



**Maryland Institute
for
Emergency Medical Services Systems
(MIEMSS)

Customer Service Annual Report**



Ted Delbridge, MD, FACEP, Executive Director

MIEMSS

653 West Pratt Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

tdelbridge@miemss.org

410-706-5074

Patricia Gainer, JD, MPA, Deputy Director

MIEMSS

653 West Pratt Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

pgainer@miemss.org

410-706-3992

James W. Brown, Customer Service Liaison

MIEMSS

653 West Pratt Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

jbrown@miemss.org

410-706-3994

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FY20 Highlights

During FY20, MIEMSS customer service highlights included:

- Improved the tracking, responsiveness, and resolution of all electronic, telephone, written, and in-person correspondence. The agency continues to acknowledge and respond to all email inquiries within 24 hours of receipt.
- Ensured MIEMSS employees continue to improve customer service skills through coaching from managers on best practices in customer service.
- Improved the processing times of all agency services to help citizens, EMS jurisdictions, and individual emergency services clinicians accomplish their transactions with the agency.
- Increased the number of services that MIEMSS provides online so that citizens and emergency services providers can utilize self-service, whenever appropriate.
- Updated online publications, forms, and pertinent information on our website so that citizens and emergency services clinicians can find relevant information quickly and accurately.
- Increased the number of on-line forms that may be filled in online and submitted.
- During the COVID 19 pandemic, increased use of social media to assist in getting the word out about updated services, events, and news in order to provide citizens and emergency services clinicians with important information.
- Continued use of the Customer Experience Survey on our website for citizens, emergency services clinicians, and businesses to provide feedback. Responses are used to make improvements to our customer services.

In addition to these core customer service-related activities, we also analyzed our business hours to better align them to customer needs especially during the pandemic. MIEMSS ensured our web site and literature was up-to-date in an ongoing manner to inform customers of current topics during these times. Discussions were held weekly on processes for improving our customer service during weekly leadership program director's meetings.

Recognition Given to Employees

Official recognition is done at our agency staff meetings where those that are mentioned by our external customers are noted. Managers provide agency leadership with individuals from each department for recognition for their work with both internal and external customers. The names of those individuals that are cited by our external customer's comments are also sent to the managers for departmental recognition.

Unfortunately, since the COVID pandemic, we have not held in-person staff meetings. Our virtual meetings have not included this recognition since these are done over the phone but we plan to include that in our next meeting as a discussion item and definitely will be presenting recognition as soon as in-person meetings can resume. It is critically important to recognize our employee's efforts in customer service, especially during these times.

FY20 Leadership Analysis and Summary of FY21 Approach

MIEMSS has stressed the need for excellent Customer Service for the entire agency during FY20. During the pandemic, the need for improved customer service has been vital to our agency. The agency has needed to work with those on the frontline that continue to serve Maryland's ill and injured patients. These clinicians did not stop delivering care. The agency remained open under specific hours to assist emergency personnel. MIEMSS instituted several customer service oriented initiatives including extensions of time need for clinician recertification, provisional licenses for students in EMS, respiratory therapy, and nursing educational programs, and delivered COVID 19 Crisis Support programs for emergency services providers and employees working in long term care environments. Additional use of social media and our website informed the public and emergency services personnel of up-to-date information regarding information related to COVID 19 and our services.

Managers are aware of the importance of providing excellent customer service to both internal and external customers. MIEMSS executive leadership strives to stress the importance of making our internal (co-workers) customers as important as our outside customers. Treating fellow agency employees with respect and with proper follow through is as crucial as our services to others. MIEMSS external customers include pre-hospital emergency services clinicians, fire, law enforcement, hospital personnel, and health departments. All departments interface with these external customers at some level. Through increased awareness of customer service, leadership has encouraged and supported better service to ALL our customers.

During FY21, additional customer service training will be delivered with more specific topics related to better serve our customers at the departmental level. Each department works with our customers at various levels. MIEMSS will implement a formal recognition process for recognizing our employee's good work. We will continue to strive to provide the highest level of service to all our internal and external customers during FY21.

Detailed FY20 Results and FY21 Plans

During FY20, MIEMSS focused on customer-service responsiveness. MIEMSS has always worked well with our customers, yet the promptness of responding has improved. With COVID 19, the agency was open during certain hours to assist emergency personnel. The licensing, certification, and credentialing of emergency medical services clinicians was modified to increase the availability of EMS clinicians by providing opportunities to renew previously held Maryland certification / license and, for those licensed / certified in other states, to become Maryland clinicians.. This helped to augment the emergency medical services workforce and improve the response to the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency.

By issuing provisional licenses for students in EMS, respiratory therapy, and nursing educational programs, these persons were able to assist in the care of patients. Responsiveness to questions that these individuals had during the credentialing process was critical to their participation in the EMS system.

MIEMSS employees, who teleworked during the pandemic, as well as those who worked on site, have a better understanding of each other's individual roles and how to interact with fellow employees in different departments and working under different circumstances. This allows us to meet the customer's needs in a more prompt and efficient manner. A better understanding of each other's jobs has made this process work. An internally developed program was presented prior to the pandemic that stressed the need for working together to better address the needs of our customers.

During FY21, additional trainings are being planned agency wide. Details of the specific topics are being discussed with leadership, focusing on our lower rated areas from the customer service surveys. Areas of customer service are changing due to the current times. With remote working, there is even more need to be customer service focused.

The formal recognition of employees will continue. By recognizing individuals at the agency level, increased awareness and interest in delivering even better customer service occurs.

Customer Service Survey Results

Through the Customer Service Survey, the majority of our customers have rated the Overall Satisfaction level of our customer service as “Very Satisfied.” MIEMSS employees continually strive to provide friendly service in a courteous manner, which is reflected in the responses of “Very Satisfied” for Friendly and Courteous service. As far as how satisfied the customers are with the customer service provided, most responses are “Very Satisfied.” We have focused on those few responses that were not satisfied and made contact with those individuals. The customers are tracked through a process to be sure that they get the information they need. The negative comments received pertained to access to certain products such as licensing updates and continuing education data. For the responses as to whether the agency made it easier to handle their issue, MIEMSS again received the majority of “Very Satisfied” responses. We continue to make our website easier to use and to expand online services for all customers to access their records. As the agency continues its transition into the electronic Licensure system, individuals are able to complete certain licensing and certification procedures as well as update their personal information online. This method of doing business is made easier by delivering additional education on how to use the system. This educational process has been extremely helpful to our customers. MIEMSS is working to improve our transparency with our customers.

Status of Customer Service Training

An internally developed customer service program, “12 Keys to Office Success,” was designed by our Director of Licensure and Certification department that has the most contact with external customers. The department uses a Customer Response Team (CRT) that reviews comments and compliments for the department. On-going training occurs for this team. The use of the CRT initiative assists in the resolution of customer concerns and includes follow-up. The “12 Keys to Office Success” training was presented prior to the pandemic. The training stresses the importance of working together to better address the needs of our customers. For the leadership level, the focus is on empowering the employee to do more, which in turn makes the customer the highest priority. In FY21, we will continue to monitor the Customer Service survey results in order to address internal training needs.

We plan to expand customer service training to more web-based sessions in FY 21, especially as workers continue to work remotely.

Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

Timeliness is very important in responding to our emergency services personnel. They need to have correct, timely answers to their inquiries. We have instituted several “help desk” emails for certain website areas where questions are most commonly raised. Emails from customers go directly to an individual or group that is responsible for responding. A response is given as promptly as possible: responses to these emails are made within 24 hours, even if it is only a follow-up to let the customer know that their concern is being addressed. This approach has resulted in faster response to email inquiries and greater customer satisfaction.

The agency plans to maintain these systems and to add additional online response systems as needed in FY21.

Best Practices

The licensing and certification of EMS clinicians is a critical service MIEMSS provides to our customers. Basic life support clinicians must renew their certification every three years and advanced life support clinicians must renew their licensure every two years. In addition, all clinicians must take an annual protocol update in order to practice in Maryland. This annual update is included now included on our agency’s Online Training Center, with access through our website. Individuals are able to log in, complete their training, take the test, and print out their certificate of completion. This information is also automatically added to the individual’s continuing education records and then sent to the EMS supervisors in each county. Additional online training programs have been developed to allow EMS personnel to continue their education without in-person sessions during the pandemic.

Plans for Improvement

MIEMSS plans to add additional programs in FY21 to help our customers increase online training and education capabilities. MIEMSS continues to implement improvements to the electronic Licensure System that supports seamless processing and enhances functionality. The system allows for more efficient processing of information and the ability to communicate electronically to providers across all levels. With continual feedback from the EMS community at-

large, MIEMSS continues to improve system functionality, while meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

Future system enhancements will make it possible to process with greater efficiency while providing faster turnaround times.

Call Center Data

MIEMSS does not have a Call Center system.

Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

Making Agency Services Available Online

Most of our services are currently available online. The agency continues to implement our online electronic Licensure System where all EMS clinicians can electronically access and view their licensing, certification, and continuing education records. Each clinician has an account where they can directly access their records. The regional EMS jurisdiction officials also have access to the system and can monitor their employee's licensing, certification, and education records. This system continues to be expanded and improved in FY21 with customer input. This year our annual EMS awards nomination process went completely online, where individuals were able to submit nominations for multiple categories to honor EMS personnel and citizens for heroic actions.

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

The licensing and certification of EMS clinicians is a critical service MIEMSS provides to our customers. Basic life support clinicians must renew their certification every three years, and advanced life support clinicians must update their licensure every two years. In addition, all clinicians must take an annual protocol update in order to practice in Maryland. This annual update is included at our agency's Online Training Center, with access through our website. Individuals are able to log in, complete their training, take the test, and print out their certificate of completion. This information is also automatically added to the individual's continuing education records and then sent to the EMS supervisors in each county.

MIEMSS will add additional programs in FY20 to help customers increase online training and education needs. MIEMSS continues to implement critical improvements to the electronic Licensure System that will support seamless processing and enhance functionality. The number of users in the Licensure System continues to increase. The system allows for more efficient processing and the ability to communicate electronically to clinicians. With continual feedback from the EMS community, MIEMSS is improving system functionality, while meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

Further system enhancements will make it possible to process with greater efficiency while providing faster turnaround times.

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

MIEMSS is a 24/7 operation with our statewide communication center that is located within our agency. Our main customers are EMS personnel that also work shifts and need to contact the agency at varying hours. The Licensure and Certification Department has the most interaction and contact with the clinicians. Prior to the pandemic, their office hours were 8:00 am - 4:30 pm. Clinicians were able to come to our central office during those hours to purchase merchandise (Protocol books, T-shirts, Polo shirts, stickers, and patches). Clinician testing was also offered during those hours, with alternative times for testing available to accommodate the EMS clinician work schedules. These testing hours were also offered by our Regional Offices, located across the state. Since the COVID 19 event with limited access to the office, individuals may call for an appointment to access services before they can come in person. An announcement on the MIEMSS website informs our customers of that policy. We have also made our merchandise available for purchase through our website. Orders are filled by personnel in the office and shipped. The Office Licensure and Certification Department would typically attend Regional Continuing Education Conferences across the state in an effort to reach all customers with merchandise and to provide clinicians the ability to check and update their certification. These conferences have been cancelled and this service will resume following the pandemic.

During FY21, the agency plans to expand its online merchandising presence. A more extensive use of the online store is planned. Currently, there is no plan to change our hours of operation.

Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

MIEMSS uses social media to disseminate information to EMS clinicians and the public. We expanded our use of social media with an Instagram account. Through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, updates and information on continuing education programs and EMS-specific information gives clinicians constant contact. The agency implemented an Instagram account this year to better inform our audiences. The public is informed regarding injury prevention topics, such as car seat checks, drowsy driving, impaired driving, motorcycle safety, and other methods to help reduce injuries to Maryland's citizens. MIEMSS utilizes a YouTube account to allow EMS clinicians to view educational programs, which improves access to additional training. This account also is used to show the public various injury-prevention Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

In FY21, we will expand the production of social media messaging and video productions to educate clinicians as well as the public in order to spread the word on injury prevention topics, EMS events, and continuing education. The pandemic has shown that social media messaging is crucial to informing our customers on up-to-date content.

Licensing and Permitting from Multiple Perspectives

The Number & Type of Licenses and Permits Processed for FY20

MIEMSS currently certifies and licenses all Maryland EMS clinicians. Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs), Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs), Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Cardiac Rescue Technicians (CRTs), and Paramedics are all initially tested and recertified by the agency. During FY20, MIEMSS certified 225 new EMDs, 36 new EMRs, 1,203 new EMTs, and licensed 32 new CRTs and 218 Paramedics. During the same period, MIEMSS renewed 129 EMDs, 42 EMRs, 4,493 EMTs, 203 CRTs, and 1,550 Paramedics.

During the pandemic, MIEMSS implemented a program for provisional certification for EMS clinicians to help augment our clinician workforce. Individuals that were previously licensed (within a limited time period), students that were enrolled in EMS classes with specific completed coursework, and individuals that held certification in other states were able to apply online to assist during the pandemic. Through this process, the agency certified 32 EMRs, 961 EMTs, and licensed 7 CRTs and 190 Paramedics.

Agency Services Available Online

The agency continues to implement the Licensure System where all EMS clinicians can electronically have online access and viewing of their licensing, certification, and continuing education records. Each individual has an account where they can directly access their records. During FY21, MIEMSS will continue to expand and enhance the functionality of the Online Training Center, including grade score captured directly into clinician continuing education records located in the Licensure system. With the pandemic, this system was used to allow EMS clinicians to complete their mandatory annual training completely online. They would view the program, take the test, receive their score, and upon successful completion, print their own certificate. This data was then transferred into the statewide continuing education records. Individuals requesting provisional status during the pandemic also utilized the online system. This streamlined the process and made it efficient method for bringing these individuals into the system. MIEMSS is reviewing possible upgrades to the Online Training Center, including an upgrade of the Online Training Center website to better serve our customers.

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

MIEMSS continues to implement ongoing improvements to the electronic Licensure System that support more seamless processing and enhance processing times for individuals. The use of the system allows more efficient processing times electronically for all clinicians.

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

Currently, there is no plan to change our hours of operation.

Satellite Processing Facilities to Meet Customer Demands

MIEMSS has four satellite offices. All agency services and testing hours are offered in our Regional Offices situated across the state. Offices are located in Frostburg, Hagerstown, Easton, and College Park.

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The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) actively promotes excellent customer service for both internal and external customers. We will continue these efforts during FY20, making our customers our top priority and striving to deliver the best customer service possible.