



EMERGENCY AMBULANCE RESPONSE: DETERMINING RURAL VS. URBAN STATUS

Joshua Smith, PhD, MPH

Epidemiologist

County of San Diego, Health and Human Services

Public Health Services

Emergency Medical Services



CO-PRESENTERS



- Isabel Corcos
- Leslie Ray
- Barbara Stepanski
- Amelia Kenner-Brininger
- Sanaa Abedin
- Ryan Smith
- Maria Pena



EMS DATA SYSTEM STANDARDS (EMSA #161)

| Name | Definition |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Metropolitan | > 500 persons per square mile |
| Urban | 100 – 500 ppl/mi ² |
| Suburban | 50 – 100 ppl/mi ² |
| Rural | 7 – 50 ppl/mi ² |
| Wilderness | < 7 ppl/mi ² |

- San Diego uses two-category split at 50 persons per square mile
 - > 50 ppl/mi² = URBAN
 - < 50 ppl/mi² = RURAL
- EMSA recommends the use of census tracts

ISSUES



- What level of measurement to determine population density?
 - Census blocks, block groups, tracts?
 - Zip Codes?
 - Ambulance operating areas?
 - Other?