

PRIORITIES FOR 2008

The focus of the 2008 policies and priorities will be on:

- The extension of ambulance services
- Upgrade of skills of staff.
- Enhancing inter-sectoral collaboration
- The introduction of ICT
- The facilitation of the passing of the NAS Bill

KEY ACTIVITIES FOR 2008

- Establish six(6) additional ambulance stations
- Recruit and train hundred (100) emergency medical technicians (EMT)-Basics and upgrade the skills of forty-five(45) EMT-Basics to EMT-Advanced
- Introduce a program to ensure timely and efficient management of emergencies
- Screen and immunize at risk EMT's against hepatitis B
- Strengthen the functional and communication linkages between NAS, facility based ambulance and health facilities
- Finalise the NAS bill for approval by cabinet and passage by parliament



NEXT STEPS:

1. Scale up services
2. Link facilities based ambulances with the NAS ambulances
3. Institutionalise the service provider and regulator roles of NAS

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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BACKGROUND

The medical emergencies and disasters that have occurred over the years have strongly highlighted the need for Ghana to initiate an Emergency Medical service. In 1999 President Kufour in his Sessional Address emphasized the urgent need for ambulance services as part of the emergency response system.

In May 9th 2001, the necessity became unfortunately clear with the Accra Sports stadium disaster, in which 126 people lost their lives.

Thus in 2004 the Ministry of Health (MOH) in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior established the seven (7) pilot ambulance stations.

AIMS

The core mandate of National Ambulance Service, (NAS), is to provide efficient and timely pre-hospital emergency medical care to the sick and the injured and transport them safely to health facilities.



ACHIEVEMENTS OF NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE

Currently NAS has twenty-four stations with two control rooms in the country. At present, the coverage of ambulance services is limited to regional capitals and a few districts.

The operation of NAS have started with the provision of basic care by the Emergency and Medical Technicians (EMT's) basic. It is hoped that very soon they will be upgraded to EMT advanced or intermediate to be able to provide more advanced care.

NAS has collaborated with other stakeholders including: Ghana Health Service, and other emergency service providers to upgrade the skills of staff to current standards.

NAS has provided new ambulances to all ambulance stations nationwide and some health facilities to support emergency delivery in the country.

TO date NAS has trained 243 emergency medical technicians to man its operations.

EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTICS

In general, some equipment and logistics are in place at the National, Regional, and the District levels but they remain inadequate based upon the extensive nature of the service provider to cover various health posts nationwide. Ministry of Health is however making strenuous efforts to provide the needed logistics and equipments for the smooth running of the National Ambulance Service.

CHALLENGES

In spite of the efficient and timely delivery of emergency services to the injured and the sick, NAS has some key challenges:

Service Delivery

- Lack of office accommodation.

- Inadequate medical equipment inside the ambulance.

- Periodic refusal of health facilities to accept cases from NAS.

Human Resources

- Lack of an approved scheme of service
- Lack of the right calibre of personnel on the job market.

Hospital preparedness and inter hospital transfers.

- Inadequate number of accidents and emergency units in health facilities nationwide.
- Lack of dedicated emergency staff.
- Poor staffing of hospitals leading to the referral of minor cases.

Governance

Lack of legislation backing the establishment of NAS resulting in a feeling of job insecurity among staff and others.

Financing

NAS continues to suffer from inadequate budgetary provision and delays in processing funds hampering the implementation of programmes