and all hospital staff.

EMS Liaisons receive 1:1 mentoring from Dr. Jim Augustine, the USACS National Director for Prehospital Care, an emergency physician and renowned expert in EMS. Specific outcomes include a follow-up survey to assess the relationship as well as monitoring the number of EMS arrivals at each site.

