Learning Objectives
- Discuss the impact of cultural differences when rendering patient care
- Define codependency and explain its impact on patient care
- Discuss the impact poverty has on EMS operations

Learning Objectives (Cont'd)
- Discuss the financial burdens placed on patients unable to pay for services and on society
- Understand the impact of homelessness in the United States as related to prehospital care
- Understand common chronic mental and physiological illnesses associated with homelessness
Cultural Awareness

- Behaviors, beliefs of particular racial, ethnic, social, religious, age group
- Ethnic values and traditions
  - Many value natural medicine
  - Value privacy
  - Know major ethnic values
  - Who makes decisions
  - Language barriers

Cultural Awareness (Cont’d)

- Religious traditions
  - Forbid surgeries, blood infusions
  - Prohibit alcohol, use of alcohol wipes
  - Touching opposite sex
  - Dietary, fasting
  - Many rules are exempt in life-threatening situations

Codependency

- Enabling behavior
  - Allows persistence of problem
  - Prevents receiving proper medical attention
  - Become victim if addiction escalates into violence
- Believes only person who understands
- Treat patients based on assessment findings
Poor and Those in Need

- Poor nutrition, poor living environments, inadequate access to medical care
- ED used for minor illnesses
- Believe they cannot afford ambulance even in life-threatening situations

Homelessness

- Causes health problems
- Exacerbates existing illnesses
- Complicates treatment

Homelessness (Cont’d)

- Treatment guidelines
  - Be empathetic, nonjudgmental
  - Calm, professional
  - Respect patient space
  - Do not speak harshly, use positive tone
Homelessness (Cont’d)

- Special standard precautions
  - Provide O₂ by mask for respiratory infection
  - Gown if must carry patient
  - Avoid carrying if they can walk
  - Clean door handles, steering wheel, mattresses, frame of ambulance with contact cleaner
  - Clean pen with alcohol wipes
  - Refrain from using mouth as extra hand
  - Wash hands thoroughly after call

Chapter Summary

- Paramedics must possess knowledge of key social issues and how those issues could affect treatment
- Patient populations vary by locale but may include people with ethnic origins and religious beliefs unfamiliar to the paramedic
  - Become familiar with values and traditions of major ethnic and religious groups in your community regarding healthcare

Chapter Summary (Cont’d)

- Codependent individual are often involved in a relationship with someone with drug problems, alcohol problems, mental illness, and chronic illness
- Codependent person could hinder EMS intervention by covering up for patient with acute problem brought on by addiction/illness
- Economic burdens brought about by poverty affect all levels of society
Chapter Summary (Cont’d)

• Many poor have chronic medical conditions because of poor nutrition and poor living environments
• Many poor have no medical coverage and must rely on local EDs even for minor illnesses and injuries

Learning Objectives (Cont’d)

• Paramedics must treat all patients with the same level of respect and care regardless of social issues
• An estimated 842,000 people are homeless on any given night in February; 3.5 million experience homelessness during year
• Many homeless individuals also have mental illness and addiction

Chapter Summary (Cont’d)

• Many homeless people have untreated chronic medical conditions
• Maintain a professional, nonjudgmental demeanor
• Take additional standard precautions