



**PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES COUNCIL**  
*Your Voice In EMS*

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**PEHSC Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
Virtual Meeting 10:00 a.m.**

**Minutes**

**CONVENE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Mr. Jones, President, called the meeting to order at 1000 hours

- Welcomed the attendees

\* If you do not see your name on the roster, please let Kelli Kishbaugh (kkishbaugh@pehsc.org) know, and you will be added.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ambulance Association of PA – Donald DeReamus/Heather Sharar  
Burholme EMS – Timothy Hinchcliff  
Center for Emergency Medicine of Western PA – Walt Stoy, Ph.D./Ron Roth, M.D.  
Centre LifeLink EMS – Kent Knable  
Chester County Department of Emergency Services – Harry Moore  
City of Allentown EMS – Eric Gratz/ Matthew Brett  
Emergency Nurses Association, PA – Kay-Ella Bleacher, CRNP  
Harrisburg Area Community College – Robert Stakem, Jr.  
Highmark, Inc. – Robert McCaughan/Bob Wanovich  
Hospital & HealthSystem Association of PA – Chris Chamberlain, RN  
Lower Allen Township EMS – Anthony Deaven  
Non-Profit Emergency Services of Beaver County – Steve Bailey  
Pennsylvania ACEP – Gregory Hellier, DO/Bryan Wexler, M.D.  
Pennsylvania State University – J. David Jones  
Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation – Juliet Altenburg, RN/Anna Over, RN  
Southern Alleghenies EMS Council – Carl Moen  
Tower Health – Mervin Wertz/Anthony Martin  
VFIS/Education & Training Services – Justin Eberly  
Valley Ambulance Authority – J.R. Henry  
Wellspan York Hospital – Steven Schirk, M.D.  
West York Ambulance – William Niehenke  
Western Berks Ambulance Association – Anthony Tucci

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Allegheny General Hospital – Mary Kovac  
American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division – Krista Brands  
Bucks County Emergency Health Services Council, Inc. – Michele Rymdeika  
Cranberry Township EMS – Ted Fessides  
Emergency Health Services Federation, Inc. – Michael Riehart, DO  
Geisinger-Lewistown Hospital – Craig Wheeler  
Pennsylvania College of Technology – Christopher Boyer, M.D.  
Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute – Jerry Ozog

Thomas Jefferson University – Jean Bail, RN, Ed.D  
UPMC Susquehanna – Steven Bixby/James Slotterback  
Volunteer Medical Service Corps of Lower Merion & Narberth – Alvin Wang, M.D.  
Wellspan York Hospital – Thomas Yeich, M.D.  
West Grove Fire Company – Gary Vinnacombe  
Williamsport Area Ambulance Service Coop. dba Susquehanna Regional EMS – Gregory Frailey, DO

### **OTHERS**

Roy Cox, Jr., D. Ed. – City of Pittsburgh

### **BUREAU OF EMS**

Dylan Ferguson, Director

### **PEHSC STAFF**

Janette Swade, Director  
Donald Potter, Jr. EMS System Specialist  
Andy Snavelly, EMS System Specialist  
Duane Spencer, EMSC Manager  
Kelli Kishbaugh, Administrative Assistant

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. HENRY AND SECONDED BY MR. MARTIN TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER 2, 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES AS PREPOSED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

J. David Jones reported the following:

There was a webinar last week with County Commissioners Association of PA to discuss the the reintroduction of Senate Bill 1274 that did not pass at the end of session last year. They are planning to reintroduce it in the next few weeks. We have not seen a draft on this yet but were told that it is similar to what they introduced last time with just some minor changes. This legislation is to enable county level authorities for EMS and/or fire the option and permit existing public safety authorities to continue uninterrupted, and this option is to allow authorities to provide shared services such as administrative services, procurement services and grant writing. It will not however, enable to hire EMS or fire providers. Once we receive the draft of this bill, we will send out to a small working group to offer our opinion.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Dr. Roth, Treasurer provided a report and a copy of the report is on file for members to review.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. HENRY AND SECONDED BY MR. MARTIN TO ACCEPT THE TREASURER’S REPORT. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Swade reported on the following:

- As President Jones stated earlier about the Senate Bill 1274, please give your input when you receive the email so we can prepare needed education.

- We were notified of pending legislation to enable PA to join the National EMS Compact which would allow providers to provide services in other states. This is known as REPLICA and we have discussed this in previous meetings. Once we receive a copy, we will distribute it for input. The biggest concern is the cost to the system.
- Information was sent out from the EMS Providers Foundation about the Highmark grant that is available. This grant could help your agency cover costs of equipment and supplies, including PPE.
- PEHSC and EMSOF Fund:
  - The EMSC Grant has remained stable at the \$128,000 year budget.
  - The EMSOF fund has seen a decline in funding because of fines not being collected over the years and not just declining because of COVID.
    - FY 18-19 budget was \$421,000.
    - FY 19-20 the fund was cut to \$404,800.
    - FY 20-21 the fund was cut to \$360,800.
    - FY 21-22 will be cut to \$280,000.
  - PEHSC reduced significant expenses to include staff pay cuts. Operations at the \$360,800 budget is obtainable. With the budget of \$280,000 for the upcoming fiscal year, we obtained a PPP loan and had discussions with the Executive Committee for possible use of some of the Secondary Fund to help us budget. We also have renewed our loan from the bank for \$130,000 if needed.
  - For FY 21-22 we will need to continue with our meetings being virtual, no travel budget and we will continue to look in other areas for possible cost saving measures. We will continue to retain our staff.
  - We have applied for some grants, including the Telehealth grant which we were awarded.
  - Director Swade asked from everyone to stay engaged and keep doing what you are doing. When we ask for your input on a survey and participate in other projects, so we can maintain engagement.

## **DISCUSSION OF EMSOF**

Director Dylan Ferguson reported the following:

- Director Ferguson showed graphs to demonstrate how the EMSOF fund has declined over the months.
  - The graphs reflect only 75% portion of the EMS fund because 25% goes to the Catastrophic Head Injury fund. So, \$7.50 of the fine goes to the EMS portion and the remaining \$2.50 goes to the Catastrophic Head Injury fund.
  - There are other sources of the fund, but they are very minimal. For instance, a fine for a citation that was issued from a disciplinary proceeding against EMS providers is also collected, but those are measured in the hundreds for the fiscal year. Also, there is a Treasury income that comes from the sale of various investments and those are measured in the thousands for the fiscal year.
  - There was a major drop in funds for the month of June of 2020 and it ended the fiscal year in the red.
  - For FY 20-21 from July to date, the fund is down 29.26% in revenue.
- Act 93 of 2020 raised the fines for a standard moving violation from \$10 to \$20 and accelerated rehabilitation for a DUI from \$25 to \$50. There was a 120-day implementation on this bill, which means the double fees have not been able to be collected until now. Because of the two-month delay in seeing the revenue, we will probably not see increased revenue figures until May.
  - ACT 93 of 2020 also includes that 30% of funds must be allocated to specifically provide training to underserved rural areas. Not less than 10% of funds shall be provided to EMS agencies to assist with medical equipment purchases for ambulances.

- Another part of the Act 93 is that a legislative budget and finance committee must complete an audit one-year from the enabling of the Act. This will evaluate the courts to what extent those fines, and fees are being waived.

Questions asked to Director Ferguson:

- Mr. Tucci asked about when we should start the talks about consolidation of Regions? We would rather start those talks now instead of at the last minute. Also, should the PEHSC Board be sending this proposal to the Department?
  - Director Ferguson answered that the Department would be supportive of any discussions to explore ways to partner with one another or combine structures. The Department does not have any plans to enforce this consolidation. We do know that the Regions have been working to reduce their budgets.
  - Those discussions should be discussed at the local level and not at the “top down” approach.
- Dr. Frailey asked what is the value of EMS to the administration, legislature, and judiciary?
  - Director Ferguson answered that the Administration will support what and where they can with the existing tools we have. We do not have the authority to engage in alternate appropriations other than those that provided for by law. There are ongoing negotiations.
  - President Jones added that we could not have predicted what was going to happen with the fines being waived and the COVID impact.
- Mr. Henry asked if there is any plan or practical hope that the Department would step up and offer supplemental stop gap EMS system funding in lieu of the EMSOF funding crisis?
  - Director Ferguson stated that the majority of the funding coming in is from the grants for COVID and that needs to go towards testing and other areas dealing with COVID and there are strings attached to these grants.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REPORT**

Director Dylan Ferguson reported on the following:

- There is a change to the mass vaccine program to include Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians ability to administer the vaccine.
- The CPR expiration dates are still extended until June 30, 2021, if your expiration date was on or after January 2020.
- The 2021 Statewide protocols update continues and once completed it will be posted to our website and a bulletin will go out for our input. You will have 21 days to make your comments once posted and then the Department will review those comments and then send to the PEHSC Medical Advisory Committee. The inputs must be evidence based and you will need to provide that evidence. Also, recommended changes may also be of an editorial or technical nature.
- On March 12, the Department sent out an action health alert regarding an extremely low Ebola outbreak. Community spread is not happening as of right now. The outbreak has been in New Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Questions asked to Director Ferguson:

- Mr. Wertz asked about the Psychomotor exams if they will be extended past the July 1, 2021 deadline?
  - Director Ferguson stated that the Psychomotor exam did not have an expiration date and will continue until suspended or revoked by the Department. The June 30, 2021 was only

for the CPR extended expiration. The Department will give as much notice as they can when the deadline for the Psychomotor exam will end.

## **TASK FORCE/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Medical Advisory Committee**

Dr. Reihart reported the following:

The medical advisory committee met on January 20<sup>th</sup> and February 15<sup>th</sup>. The agenda for both meetings were confined to working with Dr. Kupas to craft the 2021 Statewide EMS Protocol update.

Dr. Kupas led the group in a review of all 4 statewide protocols. Although there were numerous changes across all the documents, many were related to clarifying existing language, correcting typographical errors and ensuring continuity of a particular protocol across disciplines.

A few notable highlights are:

1. A VAD protocol to assist providers with assessment and destination decisions when encountering a patient with a ventricular assist device.
2. A Head Injury/TBI protocol, the contents of which are consistent with the Arizona EPIC brain injury study.
3. Addition of Ketamine as an option for sedation assisted intubation or pain management.
4. A protocol to manage tooth avulsion.
5. Addition of Droperidol as an option for nausea control.
6. Addition of CO breathe analyzation technology as an alternative to CO-oximetry.

The Bureau of EMS is currently putting the protocol documents into final draft form, after which they intend to post the documents on the Department's website for public comment. Following the public comment period, the documents will undergo a final review, a vote by the regional medical directors and development of update education.

Dr. Kupas anticipates a mandatory implementation date of September 1<sup>st</sup>.

The next meeting of the MAC is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 1000 hours.

### **EMS FOR CHILDREN PROJECT REPORT**

Mr. Fessides reported the following:

The EMSC Committee met by webinar on Tuesday February 23, 2021.

1. The 2021 EMS for Children survey opened the first week in January. As of February 16th, we had a 26.7 percent response rate of 911 EMS agencies surveyed. This is an improvement over the 2020 survey which was only able to collect a 20.9 percent response in total. Updated results as of March 8th show a 38.5 percent response rate. The survey closes Friday March 19th and survey feedback will be available several months later.
2. The National Pediatric Readiness Survey for hospital emergency departments, also known as Ped Ready, set to open in May 2021. Emergency department Nurse Manager contact information is being updated across the states 165 24/7 Emergency Departments.
3. The committee continues to discuss issues related to COVID-19 and specifically around three topics; MultiInflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) return to school and mental

health. A small subgroup is working on an infographic to be distributed to EMS agencies and emergency departments with a summary of COVID specific information regarding children including mental health awareness.

4. The Pediatric Voluntary Recognition Program for FY 2021 has 10 new agencies recognized as of 2/11/21.
5. A total of 79 new Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinators have been identified for FY 20-21 as of 2/22/21.
6. The Pennsylvania Hospital Recognition Program continues to gather information and will convene a representative sub-committee in the near future to discuss options and recommendations.
7. Two new targeted education initiatives were introduced. The first involves family centered care and our previous efforts to support EMS agency policies and practices involving family centered care. Our Family Advisory Network representative Josh Stuart will facilitate a small group to review previous recommendations and current industry information, including that associated with COVID, and update our recommendations to EMS agencies. The second initiative is related to the national performance measure on use of Pediatricspecific equipment through the methods and frequency of evaluating pediatric skills. A subgroup, comprised of EMSC committee members along with EMS and pediatric educators and physicians, will review the information and determine methods to increase the ability for services to meet the 2023 target.

Additionally, the Pennsylvania EMS for Children program was notified in February that we have received continued grant funding for the period April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022.

### **RSI TASK FORCE**

Dr. Frailey Reported:

The RSI task force met on January 25<sup>th</sup> and February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The group has reviewed the objectives for the project as established by the Bureau of EMS, which are:

1. Review the available literature and data sources.
2. Consult with EMS, medical and trauma experts to identify and quantify gaps in our current care.
3. Identify and quantify risks associated with RSI.
4. If it is believed RSI has value, provide recommendations related to:
  - a. Safeguards
  - b. Training
  - c. Experience
  - d. Logistics
  - e. Quality Assurance Activities
  - f. Protocol Development

Within these objectives, the group has identified tasks to be performed, including journal reviews, trauma system data and examples of RSI programs from other states.

Based on the discussions thus far, the members have identified the following discussion points, which acknowledge that RSI is a low frequency/high risk procedure, but one that has been part of our EMS system for many years:

1. Comprehensive education and refresher requirements will be needed, including practicum.
2. A robust QI program will ensure program compliance and clinical efficacy.
3. Two (2) ALS providers must be present to initiate RSI, the second provider should be either RSI qualified or have completed some sort of RSI assistant course.

4. Participating ALS agencies must have both direct and video laryngoscopy capability. The ability to record VL is preferred and recommended.
5. Clinical protocol must be well structured and similar to current SAI protocol.
6. Ideally, agencies should have a call volume that provides reasonable practice opportunities.

The task force is meeting monthly to continue exploring the questions surrounding bring RSI to ground ALS agencies.

### **CISM STEERING COMMITTEE**

Dr. Cox reported the following:

We have been working toward some goals to meet the needs of the mental health bill provisions. To date we have accomplished the following:

1. Formed a Steering Committee for the development of a PEHSC CISM Group.
2. Obtained data on the number of active CISM and Peer CISM teams currently operating while updating previous listing of CISM organizations within Pennsylvania.
3. Developed a compliance plan to follow current legislation in cooperation with PEHSC and the State Health Department Office of EMS.

Developed an executive action plan for three main tasks: Create a CISM Educational Program, Enhance and update the current state CISM PEHSC application in a survey monkey and Focus on improving and organizing the current CISM state network.

Currently we are working toward the development of several educational programs for Department of Health Bureau of EMS that identifies the concept of CISM, Signs and Symptoms of Stress, defines defusing and debriefing in CISM while defining CISM team and peer teams' roles and responsibilities in accordance with House Bill 1459.

### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Mr. Knable reported:

We have one application for non-voting membership as an affiliate member, ROBB Consulting, LLC. The membership committee has reviewed the application and recommends it for approval by the Board.

### **A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. TUCCI AND MR. NEIHENKE SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **CONFERENCE UPDATE**

Mr. Snively reported the following:

- Update about the 2020 conference: We had over 1,300 attendees across all three time periods. We had the live session and then two other sessions. One in September and one in December.
- Looking at the 2021 conference, because of all the uncertainty of COVID, we decided to have another virtual conference. We are looking at holding the virtual live conference the week of August 30 to September 3, 2021. Then we will run the recordings of the conference again later in the Fall like we did last year.
  - We are looking at a bigger platform this year. We contracted with CVENT again this year. With the virtual hub package, seamless user experience, will be able to have breakout rooms, better networking, vendor and sponsor return on investment and more.

- If we can get enough sponsors this year again, our goal is to offer the conference free of charge.
- A call for speakers will be going out by the end of this month.
- Also, hoping by the end of the month, to send out a call for vendor and sponsorship.

#### **TELEHEALTH GRANT UPDATE**

Mr. Snavely reported the following:

- We took on an EMSC sub grant project. This is looking at the use of telehealth technology specifically for children and youth with special health care needs.
- This is a 6-month grant that started back in December of 2020 and goes until the end of June 2021.
- We have a small workgroup consisting of representatives from children's hospitals, EMS agencies, primary care, and medical home programs.
- We are still at an information gathering stage with this grant. We have launched surveys to the EMS community and the primary care programs. Those survey's end today, so please make sure you send back your survey for the EMS agencies that have not responded yet.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. DEAVEN AND SECONDED BY MR. NIEHENKE TO  
AJOURN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

### **1132 hours - Convene Annual Council Meeting**

#### **Nominating Committee Report**

Mr. Martin reported the following:

- The PEHSC Nominating Committee met twice to prepare the slate that we present to the Council today.
- Four companies will be leaving the Board due to term limits. Those four are:
  - Emergency Nurses Association, Pennsylvania
  - Good Fellowship Ambulance & Emergency Medical Services Training Institute
  - Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center
  - Tower Health
- The slate contains 10 organizations – six of which are to be re-elected for another term and four new organizations for a term.

Nominating Committee Report – 2020-2021  
Slate of Organizations – PEHSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
TERM 2022-24

| <b><u>Organization</u></b>                                                    | <b><u>Type</u></b> | <b><u>Geography</u></b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| *Ambulance Association of Pennsylvania                                        | Statewide          | Statewide               |
| *Burholme Emergency Medical Services                                          | Ambulance Company  | Philadelphia            |
| *Centre LifeLink Emergency Medical Services Ambulance                         | Ambulance Company  | Seven Mountains         |
| *Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania                          | Statewide          | Statewide               |
| Main Line Health                                                              | Hospital           | Delaware                |
| PA Fire & Emergency Services Institute                                        | Fire Service       | Statewide               |
| *Southern Alleghenies Emergency Medical Services Council                      | Reg. EMS Council   | Southern Alleghenies    |
| *Valley Ambulance Authority                                                   | Ambulance Company  | EMS West                |
| West Grove Fire Company                                                       | Ambulance Company  | Chester                 |
| Williamsport Area Ambulance Services Cooperative dba Susquehanna Regional EMS | Ambulance Company  | LTS                     |

\*Re-nominated for a second term

- Any Additional nominations – none

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. DEAVEN AND MR. NIEHENKE SECONDED TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. MOEN AND MS. ALTENBURG SECONDED THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. MOTION CARRIED.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**

### **Ambulance Association of PA**

Ms. Heather Sharar reported the following:

- Our Conference will be May 5 and 6, 2021 and will be virtual. We did not have a conference last year due to COVID. The cost will be \$200 per organization instead of per person fee. We have some great national speakers this year.
- We are working on an impact statement about raising the minimum wage. This will go out later today. The idea behind this is that we would pay our staff much more money if the reimbursement rates were decent and covered the cost to provide the services. There will be a media and Legislative campaign starting next week. President Biden and Governor Wolf have both stated that this is a priority for them. The more people sending out the message, the louder it will be heard.
- From the Pennsylvania EMS Provider Foundation, we are grateful for Highmark that is providing a \$10 million grant for EMS agencies. This application is listed on our website at [aa-pa.org](http://aa-pa.org). The deadline for this grant is on May 15, 2021.
- The PA EMS Provider Foundation just awarded this year's Paramedic education grants. There were five grants at \$3,000 each. The money raised for the grants came from the one-day cycling event we were able to hold in 2020.
- We are planning on having our normal fundraisers in September of 2021. We are hoping to hold in-person events again. These events will include:
  - The three-day cycling event which will go from Willow Grove to Harrisburg.
  - The memorial service will then be held at the Capitol.
  - On Sunday we will have the Stars of Life dinner.

Mr. DeReamus added the following:

- CARES money will be coming available with the Federal Rescue Plan that included \$13.6 billion for Pennsylvania and we will need to fight for some of that money to resolve EMSOF and revenue issues. If we ask for your help, please give it.

### **Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute**

Mr. Jerry Ozog reported the following:

- Our Board of Directors has met at the beginning of this year about five Legislative priorities.
  - First: is to modernize the relief association funding system. We conducted a survey and received over 300 responses back with some really good ideas. This relief funding is for fire service organizations.
  - Second: is the fire and EMS countywide authorities. We have been involved since the beginning and been participating in the stakeholder meetings. I do want to compliment whomever for putting together the question and answer sheet that went out after the discussion a week ago. That kind of answers a lot of our questions. I mentioned this before at numerous meetings that we do support that legislation and we do support anything that would be another tool that count assist municipalities and counties to figure out sustainment, survival, and improvement of emergency services in Pennsylvania.
  - Third: modernizing the Junior Firefighting program.
  - Fourth: Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) assistance for emergency providers. The Career Firefighters Association is taking the lead on this in regard to the workers compensation presumption. We have not taken an official position on exactly what that exactly looks like, but we do support the idea of assistance for emergency services that have PTSI.
  - Fifth: 10-year smoke detector battery mandate for rental properties.

- We have not decided yet on our annual dinner that is usually held in November. We will continue to watch the numbers with COVID.
- The Lehigh Valley Burn Prevention Foundation received Legislative Initiative Funding from Senator Brown to develop safety education for fireworks. Lehigh Valley Burn Prevention Foundation has reached out to our organization and other organizations to help create a high-quality education program for social media, videos, press releases, etc. to come out this Summer. This should be passed down and shared by your organization once released.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Chris Chamberlain, Vice President for Emergency Management from The Hospital & Healthsystem Association of PA introduced himself. He is replacing Scott Mickalonis.
- Juliet Altenburg from PTSF had a strategic planning session with their board members and organizational partners yesterday and EMS was a hot topic. PTSF is very committed to advocating for EMS, so keep forwarding legislation to our office that you want our members to get involved with.

### **ADJOURN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. DEAVEN AND SECONDED BY MS. ALTENBURG TO  
ADJOURN THE MARCH 2021 MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.**

**The next scheduled meeting of the PEHSC Board of Directors will be on Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 10:00 am via Zoom**