

EMS and Biosurveillance: The Ebola Experience

Narrative: Ebola exploded onto the scene in 2014 in West Africa, eventually traveling to the United States. While much of the effort for response was aimed at the inpatient delivery of care for Ebola patients, EMS was the first contact with these patients.

Emergency Medical Services generate volumes of data which contain valuable information about infectious disease activity within the community.

In a matter of weeks, EMS agencies from across the United States began performing surveillance looking for patients with Ebola using 911 data, as well as patient care records.

This data was in near real time and provided EMS personnel and public health officials with proper alerting of potential cases so that crews could protect themselves and give advanced warning to the medical community and public health.

Objective:

To review:

1. the time line of the Ebola crisis,
2. the EMS response to the Dallas patient,
3. the development of surveillance case definitions and data from the Ebola surveillance from the single largest aggregation of data from EMS across the US and Canada.