

Comment from Saratoga County (New York) EMS

We highly support the National Roadway Safety Strategy in concept. With regards to the Post Crash Care section, we would like to offer some recommendations:

1. Assure that funding for the listed key departmental actions is distributed in a fashion that makes the recommended actions accessible to all Emergency Medical Services. A significant majority of EMS services are smaller, have limited administrative staff, and are often overlooked by local, state and federal organizations seeking to promote safety improvements such as traffic incident management training and strategies.
2. Promote greater access directly by EMS services to data maintained, analyzed and collected by the National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS). This would facilitate greater use of these data to improve post-crash care.
3. Expand use and support of EMS interfaces in Health Information Exchanges to provide post-crash care data directly to EMS providers and agencies through their electronic patient care record systems by directly interfacing these with hospital electronic medical records. This would also enhance post-crash care in hospitals by providing immediate and fully automated access to EMS records through Health Information Exchanges.
4. We do not support the key departmental action #4 for shortening on-scene response times. There is no evidence that speed in response improves outcomes. We do, however, recommend that NHTSA collaborate with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to focus on technologies that would improve care provided to crash victims such as administration of blood and blood products by EMS, use of drones to deliver blood and other life support technologies to crash scenes, enhancements to crash notification systems that would provide data directly to EMS responders prior to arrival at a crash scene, and other technologies that would improve survival.
5. NHTSA should utilize existing NEMSIS and census data to focus additional funding on rural EMS services to improve capability to respond to crashes. Rural EMS in many communities is understaffed, underfunded, without necessary equipment and supplies, and poorly prepared to answer emergency calls for assistance (compared to their counterparts in more densely populated areas).