Community Paramedicine For Rural Communities
Amy McPherson, MPH Student at University of Arizona’s Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health

ABSTRACT
- Community paramedicine, or integrated community health care programs, are an innovative approach to the expanding demand for services from emergency medical services and the shortage, or inaccessibility, of primary care providers in rural communities. Many programs also aim to decrease the number of high frequency patients.
- Paramedics are trained to provide patient-centered care in the home, while providing information about local resources already available to patients. When patients have the resources they need, they are less likely to rely on the emergency system to manage their chronic illnesses.
- Integrated community healthcare programs are adaptable to the unique needs of a rural community.

BACKGROUND
- Almost 20% of 9-1-1 calls do not require a paramedic response
- Overage costs millions of dollars each year to communities
- Community paramedics assist patients with chronic illnesses and/or those without access to primary care
- Rural communities may lack primary care or convenient access to service providers

OBJECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
- Identify needs of the community
- Identify resources already available to fulfill needs
- Collaborate with local health service providers
- Train paramedics
- Communicate and collaborate with community
- Connect patients with primary care providers and other resources
- Maintain standardized data collection
- Research funding/reimbursement opportunities

DECREASES "down Cme" and allows paramedics to expand their skillset

EVALUATING NEEDS OF COMMUNITY
- Evaluating insurance enrollment rates, most common primary complaints of emergency service calls, and outcomes of emergency service treatment can provide insight to the needs and characteristics of a community.

Santa Cruz County Insurance Enrollment Rate (2013)

Top 10 Primary Symptoms of High Frequency Patients (Rio Rico, AZ - 2014)

High Frequency Caller Dispositions Rio Rico, AZ (2014)

TRAINING PARAMEDICS
- Role of the paramedic changes from crisis manager to educator
- Motivational interviewing techniques beneficial for communicating with patients.
- Must be aware of available resources for patients based on individual need.
- Create training plan for determining how paramedics will be trained and their skills evaluated and improved.

Sample training plan for learning motivational interviewing techniques:

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<tr>
<th>Training Goal</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Learning Methods / Activities</th>
<th>Documenta&gt;on / Evidence of Learning</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td>Become familiar with motivational interviewing techniques and implement these tools into paramedic skills</td>
<td>1. Understand the role and objectives of motivational interviewing 2. Exhibit comprehension of the four basic skills of motivational interviewing (OARS) 3. Exhibit understanding of the five basic principles of motivational interviewing (DEARS)</td>
<td>1. Complete a course in basic motivational interviewing 2. Practice using this technique to solve a problem or address a health concern. 3. View video on motivational interviewing</td>
<td>1. Evaluation of ability to adhere to motivational interviewing techniques in a conversation 2. Written evaluation of ability to describe role and methods used in motivational interviewing.</td>
<td>Supervisor and peer evaluation feedback will allow for continued improvement</td>
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FILLING THE GAP IN RURAL AREAS
- Rural communities may lack sufficient access to primary care providers or advanced emergency care.
- As a result some patients end up using 911 as source for primary care
- Paramedics fill that gap and provide more proactive care through community paramedicine
- Expanded role vs. Expanded scope of practice
- Paramedics are supervised by a physician
- Must be careful not to overlap with existing services (i.e., home health care)