



PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES COUNCIL
Your Voice In EMS

**PEHSC Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, September 16, 2020**

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 know and you will be added.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Allegheny General Hospital – David Lindell/Robert McCaughan
Ambulance Association of PA – Donald Dereamus/Douglas Garretson/Heather Sharar
Burholme EMS – Timothy Hinchcliff
Center for Emergency Medicine of Western PA – Walt Stoy, Ph.D.
Centre LifeLink EMS – Kent Knable
Chester County Department of Emergency Services – Harry Moore
City of Allentown EMS – Eric Gratz
Emergency Nurses Association, PA – Kay-Ella Bleacher, CRNP
Good Fellowship Ambulance and Training Institute – Kimberly Holman, RN
Harrisburg Area Community College – Robert Stakem, Jr.
Lower Allen Township EMS – Anthony Deaven
Non-Profit Emergency Services of Beaver County – Steve Bailey
Penn State M.S.H. Medical Center – Scott Buchle
Pennsylvania ACEP – Gregory Hellier, DO/Bryan Wexler, M.D.
Pennsylvania State University – J. David Jones
Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation – Juliet Altenburg, RN
Second Alarmers Assoc & Rescue Squad of Montgomery County, Inc – Ken Davidson
Southern Alleghenies EMS Council – Carl Moen
Tower Health – Mervin Wertz/Anthony Martin
Valley Ambulance Authority – J.R. Henry
Western Berks Ambulance Association – Anthony Tucci

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

American Trauma Society – Krista Brands
Bucks County Emergency Health Services Council, Inc. – Michele Rymdeika
Cranberry Township EMS – Ted Fessides
Emergency Health Services Federation, Inc. – Michael Reihart
LTS EMS Council – Wendy Hastings
Myerstown First Aid Unit – David Kirchner
Pennsylvania College of Technology – Christopher Boyer, M.D.
Portage Area Ambulance Association – Terry Sloan
Temple Health System Transport Team, Inc. – Christopher Ritter
Thomas Jefferson University – Jean Bail, Ed.D./Jess Coale
VFIS/Education & Training Services – Justin Eberly

Volunteer Medical Service Corps of Lower Merion & Narberth – Alvin Wang, M.D.
Washington County EMS Council – Ryan Frazee
Wellspan York Hospital – Steve Schirk, M.D./Thomas Yeich, M.D.
West York Ambulance – William Niehenke

BUREAU OF EMS

Dylan Ferguson, Director
Douglas Kupas, M.D.

PEHSC STAFF

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Tucci and seconded by Ms. Bleacher to accept the June 10, 2020 Board of Directors meeting minutes as drafted. Motion carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

J. David Jones reported the following:

Dr. Kupas received the 2020 NAEMT's Rocco V. Morando Lifetime Achievement Award. This was held at their virtual meeting on September 15, 2020. Congratulations Dr. Kupas for the award.

We had two members of PEHSC that have passed away. Monica Leibman was with the EMSC program and Conference faculty for us. Robert Full who was a Liaison to Allegheny County and PEMA. Mr. Full was formally with the City of Pittsburgh.

There was one line of duty death: Brad Blackman was with Delaware and Montgomery Counties and was recently with the AMR of Philadelphia. Mr. Blackman succumbed to complications from COVID-19, likely contracted from his work in EMS.

Updates for you:

- We had a 911 Advisory Board meeting two weeks ago. The 911 Advisory Board has been tasked to come up with a new distribution formula for the funds that are generated by all the phone lines throughout the Commonwealth. The Interim funding formula is currently in place and has been since Act 12 was passed. The Board was attempting to determine a permanent funding formula for revenue but so far still falls short of what is needed to fully fund the 911 system. An interim funding formula was voted on in June and failed by one vote. It went back to the committee and there was some movement from the members of the board to reconsider that same proposal. The proposal was brought back at the September meeting and failed again by one vote. The issue seems to be that there are several 911 centers that would lose a tremendous amount of funding while other 911 centers would gain. Of course, everyone likes to keep status quo. The assessment against each line is around \$1.56 a line, if it is landline, cell phone or voice line. The least amount per line would be \$1.54, which in some counties would be a loss from what is currently under the temporary funding formula. Hopefully, there will be a different proposal at the December meeting. If anyone has any suggestions on how to better distribute the funding,

please contact your local 911 center or county commissioners, they all have voting representatives on the advisory board.

- SR6 update: Some legislation has been moving forward over the last several months. One of things pending right now is a bill to increase the EMSOF fines to double and to redistribute funds for EMS, mental health programs and other a few other things. This bill has not moved but it is expected to move the end of this month.
- County Commissioners have a bill pending that would allow authorities at the county level for EMS and Fire. There is still some disagreement about how that is going to happen. We have seen some minor changes in the language. There have been several hearings throughout the state on this matter and so far, it has not moved to a vote yet.
- Doug Garretson has announced his retirement. We want to thank Mr. Garretson for his many years of service, along with his support and many roles with PEHSC. Wish him luck and thank you again for your service. He remains a member of the Board representing the Ambulance Association of PA.

TREASURER'S REPORT

In Dr. Roth's absence, Tony Deaven provided a report, a copy of which is on file for the members' review.

A motion was made by Mr. Tucci and seconded by Mr. Henry to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Swade reported on the following:

I want to take a moment to recognize the staff here for adjusting to the remote working situation and transitioned quickly. We are still rotating with one staff member in the office each day. We only had a few technology issues, but they are resolved.

1. A copy of the Annual Corporate Report is in your materials for today. This report is also on our website. The report was submitted to Department in a timely fashion.
2. In the material today you will see that we have received a budget reduction as a result of the reduced traffic violations written in Pennsylvania during COVID. We also provided you some charts that looks at how the fund has been performing. You will see that the fund has been in a troubling position for a long time and this has not gone unnoticed. This issue has been a topic for SR6 and House Bill 1838, which would double the fine from \$10 to \$20. The \$10 fine has been in place since 1985. This would give a long-term solution to the Operating Fund. Because the revenue is down significantly, the Department of Health had reductions to the contractors which includes the regions and PEHSC. If you recall from last year, our budget was already reduced for this fiscal year \$17,000 because the fund was in a downward spiral. You add COVID now and we have to take another \$44,000 budget cut. PEHSC had to make some dramatic decisions. Staff came together with the Executive Board and made some changes. The changes consist of many things, but the important part is that staff accepted a 5% pay cut. The next big discussion is office space and possibly in January going completely remote. We will still have some costs with storage costs and maybe a small location to have our copier and a small meeting room. We did submit our revised budget to the Department of Health. Director Ferguson has been keeping a watchful eye on the monthly numbers and it is possible that we could take another cut in the

future. To help us with the long-term solution, please engage your Senator for House Bill 1838 and educate them. It has already passed the House but needs out of Senate Appropriations. Short term fix would be in SR6 where it calls for \$5 million to be returned to our fund. This money was taken out in 2011 to balance the budget.

3. We have a role on the Mental Health Bill, Act 69, House Bill 1459, we have reached out to some of our partners to revisit the CISM team network guidelines. This is being worked on by Roy Cox and Sheila Roth.
4. We are starting to take a look at Senate Bill 1274 Authorities Bill by the Counties. Working on some education with some of the Legislators.
5. Pennsylvania agenda for the future has been delayed due to COVID, but once changes have been made to our office situation, look for information about participation.
6. EMS Conference dates have been picked for June 2021 with Spooky Nook. We already have a deposit with Spooky Nook since we had to move this year's conference to virtual. We are working on details but will have more information later because we need to see about restrictions during that time with COVID.

I also wanted to thank all of you for stepping up and helping with the conference and assisting in securing sponsors.

Questioned was asked

- about starting to look at maybe regionalization of regional councils to maintain the EMSOF.
 - Ms. Swade answered that she will take this question back to the Executive Committee.
*staff note: The PEHSC Executive Committee did not identify have any plans to consider this at this time.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REPORT

Director Dylan Ferguson reported on the following topics:

1. Update on COVID-19: Cases continue to fluctuate across the Commonwealth, with spikes especially counties with college and universities. Particular with ages between 18-24-year-old age demographic. Yesterday was the first time Pennsylvania had over 1,000 cases for a long time.
2. EMS calls for influenza are at an 8% higher rate from last year's numbers.
3. Transports are down 5% for the year and that was as of the end of July.
4. The National Registry has removed the education limits for EMTs, AEMTs and Paramedics that are due to expire at the end of March 2021 and Emergency Medical Responders that will expire at the end of September of 2021.
5. The Federal Government released a COVID-19 allocation vaccine framework and happy to report that emergency responders are highlighted as top priority for the framework.
6. Individuals that applied for COVID temporary certification under the emergency workforce expansion are about to expire October 15. Currently 267 holding this type of status and 56 individuals that have converted to full certification under that previous under 2020-05.
7. Personnel matter, Travis Woodward is leaving the Department of Health and going to work with Department of Human Services. His last day with the Bureau is September 26.
8. Regarding the \$6.5 million that was moved to balance the 2011-2012 the budget. That was sustainable with a budget crisis a few years down the road, but because of COVID-19 has hit the fast forward button and FY 19-20 traffic ticket revenues were down \$775,000 about 9%. This effects the EMS portion of the fund balance, EMS gets 75% and the head injury fund gets 25%, so this gave FY 19-20 at a negative balance. So, all 13 regions and PEHSC were notified in August about losing 11% revenue. For this FY, July numbers show that the EMS portion was only \$273,461, which is a 63% lose from last year's July numbers. August's number was \$517,000, which is down 48% from August last year.

Questions asked to Mr. Ferguson:

- Mr. DeReamus asked about the use of Ketamine in Colorado is Pennsylvania going to do anything with that?
 - Mr. Ferguson answered that he has not heard anything from a Legislative front or anything giving pause or concern. The Department of Health does look at data regularly on various topics including Ketamine.

TASK FORCE/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Medical Advisory Committee

Dr. Reihart reported the following:

The medical advisory committee met by webinar on August 12th.

1. Dr. Anderson presented information on exhaled breath analysis to determine the presence and level of carboxyhemoglobin. Currently, the only approved technology in the scope of practice for this purpose is CO-oximetry. Dr. Anderson met with a representative from the device manufacturer to learn more about the technology and received a product demonstration. If approved, devices using this technology provide another option for an EMS agency that is considering the purchase of a CO analysis device.

Although new to emergency services, the technology of using exhaled breath to measure a person's CO level has been around since the 1970's and has been studied for use in rehab and other emergency situations. Dr. Anderson feels the technology is solid and is FDA approved.

Some devices only use a disposable mouthpiece for the patient to interface with the device, others can also be used with a facemask.

These devices are not intended to replace pulse CO-oximetry that an agency might already carry. CO detection, in any form, is not required for licensure and therefore it is an agency option.

The use of these devices would be driven by current statewide protocol pertaining to measurement of carboxyhemoglobin.

Today the MAC presents VTR 0920-01, recommending the Department of Health amend the EMS provider scope of practice to include exhaled breath CO analysis devices.

2. Dr. Mechem introduced Dr. Zachary Meisel, from Penn Medicine, who is one of the principal investigators for the SPARROW research study, who provided an overview of the project.

The study will use retrospective and prospective data to determine the efficacy of the City's Alternative Response 2 (AR2) and blighted area remediation program on reducing the incidence of opioid overdoses. The AR2 response vehicle is staffed by Phila Fire Department EMS; its function is to evaluate opioid effected patients if they can be transported to an alternative destination.

This is a CDC funded study that has been approved by the University of Pennsylvania IRB and endorsed by the regional EMS Council, PFD Commissioner's medical advisory committee and City of Philadelphia Department of Mental Health.

A motion to accept was made by Mr. Tucci and Mr. Martin seconded the motion to accept VTR 0920-01. Motion carried.

The MAC voted to send a letter to the Department of Health in support of this research project.

3. Dr. Kupas discussed the 2021 statewide protocol update cycle. As in previous updates, PEHSC solicited stakeholder input by means of an online survey. This survey captured 165 recommendations, which is the most the council has ever received using this method.

As part of the preparation for the November MAC meeting, when the first draft review will occur, Dr. Kupas will work with the EMSC committee on any proposed revisions to pediatric-specific protocols.

In addition to committee-level review and recommendations, Dr. Kupas announced the final draft protocol documents will be posted on the Department's website for public comment prior to approval.

4. The next MAC meeting is a webinar schedule for Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 1000 hours.

EMS for Children Project Report

Mr. Fessides reported the following:

The EMSC Committee met by webinar on Tuesday August 25, 2020.

1. Pursuant to VTR 0320-1 regarding adding a Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator requirement to Master and Expert level agencies who participate in the Pediatric Voluntary Recognition Program, mailings went out to all PVRP agencies with updated program material along with Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator materials and a brief letter explaining the changes and due dates. Agencies were directed to an online survey to complete information regarding the PECC requirement. 47 agencies have responded so far with 87% identifying a PECC.
2. Committee members are working to revise the Safe Transport in Ambulance program. Pennsylvania is one of several states working collaboratively to create a National Curriculum.
3. The Emergency School Guidelines document published in 2018 as a book has been updated and published as an online flipbook. The book can be downloaded for print but allows greater access for users electronically.
4. The 2020 EMS survey from earlier this year has just started to provide state specific information back to each program just a few days prior to our meeting. This information includes agencies who want to add a Pediatric Coordinator. Another EMS survey is planned for January 2021.
5. The 2020 National Pediatric Readiness Survey for Hospital Emergency Departments previously scheduled for June 2020 has been rescheduled to begin in May 2021.
6. The committee engaged in a discussion regarding COVID-19 impact on children and specifically around three topics; Multi-Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), return to school and mental health. Issues including the lack of abuse reporting during the Pandemic along with a significant increase in fatalities or near fatalities during the same time period were highlighted. Other conversation identified an increase in overdoses among children and the concern for abuse with a return to home of previously incarcerated individuals who had been released due to COVID-19 actions. The lack of child contact with mandated reporters is resulting in lower reporting and was a concern across clinical and child protection representatives. The Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) for EMS program is now available for both in person and virtual presentation to prehospital and first responders and can be scheduled through the American Academy of Pediatric Pennsylvania Chapter at <https://www.paaap.org>. Lastly, pediatric clinicians discussed the presence of MIS-C cases primarily in the eastern part of the state and presenting as low fever with tachycardia to hemodynamically unstable with cardiac involvement. Total cases are in the dozens since March.
7. A small sub-group will be reviewing the statewide protocols and the stakeholder suggestions for changes recently submitted to the Medical Advisory Committee for pediatric content and appropriate recommendations to MAC and Dr. Kupas.

8. The Pediatric Voluntary Recognition Program for FY 19-20 saw 23 new agencies added to the group and another 2 for the current fiscal year. Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator activity for FY 19-20 identified 56 new PECC's and another 7 for the current fiscal year without including the EMSC survey or PVRP survey's responses.
9. Josh Stuart was identified as the new Family Advisory Network representative. Josh is taking Mr. Spencer's place as FAN as he had transitioned over to the EMSC Program Manager position at the beginning of 2020.

EMS Education Task Force

Mr. Wertz reported the following:

The EMS Education Task Force met on July 30th and offers the following report:

- I. The task force re-revisited VTR 1215-05 from December of 2015, which recommended that EMS educational institutes have the option to conduct the BLS psychomotor skills exam that is currently administered by the regional EMS council. The board acted in the affirmative on this recommendation and the Department of Health indicated in its letter of February 29, 2016 that:

"The Department will further investigate the possibility of BLS Education Institutes conducting psychomotor exams as time and available resources permit."

To date, the Department has not implemented this recommendation. The current financial limitations of the EMS system have drawn attention to the need to consider cost savings measures. The task force reviewed the recommendation from a conceptual standpoint and reaffirmed its applicability and intent.

However, the task force did revise several of the previously recommended implementation steps as follows:

1. The educational institutes should be supplied with standardized exam materials.
2. Evaluators should complete a training program.
3. Evaluators should not be faculty who taught the students on that part of the exam.
4. Education institutes should use a pool of approved evaluators.
5. Regional council staff should be present for exams during the introductory phase of this process. *Staff note: the focus here is to standardize i.e. define the introductory period in an effort to reduce the regulatory oversight
6. Following the introductory period, regional council staff should conduct periodic onsite audits of exams.
7. In addition to periodic audits, performance-based audits should be conducted for failure rates above the state average; legitimate concerns received by the BEMS; administrative failure identified by the BEMS.

Because the suggested process modifications do not change the intent of VTR 1215-05, a new VTR is not necessary. The recommended modifications were transmitted to the BEMS via letter on April 26th.

- II. Today, for the board's consideration, we present **VTR 0920-02, which recommends the discontinuation of spinal immobilization testing as part of the EMT psychomotor examination.**

Evidence-based patient care has shifted from “spinal immobilization” to “spinal motion restriction.”

The term spinal immobilization has been replaced with, “Restrict Spinal Motion” in the PA EMS provider scope of practice published on January 18, 2020. The current PA Statewide Treatment Protocols establish spinal motion restriction as the expected standard of care.

BLS educational institutes will continue to provide theory and practicum instruction for use of the long spine board as an extrication/lifting and moving device. The educational institute will continue to verify the student’s competency in the use of a LSB based on the indications stated above.

The National Registry of EMTs intends to remove spinal immobilization testing from its list of requirements for attestation by a state’s lead EMS agency. Implementation of this recommendation may need to be delayed until the NREMT removes this requirement.

A motion to accept was made by Ms. Bleecher and Mr. Gratz seconded the motion to accept VTR 0920-02. Motion carried.

Membership Committee

Mr. Martin reported:

We received an application from Mutual Aid Ambulance Service, Inc. for Council Membership. The Membership Committee reviewed and approve for vote.

A motion to accept was made by Mr. Tucci and Mr. Gratz seconded the motion to accept the Council Membership. Motion carried

Project Updates

Conference Update

Mr. Snavelly reported the following:

- Thank you to everyone that helps us.
- We were able to put together 16 sessions with a total of 24 hours of con-ed.
- Average attendance per session was 253. Had 790 attendees that at least watched one con-ed.
- 41% were first time attendees.
- Starting to work on 2021 conference. If you have any feedback, ideas, thoughts, please email or call me.
- Thank you to all our sponsors. This allowed us to not charge attendees, so thank you.

EMS Agency Survey w/Center for Rural PA

Mr. Potter reported the following:

- For a number of years, the Center for Rural PA has surveyed the fire service for workforce development, call volume and other information.
- We are in the process of developing a similar survey for EMS. This will be an electronic survey.
- We have a focus group where we are looking at what goals, objectives and what we want to learn from this survey.
- As we move forward, we will let the Council know when this will be sent out.

EMS Awards

Mr. Spencer reported the following:

- The awards ceremony will be held virtual on Tuesday, October 13 at 1930 hours. This will be live on Facebook and YouTube.
- Each award has been sponsored.
- Thank you to our sponsors.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

American Academy of Pediatrics

Mr. DeReamus reported the following:

- Currently the balance billing legislation is not on the legislative schedule.
- The Ambulance Association is following legislation related to the budget, county authorities and HB 1838.
- Heather Sharar reported that on 9/14/20 they held the Statewide EMS Memorial Service at Capital. Even though we could not have our foundation Star of Life dinner and three-day bike ride, we still had 53 individuals that wanted to ride and rode around Harrisburg. Senate Resolution 353 and House Resolution 990 designating September 14 as EMS Memorial Day.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Jones reported that Leo Scaccia is retiring. He has been part of the Chester County EMS system for many years.

ADJOURN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Wertz and seconded by Mr. Deaven to adjourn the September 2020 Board of Directors meeting. Motion carried.

The next scheduled meeting of the PEHSC Board of Directors will be on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 10:00 am