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Narrowbanding and its Impact on Emergency Medical Services

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**“We live in the midst of alarms; anxiety beclouds the future;  
we expect some new disaster with each newspaper we read.”**

**Abraham Lincoln**



# EMS Successes in narrowbanding

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- ▶ **Western States EMS Agencies**
  - ▶ Utah (96% completed)
  - ▶ Arizona (Developed infrastructure and will complete by 2013)
  - ▶ Nevada (Three phase process)
  - ▶ Idaho (Working towards completion)



# EMS Successes in narrowbanding cont.

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- ▶ **Western States EMS Agencies**
  - ▶ Discovered a gap!
    - ▶ Did not include some Dispatch agencies and hospitals
    - ▶ Now helping those agencies narrowband
  - ▶ The other states in the region report similar results
    - ▶ (Washington, Oregon, California, New Mexico, Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming)



# Tools used to aid EMS in narrowbanding

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- ▶ SAFECOM mapping tool
  - ▶ Coordination with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)
  - ▶ Grant Funding
    - ▶ State
    - ▶ Federal
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# Obstacles discovered by EMS

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*Sometimes all we can do is wait for some kind soul to come pull our rear-end out of the bind we've gotten ourselves into*

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# Obstacles cont.

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- ▶ Cost to the agencies
- ▶ Tighter coordination between users needed to avoid interference
- ▶ Relicensing
- ▶ Reduced coverage
  - ▶ In some cases 20%
  - ▶ In Utah a loss of 3dB's (Resolved by putting amplifiers at the sites)
- ▶ High band users will see a change in system coverage
- ▶ Not enough encouragement for regionalization
  - ▶ It is not a single agency or one at a time approach
  - ▶ There is a continuous need to transition hospital(s) and the ambulance agencies they most frequently communicate with in a carefully choreographed process to minimize interference
- ▶ Potential for interference when transferring a patient between jurisdictions



# Solution for EMS in narrowbanding ? ? ?

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*Keep going, and don't look over your shoulder . . .  
Something may be gaining on you*

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# Real solutions for EMS in narrowbanding

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**Working together to accomplish the goal of providing a narrower bandwidth in order to gain more channels from the same amount of frequencies**

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