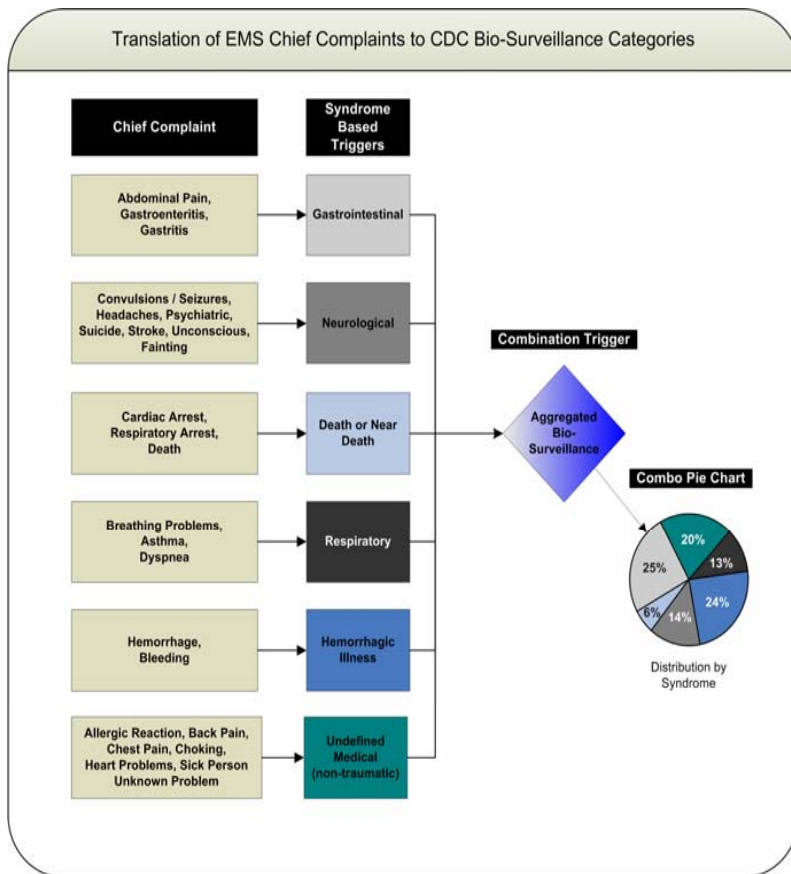# Bioterrorism (BT)

Using Public Safety 9-1-1 call data for bioterrorism (BT) and health surveillance has created a new awareness to the value of emergency pre-hospital data. FirstWatch, a pioneer in Public Safety 9-1-1 call data analysis, has been actively monitoring real-time 9-1-1 call data since 1999. Now processing more than **10,000** real-time Public Safety encounters daily from systems throughout North America. FirstWatch is the largest real-time network of its kind.

Public Health Officials recognize that information from multiple data sources is required to develop the best assessment of a community's overall health. Public Safety 9-1-1 data brings a number of distinct benefits providing a very unique and timely perspective. Typically the geographic area covered by a 9-1-1 system is very large, many times comprised of a multi-city or county area, whereas other data sources, such as hospital emergency department data, represent a much smaller geographic footprint. Additionally, 9-1-1 data is processed in a very timely manner, typically within one or two minutes. Once processed, the 9-1-1 information includes not only specific chief complaint criteria, but also includes a geographically specific location which can be used to provide a precise location for the patient. The combination of a large service area, timeliness of information, and geographically validated location data (via FirstWatch) offers health officials a valuable situational awareness tool.

Patient information collected during a 9-1-1 call can vary from agency to agency. However, users of the Priority Dispatch ProQA, an automated expert algorithm system software, can gather a variety of health data including age, sex and acuity to categorize a patient into almost **300 condition determinants**. ProQA provides additional value by <u>ensuring consistency in the call screening process</u> where each incident is processed the same way.

FirstWatch is the only organization integrating real-time Command and Dispatch (CAD) data with ProQA data in a seamless interface. The system also includes supplemental screening tools designed to screen for exposure to Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear exposure (CBRN) and symptoms associated with severe respiratory syndrome, including information relating to recent travel to high risk locations. Public Safety and 9-1-1 teams are on the front lines of health emergencies, and FirstWatch provides real-time analysis and alerting.