Introduction:
Medical oversight, which includes protocol development and maintenance, education and training and quality management, begins at the agency level. To assist the more than 100 agency medical directors who provide their services to ensure that quality EMS is available across the state, the department initiated a regional medical direction program to provide the resources to help agency medical directors better perform their duties. This program is meant to be a resource for agency medical directors and is not meant, in any way, to interfere with the relationship between any agency medical director and his/her EMS agencies, nor is it in any way meant to supplant the authority of the agency medical director. In addition, agency participation is voluntary. The program resources will be made available to assist EMS agencies and their medical directors, but each agency or medical director will have the option to choose whether or not they utilize the resources. Whether an agency chooses to use the resources or not will not alter the agency medical director’s responsibilities for providing appropriate medical oversight and ensuring continued competency of the providers working under his/her license, as defined in state rules.

The regional medical direction program is a coordinated effort to enhance EMS medical care and outcomes statewide. The State Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Council has allocated funding for regional medical direction projects through the RETACs to integrate EMS medical direction with their statutory responsibility for planning and coordination of emergency medical and trauma services throughout Colorado. The regional medical direction program is designed to provide resources for each RETAC to establish, support and successfully complete the objectives suggested in this guide as well as those objectives and projects that may be developed to meet the individual needs of each region. Each program will be governed by a written agreement with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the successful completion of each year’s objectives will be documented in accordance with the contractual reporting requirements.

Regional medical direction programs should be designed to:

1. Facilitate peer communication and cooperation
   a. Share ideas and practice concepts
   b. Provide updates and facilitate discussion regarding regulatory changes, advances in EMS clinical practice and developments in technology.
   c. Discuss local and regional systems issues

2. Provide resources to agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators that will enhance their ability to provide effective medical oversight

3. Facilitate regional quality management activities
   a. Create meaningful benchmarks to assess agency and system performance
   b. Develop pertinent regional CQI questions
   c. Discuss global data to determine opportunities for system improvement

4. Promote development of protocols, education and training
5. Facilitate communications between agencies and the state office

6. Facilitate communications between agencies and the healthcare community at large

**Suggested deliverables:**

a. Tools to facilitate communication and promote EMS education amongst agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators throughout the region
   i. Regional medical direction meetings
      Conduct regularly scheduled meetings to facilitate communication between agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators. The meetings should occur, at a minimum, once yearly. Optimally, more frequent meetings should be considered.
   ii. Continuing medical education
      Conduct regularly scheduled educational offerings pertinent to EMS clinical practice, quality management and other pertinent topics for agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators. Collaborate with hospitals, education programs or other appropriate organizations to recognize credits for continuing medical education for licensing, certification or credentialing.
   iii. Communication channels
      Develop and maintain effective communication channels amongst the agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators in the region. Attend EMPAC meetings to serve as a conduit for information between local medical direction and the state. Collaborate with the RETAC to complement existing communication channels between the state and agencies in the region. For example, develop a newsletter, list serve or other methods to communicate regulatory changes, educational offerings, updates on clinical practice concepts and developments in technology. Make these available through the RETAC web site or other appropriate venues.

b. Promote regional coordination
   i. Develop a set of regional protocols, review annually and update as indicated for voluntary use by EMS agencies
   ii. Standardize regional education and training. to improve consistency and effectiveness in the delivery of EMS education and training

c. Facilitate quality management activities
   i. Serve as a resource for quality management education for agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators to develop and maintain effective quality management programs for each agency
   ii. Promote discussion amongst agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators to develop and maintain a regional quality management program
iii. Serve as a resource to enhance the ability for EMS agencies to submit accurate, meaningful data to the state
iv. Create meaningful benchmarks based on regional, state or national data to assess agency and system performance benchmarks
v. Develop regional CQI questions that are of interest to the agency medical directors, agency clinical coordinators and providers in the region
vi. Discuss and evaluate global data to identify opportunities for system improvement

d. Technical assistance
   i. Serve as a resource for individual agency medical directors or agency clinical coordinators to help improve clinical practice, quality management programs, and systems of care for each agency
   ii. Serve as a resource for new agency medical directors and agency clinical coordinators to develop competency in EMS medical oversight and quality management.