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## Mobile integrated health care and community paramedicine: A position statement and resource document of NAEMSP

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## ABSTRACT

Emergency medical services (EMS) are integral to public health and safety and provide health care to both individuals and communities. Community paramedicine (CP) and mobile integrated health care (MIH) programs are expanded models of EMS that provide needs-based, patient-centered care in the community. Successful implementation requires a community health needs assessment, engaged EMS medical directors, multidisciplinary collaboration, and sustainable reimbursement that recognizes prehospital care delivery beyond traditional payment for transport.

### NAEMSP RECOMMENDS

- Engaged and knowledgeable EMS physician medical directors, preferably with EMS board certification, must guide CP and MIH programs.
- CP and MIH programs should be tailored to meet local community needs based on a community health needs assessment and designed to bridge local gaps in access or care without duplication of services. The role of EMS clinicians should be clearly defined by the physician medical director and reflect the boundaries of collaborative practice.
- Physician medical directors may seek additional guidance on CP and MIH practice from state regulatory bodies, though practice regulations and standards should not stifle innovation and be established upon available data and outcome measures. Any state training or certification regulations should be dependent upon the expanded services provided and made with input from physician EMS medical directors.

- Clinician training programs intending to be comprehensive in approach should use standardized curricula. In programs with a limited expanded scope of practice, modularized training specific to the targeted disease processes may be appropriate. In both cases, CP and MIH clinicians should undergo regular competency evaluation supported by the physician medical director.
- State and federal agencies should establish reimbursement systems under Medicare and Medicaid, and EMS agencies should work with private payors to ensure reimbursement for the provision of community paramedicine and mobile integrated health care, decoupled from reimbursement for transportation.
- Data collection and analysis using standardized tools, methods, and reporting structures are essential for the evaluation and growth of CP and MIH programs. CP and MIH research should develop a standard taxonomy for describing programs, identify common data definitions and outcomes measures, collaboratively aggregate data, and advocate for development of data reporting standards.

**Keywords:** *Community Paramedicine, Mobile Integrated Health Care, Emergency Medical Services*

## INTRODUCTION

The conceptual foundations of mobile integrated health care (MIH) and community paramedicine (CP) are not new; the first examples of what may now be described as MIH-CP developed in the early 1990s in frontier and rural communities leveraging emergency medical services (EMS) to address unmet health needs (1, 2). National dialogue then turned to address the broader roles of EMS in public and population health, with the idea of EMS as “community-based health management...fully integrated with the overall health care system” (3-6). A 2001 perspective piece described “EMS-based community health services or *community paramedicine*” and a 2008 paper described community paramedicine as an expanded EMS model of care “based on local need...provided by [emergency medical technicians] and Paramedics integrated into the local or regional health care system and overseen by emergency and primary care physicians...enables the presence of EMS personnel for emergency response in low call volume areas by providing routine use of their clinical skills and additional financial support from these non-EMS activities” (7, 8).

The following decade saw increasing descriptions of both the EMS clinicians performing these services (e.g., “advanced practice paramedics”, “extended role paramedic” and “community health paramedic”) and the types of services offered (e.g., “primary health care model”, “substitutional model”, “community coordination model”) (9-11). National organizations developed vision statements for community paramedicine and the Health Resources and Services Administration operationally defined community paramedics as “emergency medical technicians and Paramedics operating in expanded roles...to connect underutilized resources to

underserved populations” (12-15). An international consensus definition emerged in 2023, defining a community paramedic as one who *“provides person-centered care in a diverse range of settings that address the needs of the community...may include provision of primary health care, health promotion, disease management, clinical assessment and needs based interventions...should be integrated with interdisciplinary health care teams which aim to improve patient outcomes through education, advocacy, and health system navigation”* (16). While there remains no consensus definition of MIH, specifically, the term is predominantly used in the United States (U.S.) to describe the interaction of EMS within a broader health and/or public health system, of which community paramedicine is one common service line (17, 18).

Since the adoption of “Principles for Community Paramedicine Programs” by the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) and the National Rural Health Association in 2012 (19), MIH-CP has continued to expand, with over 200 additional peer-reviewed manuscripts and numerous reports in addition to evolving workforce, regulation, and reimbursement landscapes. Our goal is to provide contextualized resources supporting the revised 2025 NAEMSP Position Statement on Mobile Integrated Healthcare and Community Paramedicine.

## **METHODS**

To support the development of this resource document, we conducted a structured rapid review of the MIH-CP literature in February 2025. This methodology offers a rigorous and efficient approach to evidence synthesis, based upon the principles of a systematic review, but

in a condensed format enabling timely decision-making, and is similar to methods used in other NAEMSP resource documents (20, 21). We searched PubMed for articles published between January 2013 and December 2024 using the keywords “community paramedic” OR “community paramedicine” OR “community health paramedic” OR “mobile integrated health” OR “mobile integrated health care” OR “mobile integrated healthcare” OR “extended care paramedic” OR “MIH-CP” in the title/abstract. Non-English publications were excluded. The strategy identified 216 articles available for screening. Titles and abstracts were reviewed for relevance to this position statement by two independent reviewers (AJU, LCO), with adjudication by a third reviewer (SAG) in the case of a tie. The structured rapid review resulted in 161 articles for consideration by authors to inform this position statement and resource document (Supplemental File Table 1). Additional publications, such as those of historical or contextual importance, were identified by the authors through bibliography searches.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **EMS Physician Medical Direction**

***Engaged and knowledgeable EMS physician medical directors, preferably with EMS board certification, must guide CP and MIH programs.***

Medical directors, preferably with EMS board certification, must be engaged in all aspects of MIH-CP program development and delivery, including ongoing training, continuous quality improvement, and quality assurance (22-24). Board-certified EMS medical directors are highly qualified to engage other specialists and stakeholders to assist with program and protocol development (25). While EMS physicians are well positioned to engage with specialists and

stakeholders to develop care pathways, EMS physicians are best positioned to be advocates and drivers of innovation for MIH-CP by championing the recognition and implementation of this evolving model of care delivery within the framework of healthcare. The American College of Emergency Physicians policy statement on medical direction of MIH-CP programs recommends clinical oversight and supervision by an EMS medical director, specialized education for the MIH-CP clinicians to ensure patient needs are addressed, systems of ongoing assessment to evaluate effectiveness, procedures in place to comply with emergency medical treatment and active labor act (EMTALA) regulations, and a strong quality assurance/quality improvement system (26). Additional literature from the American College of Emergency Physicians notes that EMS medical director malpractice insurance may not cover MIH-CP activities and urged consideration of this during program planning and implementation (27).

Medical oversight of MIH-CP is essential. The degree of physician involvement will vary based on program services provided and may include protocol-driven care under standing orders, , delegated practice under the authority of EMS physician medical director (in select states, such as Texas), real-time physician oversight via telemedicine, and even direct patient care from the physician medical director in certain programs (28, 29). While the specialty or subspecialty training of physicians providing direct oversight may vary (30, 31), all should be appropriately trained and familiar with EMS and MIH-CP protocols and should have a reporting structure that includes the MIH-CP service medical director.

## Clinical Services and Care Models

***CP and MIH programs should be tailored to meet local community needs based on a community health needs assessment and designed to bridge local gaps in access or care without duplication of services.***

While there remains a lack of consensus on the exact roles of EMS clinicians in MIH-CP programs (32), clarity of scope and boundaries within any particular MIH-CP program should be informed by a community health needs assessment (33). The community health needs assessment (“gap assessment”) is a standardized method for identifying service gaps, ensures non-duplication of existing resources, reinforces MIH-CP role in bridging gaps rather than competing with existing services, promotes interprofessional collaboration, and allows for standardized language with which to engage stakeholders (34).

***The role of EMS clinicians should be clearly defined by the physician medical director and reflect the boundaries of collaborative practice.***

In current practice, EMS clinician roles within MIH-CP vary greatly and specific roles and duties appear to vary by the model of care they are working under (35). Although there is no universally accepted categorization of MIH-CP programs, individual programs are usually function/context-specific or location-specific, yet these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Table 1).

Generally speaking, the role of an MIH-CP clinician differs from other paramedicine services in response to emergencies, engaging with communities, situated practice, primary health care, integration, governance, higher education, and treatment/transport options (“RESPIGHT”) (36). Specific medical services provided (e.g., history & physical examination, blood pressure measurement, Foley catheter maintenance) are summarized in recent national surveys of MIH-CP programs (37-39) and systematic review (40).

### **Regulation, Accreditation, and Certification**

***Physician medical directors may seek additional guidance on CP and MIH practice from state regulatory bodies, though practice regulations and standards should not stifle innovation and be established upon available data and outcome measures. Any state training or certification regulations should be dependent upon the expanded services provided and made with input from physician EMS medical directors.***

Community paramedics have traditionally functioned in expanded roles (i.e., credentialed by a medical director to practice a certified competency in a specific setting) rather than expanded scope (i.e., regulated by state statutes regarding boundaries of permissible skills and activities based on licensure, certification and training); prior arguments made by the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration, American College of Emergency Physicians, and the National Consensus Conference on Community Paramedicine suggest that community paramedics operate under the existing EMS scope of practice model (27, 41, 42). Community Paramedic certification (CP-C) via the International Board of Specialty Certifications is available (43). The

Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS) published the first edition of accreditation standards for MIH programs in 2022 (44), with a second edition forthcoming.

A comprehensive 2018 evaluation of state regulations of community paramedicine programs demonstrated heterogeneity, which largely reflects the heterogeneity in the current landscape of MIH-CP practice. A National Association of State EMS Officials report from that same year found “enabling legislation” in 16 states, but only one state had additional language defining community paramedicine and enabling Medicaid payment for this model of care (45). State-based compendiums provide more granular detail of this state-to-state variation and may be a guiding resource for nascent programs (46-51). More broadly, calls continue to be made to avoid prematurely setting broad standards and rules that could harm the field in its infancy (52, 53) and engaged EMS medical directors play an important role in advocating for the development of appropriate regulations at the local, state, and national level.

#### **EMS Clinician Education and Training**

***Clinician training programs intending to be comprehensive in approach should use standardized curricula. In programs with a limited expanded scope of practice, modularized training specific to the targeted disease processes may be appropriate. In both cases, CP and MIH clinicians should undergo regular competency evaluation supported by the physician medical director.***

Recent reports identify extensive education and training variation, due in part to the spectrum of clinical roles and duties they may perform, as well as state-by-state variation in potential

roles and duties (46, 54, 55). Community paramedicine education curricula are publicly available through multiple organizations and have been instituted internationally (56-60).

Vision statements for MIH-CP called for specialized education of EMS clinicians, though the exact content of this education has not been specified (12, 13). While disease-specific programs may focus on disease-specific education (61), the previous NAEMSP position statement on MIH-CP suggested considering more holistic education for general community paramedic clinicians who may encounter a breadth of conditions (17, 62). However, given ongoing heterogeneity in the field, and because education should match emerging (and not-yet-emerged) roles and duties, the National EMS Advisory Council recommends ongoing consensus development in this area (63). Some agencies are using other clinicians (e.g., advanced practice clinicians) in scenarios where EMS education or training is not yet optimized (64, 65).

Training for MIH-CP roles is also poorly described (66, 67). A recent survey of nationally certified EMS clinicians performing in MIH roles found that clinicians most often received less than 50 hours of training (54). Further, while some states have regulated community paramedic training (46), most do not, with variable approaches to the regulation of training and certification for MIH-CP. Some programs choose to train paramedics for the job role whereas other programs prefer to pair paramedics with a specialist in another discipline; for example, community paramedics responding to behavioral health calls in Modesto, California receive 140 hours of specialized training to work independently for behavioral health 9-1-1 calls while community paramedics in Atlanta, Georgia work with a mental health social worker to accomplish a similar

task (68). Other programs choose to provide additional training in the form of community health worker certification (69). International experts have report early consensus on standardized domains for in-home assessment by community paramedics (70), though the applicability to US MIH-CP programs remains unclear.

### **Funding & Reimbursement**

***State and federal agencies should establish reimbursement systems under Medicare and Medicaid, and EMS agencies should work with private payors to ensure reimbursement for the provision of community paramedicine and mobile integrated health care, decoupled from reimbursement for transportation.***

Perhaps the most pressing unanswered questions for MIH-CP is how this model of care can be sustainably funded. As funding and reimbursement landscapes continue to change, the growth and sustainability of MIH-CP will be heavily influenced by national standardization of payment models, allowing EMS clinicians and agencies to provide the right level of care, to the right patient, at the right time, in the right place, with the right transport disposition. Many MIH-CP programs continue to report lack of sustainable funding as a significant barrier to effectively expanding programs (71, 72). Despite mounting evidence of cost neutrality or cost savings MIH-CP models to the healthcare system (73-83), MIH-CP programs also represent increased cost to the EMS system, including training, operations, and staffing (84).

Payment for EMS services is often tied to EMS transportation; however, calls to align payment with the value of the care provided by EMS clinicians, rather than the transportation decision

only, are ongoing (25, 73, 85-87). The Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport (ET3) model provided a framework for a fee-for-service model of EMS reimbursement, decoupled from transportation to an emergency department (88). The ET3 model allowed for patient transport to an alternative destination and reimbursement for treatment in place with a qualified health care partner either on-scene or via telehealth (88). The stated goals of this model were to reduce expenditures, increase system efficiency, and provide quality person-centered care using an appropriate level of service based on the person's actual healthcare needs (88). The model was intended to run for five years, but ended two years early on December 31, 2023 (88, 89). A total of 2,379 beneficiaries received care under ET3 with 35% of the 185 participating agencies billing for interventions (90). Eight programs provided more than 100 interventions over the study period with the majority of these (92%) treatment in place (90). Multiple challenges were identified by the participants including: EMS personnel disengagement, difficulty in obtaining agreements with alternative destination partners, patient understanding of the program, and technology issues (90). Low participation rates prevented adequate statistical evaluation of outcomes, though the final report noted a trend towards fewer ED visits and cost savings (90).

Pending federal legislation includes the Emergency Medical Services Reimbursement for On-Scene and Support Act, the Improving Access to Emergency Medical Services Act of 2024, and longer-term extension of several rules related to telemedicine via the American Relief Act of 2025.

Outside of a centralized reimbursement process through federal legislation, the MIH-CP model may also be funded via direct financial collaboration with health systems, accountable care organizations, and managed care organizations. Examples include providing value-based care (e.g., treatment in place or alternate destination transport) and cost-avoidance (e.g., 30-day readmission reduction) (91). The growing literature base also highlights the possibility of reimbursement for services from state Medicaid or commercial payers, though the type of clinician (Paramedic vs non-Paramedic EMS clinician) and reimbursable services vary greatly (92, 93).

### **Outcomes and Data Collection**

***Data collection and analysis using standardized tools, methods, and reporting structures are essential for the evaluation and growth of CP and MIH programs.***

Research on MIH-CP remains vitally important to safe and effective EMS practice (94). Both the quantity and quality of MIH-CP research has increased over the past decade, with a trend away from retrospective program descriptions and towards prospective interventional and implementation trials with health outcomes (95-103). However, given significant heterogeneity in both clinical practice and outcomes reporting, it remains difficult to aggregate data and/or compare programs (104-110). Outcomes measures and reporting varies greatly among programs (111). The MIH-CP Outcome Measures Workbook provides a variety of recommended agency-level outcomes; even greater heterogeneity exists among larger outcomes, such as state-based reports (112, 113).

***CP and MIH research should develop a standard taxonomy for describing programs, identify common data definitions and outcomes measures, collaboratively aggregate data, and advocate for development of data reporting standards.***

Despite the increasing visibility of MIH-CP programs over the past decade, it remains difficult to identify and classify all active programs in the U.S. Current unanswered questions include: the prevalence and types of MIH-CP programs across the country, EMS clinician roles within these programs, the education and training received for those roles, best practices for collaborating in multidisciplinary out-of-hospital teams that reduce fragmentation of care, and methods for outcomes data collection among multiple agencies. Current unanswered questions include available data sources and interoperability, patient-centered outcomes (including both qualitative experiences and disease-specific outcomes), longitudinal patient outcomes, patient safety, EMS clinician-centered outcomes (including workforce development and retention), MIH-CP program implementation, health system outcomes, as well as a larger framework and agenda for MIH-CP research, which was last updated in 2012 (114, 115).

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Engaged and knowledgeable physician medical direction is essential to MIH-CP program implementation. A critical first step in program implementation is a health system gap analysis. When completing this gap analysis, it is important to engage the local public health system including not only hospitals and clinics but public health entities and community organizations. Once completed, the physician medical director along with program leadership should use this gap analysis to guide program design, ensuring clinician training appropriate to the scope of the

program, and maintaining clinical quality. Standardized curricula exist to support MIH-CP clinician training, (113, 126-128) although no specific curricula or certification has yet been widely adopted by the MIH-CP community. Ultimately a training program tailored to the specific needs of the community, and meeting regulatory standards, should be developed in collaboration with the program medical director.

Program design should also include plans to maintain flexibility to adapt roles as community needs evolve, and efforts should be made to avoid duplication of existing or planned services. This may include regular and open communication with other community services and collaboration across similarly focused programs. Successful integration of MIH-CP programs within the larger public health system requires early stakeholder engagement, often with stakeholders unfamiliar with EMS and MIH-CP. While MIH-CP programs must operate within existing regulatory framework, programs and medical directors must advocate for regulations and standards that do not stifle innovation. Frequent discussions with stakeholders and demonstration of measurable outcomes are helpful approaches. This breadth of responsibility – program design, stakeholder engagement, training, clinical oversight, system integration, quality assurance and quality improvement – is best met through the engagement of an EMS physician medical director with MIH-CP experience.

Sustainable funding strategies are essential for long-term program viability. Unfortunately, a standardized payment model for MIH-CP services remains elusive Until such a payment model is

implemented, programs should pursue diversified revenue streams, including partnerships with health systems, private payors, and grant opportunities. Developing a comprehensive, data-driven business case, decoupled from transport-based reimbursement, allows stakeholders to understand the value proposition of improved outcomes and potential cost savings. An early emphasis on data collection, aligned with community priorities and broader health system goals, is essential to demonstrate the value of the service and to ensure program accountability and growth. An engaged medical director can be a valuable asset in advocacy at the local, state, and national level for regulatory guidance and financial sustainability.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This resource document has three key limitations. First, the structured rapid review methodology was a pragmatic choice for the time-sensitive nature of this position statement; however, a comprehensive literature review was not performed and potentially missed pertinent literature. We attempted to minimize this limitation by using broad search terms and multiple reviewers. Second, the inclusion of grey literature and consensus recommendations was necessary for some aspects of this resource document where academic literature is sparse or nonexistent. Third, the pace of change in MIH-CP is rapid and some references or resources, particularly those citing pending legislation, may change after publication.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The MIH-CP model represents an ongoing paradigm shift in EMS, moving beyond emergency response and transportation to meet broader community healthcare needs. This revised position statement and resource document outline key examples of successful programs, including engaged EMS physician medical direction, education and training, sustainable reimbursement, and data-driven evaluation. Future efforts should address important gaps, including standardized nomenclature, outcomes measurement, rigorous data collection, and sustainable reimbursement models with supporting policy.

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Table 1: Example MIH-CP models of care and EMS clinician roles and duties, separated by function/context-specific and location-specific services.

Model of Care	Description of EMS Clinician Roles, Duties
<b><i>Function- or Context-Specific: Services that are provided by MIH-CP clinicians to fulfill a specific function or deliver care in a context identified as a service gap.</i></b>	
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs related to disease surveillance (116), primary/secondary prevention (117), and/or connecting to community resources (118)</li> <li>• Access populations that cannot or will not access services otherwise (119)</li> <li>• Viral testing &amp; vaccinations (120-122)</li> </ul>
Preventive Care, Risk Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home safety evaluations for new parents &amp; programs to improve access to prenatal and postpartum care and wrap-around services for people with high-risk pregnancies (123)</li> <li>• EMS clinicians focusing on in-home assessment and/or identification of fall risk, dementia, delirium, polypharmacy (124-126)</li> <li>• EMS clinicians providing education and care for individuals following hypo/hyperglycemia-related presentations (61, 127)</li> <li>• High blood pressure screening/treatment (128)</li> <li>• Post-stroke and post-coronary artery bypass graft care in rural counties (tertiary prevention) (129, 130)</li> <li>• Post-overdose harm reduction (tertiary prevention) (131)</li> <li>• Social determinants of health screening (132)</li> </ul>
Chronic Disease Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMS clinicians following up on positive emergency department-based hepatitis screenings and coordinating follow up &amp; treatment (133)</li> <li>• Post-overdose response including screening, brief intervention, starting medications for opioid use disorder (134, 135)</li> <li>• EMS-led community health promotion program for at-risk older adults (136)</li> <li>• Congestive heart failure chronic disease management &amp; readmission avoidance (137-140)</li> <li>• Coordinating complex care among teams of clinicians and community agencies (119, 141)</li> <li>• Ensuring patient have access to and are properly taking treatments for diseases of public health importance (e.g., tuberculosis, hepatitis C) (142, 143)</li> </ul>
Alternative Destination Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expands options for transportation to include non-emergent health ambulatory care settings, including sobering centers or mental health facilities (23, 144, 145)</li> </ul>
Disaster Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting with lost medications and system navigation following a local flood disaster (146)</li> </ul>

Care Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses specifically on the transition from emergency department or hospital to home (147-153)</li> </ul>
System Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redirection of 9-1-1 calls to appropriate levels of care (154), including use of point-of-care testing (155, 156)</li> <li>• Identifying and navigating appropriate patients to specialty care (157) or social services (158, 159)</li> <li>• Reducing frequent and/or unnecessary 9-1-1 EMS calls and/or ambulance use (160-167)</li> </ul>
Telemedicine & Digital Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMS clinicians with telemedicine may help determine appropriate transportation modality, appropriate treatment (i.e., enable treatment-in-place), or facilitate access to multidisciplinary services in broadband deserts, disaster or isolated settings (28, 133, 168-173)</li> <li>• Digital monitoring symptoms with on-demand MIH-CP services (174) and leveraging EMS clinicians to assist with remote monitoring setup (175)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Location-Specific: Services that are provided by MIH-CP clinicians to deliver care to a specific location that is identified as a service gap.</i></b></p>	
Hospital at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial or complete avoidance of brick-and-mortar hospitalization through a home-based inpatient level of care, allowing for increased relative hospital capacity (176); may also include observation status at home (177)</li> </ul>
Long-Term Care Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMS partnership with long-term care facilities to increase services offered to reduce unnecessary transport to the emergency department (178-180)</li> </ul>
Within Primary or Specialty Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding EMS clinicians within primary care practices to improve access to care and reduce wait times for urgent evaluations during off-hours (181)</li> <li>• Partnerships with palliative care services and hospice agencies to reduce hospice revocation, avoid EMS transport, and improve timely access to off-hours care (182)</li> </ul>
Homeless Shelter or Street Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multidisciplinary care, including EMS clinicians, to address health and social needs among individuals experiencing housing insecurity (183)</li> </ul>
Treat In Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for in-home treatment of older adults without the requirement of transportation (184)</li> <li>• Alternative protocols for treatment-in-place during the COVID-19 pandemic (29)</li> </ul>

Table 1 footnotes: MIH-CP: mobile integrated health care - community paramedicine; EMS: emergency medical services