

Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FLORIDA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting minutes from the meeting of:
January 23, 2015

Ocean Center
Daytona Beach, Florida

Member Name:	Voting Status:	Attendance:
John Bixler, EMS Section Administrator	Non-Voting	Present
Charles E. Moreland, Ed.D., Chair	Voting	Present
Daniel Griffin, EMS Educator, Vice Chair	Voting	Present
Chief Darrel Donatto, EMS Administrator (Fire)	Voting	Present
Michael Lozano, M.D., Physician	Voting	Present
Chief Tom Quillin, EMT (Non-Fire)	Voting	Present
Doris Ballard-Ferguson, Ph.D., Lay Elderly	Voting	Present
Jane Bedford, Paramedic (Non-Fire)	Voting	Present
Sheila Bradt, Emergency Nurse	Voting	Not present
Alan Skavroneck, Commercial Ambulance Operator	Voting	Present
Tracy Yacobellis, Department of Education	Non-Voting	Present
Charles Hagan, III, Office of the Governor, Emergency Management	Non-Voting	Not present
Captain Timothy J. Roufa, Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles	Non-Voting	Present
Preston Bowlin, Department of Financial Services	Non-Voting	Present
Trenda McPherson, Department of Transportation	Non-Voting	Not present
Carlton Wells, Department of Management Services	Non-Voting	Present
Joe Nelson, D.O., State EMS Medical Director	Non-Voting	Present
Julie Bacon, EMSC Liaison	Non-Voting	Present
Bethany Lowe, Meeting Coordinator	Non-Voting	Present

Note: A verbatim transcript of the entire meeting is available for review at the Bureau of Emergency Medical Oversight, EMS Section.

Call to Order

Chair Moreland called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A roll call was conducted and a total of nine voting members were present, therefore a quorum was met.

Medical Director's Report

Joe Nelson reported that the Florida Association of EMS Medical Directors (FAEMSMD) discussed participation in a new sub-committee along with Dr. Moreland. It will be called the Reporting Sub-committee and two medical directors will be appointed to it. It will serve to continue the EMSTARS data review process with a statewide perspective.

Another topic of discussion was cardiac arrest best practices. Dr. Chris Van Delen will be leading a work group with the medical directors on this topic to improve cardiac arrest survival statewide.

Dr. Nelson then reported that he attended a National Association of Athletic Trainers (NAAT) meeting in Pensacola the previous week. This meeting was a specific task force for updating the guidelines that organizations recommend to their athletic trainers across the nation. Much of the discussion focused on changes in the use of spine boards within EMS, as well as helmet and equipment removal. Dr. Nelson recommended pre-contact with the local EMS system when a sporting event takes place so that the athletic training staff is in sync with local EMS protocols.

Danny Griffin then stated that one of the things that he has emphasized through his "Friday Night Lights Out" DVD is for the local EMS stations in the area of a high school football field to visit each school a week or two prior to the beginning of the season to ensure they are properly equipped to treat an injured athlete.

Dr. Nelson then reported that the second topic of discussion at the NAAT meeting was the treatment of incapacitated persons. Law enforcement officers are not covered for liability and immunity from civil action if they assist EMS with the transport of an incapacitated person against their will. This presents a challenge for law enforcement agencies. The FAEMSMD has decided to attempt to meet with the Florida Association of Police Chiefs and the Florida Association of Sheriffs in an effort to improve the environment for incapacitated persons.

Dr. Nelson reported that the new term in the field of neurology and stroke care is "Emergency Large Vessel Occlusion" (ELVO). Typically, an ELVO type of stroke is a devastating stroke that has significant impact on the victim. There are opinions as to whether or not the stroke patient should go to a closer primary stroke center as opposed to a distant, comprehensive stroke center.

Dr. Nelson then stated that a new score has been developed and validated, which is called the RACE Score. This new score system uses data from the National Institute of Health Stroke Scale in a new way. It has been shown to be effective in identifying those patients with large vessel occlusions or ELVO types of stroke.

Dr. Nelson then reported that the FAEMSMD adopted the following statement at their meeting yesterday: "The FAEMSMD is strongly opposed to a mandatory statewide protocol. Instead, we feel as medical directors it is our responsibility to develop recommended guidelines for use as a tool for development of local medical protocols by the local medical director. These guidelines will be reviewed as necessary as sciences changes."

Chief Darrel Donatto then stated that the Florida Fire Chief's Association and Fire Services support this statement.

Dr. Nelson then explained in detail what an incapacitated persons' case might be. It could involve traffic accidents or medical calls in which law enforcement is summoned to assist. Generally, they involve patients who have either a medical complaint or injury and as a result, cannot make valid decisions for themselves. In such cases, EMS providers feel that the patient meets the legal standard for incapacitated persons and wants to transport the patient to the hospital, but the patient refuses medical care. In certain areas of the state, law enforcement agencies are reluctant to assist EMS in moving that patient to the hospital because they feel—based on the State Attorney General's interpretation of 401.445, Florida Statutes—law enforcement officers are not included in the list of professionals who are held harmless by the statute for civil actions resulting from transporting a person against their will.

Next, Chair Moreland stated that he will be deferring to the Vice-Chair, Danny Griffin, on some of the tasks listed on the agenda. He stated that Danny will determine if the Council has a quorum or not. Danny will also handle the reports provided by the council members. As for comments, Chief Donatto will handle any public comments provided by the audience. Chair Moreland also stated that Preston Bowlin will now provide the report for the Data Committee.

Council Member Reports

Tracy Yacobellis, Department of Education

Ms. Yacobellis reported that in October 2014, the EMS program directors from the Board of Colleges and Technical Centers met to evaluate and re-establish the EMT and paramedic statewide articulation agreements. These agreements create a bridge for students who complete EMT and paramedic courses through a Florida clock-hour program at the technical centers. These agreements allow students to receive an advanced standing when pursuing the EMS Associates of Science (A.S.) degree.

Ms. Yacobellis stated that the programs directors discussed issues related to the articulation agreements and voted on an appropriate minimum amount of credit that should be awarded statewide for these students. Ultimately, this resulted in two updated articulation agreements for our public programs. Students who complete EMT school and who have either their current EMT or paramedic license will be awarded 11 credit hours toward the EMS A.S. degree.

In addition, students who have completed a paramedic program will be awarded 38 credit hours toward the EMS A.S. degree when they also have their paramedic license here in Florida.

These articulations are being finalized by the Department of Education's legal office and will be posted online as soon as possible.

Ms. Yacobellis then reported that the EMT and paramedic certifications have been added to the 2014-2015 postsecondary funding lists. The significance of this is that students who achieve these certifications will generate additional funding back to the district or college in which they earned it.

Ms. Yacobellis stated that the curriculum framework review for all EMS programs will be conducted this year, and changes will be effective for the 2016-2017 academic year. Many of the EMS program directors met the previous Wednesday. A program review committee will be created for each program to address updates needed for each level. The programs that will be reviewed include:

- The Emergency Medical Responders program at the high school level
- EMT
- Paramedic
- EMS Associates Degree

These committees are comprised of 50 percent education and 50 percent industry at a minimum, and are meant to guide the competency, skills and knowledge required of the programs to future EMS professionals.

Darrel Donatto, Florida Fire Chief's Association (FFCA)

Chief Donatto stated that one of the FFCA's main concerns is improving the diversity of Florida's workforce. The FFCA sees an opportunity to address this concern through a combined EMT/firefighter curriculum. This will allow greater access for those interested in working in this field. Chief Donatto encouraged a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Education and the Division of State Fire Marshall's Office to help facilitate this new curriculum.

Chief Donatto then stated that there are a number of rules that the FFCA has been trying to get passed through the DOH. He stated that the council needs to take an official position to get things moving. Chief Donatto then stated that the council had created rules that are inappropriate and must be undone—specifically, the EMS educator qualifications requirements.

John Bixler then stated that the rule update process is actually part of the rule reduction exercise throughout all of state government.

Preston Bowlin, Data Committee

Mr. Bowlin reported that all of the agencies have transitioned to the new EMS Tracking and Reporting System (EMSTARS)/CDX program. There are now 32 performance measures that can be viewed. One of the performance measures is report times with an age group slider that allows the viewer to choose the age group of interest.

Additional performance measures include:

- Return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC)
- Number of patients
- Number of calls
- Number of transports
- Times to hospitals
- Cancellations

Mr. Bowlin stated that there will be four scheduled training sessions that can be found on the EMSTARS website (www.floridaemstars.com). They are scheduled for February 10, February 24, March 3 and March 17, 2015.

Mr. Bowlin then stated that the state can accept Version 3 file submissions in April 2015. Be sure your vendor is certified by the National EMS Information System (NEMSIS). The testing is now handled by NEMSIS and vendors should follow the Florida Business Rules.

There are currently 163 agencies submitting data. That is 59 percent of agencies submitting. Out of 3.6 million reports accumulated, 76 percent of those runs are in EMSTARS at this point.

Mr. Bowlin then reported on the Data Committee's 2015 fiscal year. The major areas of focus are:

- Increased communication and participation with the Data Committee
- Expansion of reporting and quality assurance through access to information, performance measures and review
- Established standard definitions for Version 3 field values and extended interface with other committees, medical directors, education and medical care

Mr. Bowlin then introduced Julius Halas, Director of the Division of State Fire Marshall, to give a report on the combined firefighter/EMT curriculum. Director Halas stated that the program covers over 900 curriculum areas. If a community college or vocational technical center wanted to continue to do separate firefighter and EMT course, they could. But for those employers requiring at least an EMT and sometimes paramedic preferred plus firefighter credentials, having a single registration makes a lot of sense.

Director Halas then stated that he and Mr. Bixler worked together to draft a MOU. He stated that the next steps would be to acquire the appropriate signatures for the MOU.

Next, Danny Griffin asked if the new curriculum could have an umbrella terminology to indicate both the fire school credentials and the EMT credentials in one certificate. Tracy Yacobellis replied that it would be listed under one program number. Director Halas then mentioned it would be a wise idea to have students complete their EMT exam prior to entering fire school to ensure successful test taking.

Chief Donatto then made a motion that the EMSAC take an official position to urge the DOH to secure an MOU with the Division of State Fire Marshal that supports a combined firefighter/EMT course program as soon as possible. The motion was seconded and passed.

Old Business

Chair Moreland motioned to appoint Doris Ballard-Ferguson as the council's parliamentarian and Chief Donatto as the secretary/treasurer. Danny Griffin would remain the vice-chair. The council was in favor and the motion passed.

Next, Chair Moreland proposed a vote on the EMSAC Bylaws. He thanked Cory Richter for his work on updating them. Doris Ballard-Ferguson said that the Bylaws should state that the council be guided by the EMS State Plan and a strategic plan. Also, she proposed that all appropriate statutes and administrative rules be reviewed as needed. Dr. Ballard-Ferguson said that the Bylaws should also state who is next in the chain of command when the chair and vice-chair are absent.

Mr. Griffin then motioned for the EMSAC to vote to approve the updated Bylaws. All members were in favor, and the motion was seconded and passed.

Mr. Griffin then requested a vote to adopt the proposed EMSAC official letterhead and that any communications in letter form be used on this letterhead only. Chair Moreland suggested that the current membership of the council be reflected in the letterhead. Once the vacant positions are filled, the letterhead will be updated with the new positions listed. Dr. Ferguson also suggested that the new officers be listed in order as well. The council agreed to these changes. Jane Bedford seconded the changes and all members voted in favor of the new letterhead.

Next, Chair Moreland motioned for approval of the July 2014, September 2014, October 2014 and November 2014 EMSAC meeting minutes. Darrel Donatto seconded for all four minutes. The council voted in favor and the motions passed.

New Business

John Bixler provided follow-up to severe viral illness preparedness in the state of Florida. When the DOH sent out surveys to measure the state of EMS providers' preparedness for Ebola, more than 60 percent of EMS providers had not exercised severe viral illness response with local hospitals. Mr. Bixler encouraged those providers to do so as soon as possible.

Next, Mr. Bixler introduced the concept of severe viral illness response teams—similar to HAZMAT teams. He invited the council and constituent groups to provide any feedback on this concept.

Mr. Bixler then reported that the Emergency Medicine Learning and Resource Center (EMLRC) is setting up a severe viral illness training program. Dr. Nelson stated that it is designed to consist of five one-hour webinars, which will begin within the next 60 days. There will be over 50 hands-on training exercises that will focus on correct procedures for donning and doffing personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as the interaction between EMS and the hospitals using case-based scenarios.

Cindy Dick, Director of the Division of Emergency Preparedness and Community Support, then expanded on the topic of PPE. During the wake of the Ebola outbreak, two nurses contracted Ebola. They had presumably been in the appropriate PPE and utilizing the proper donning and doffing procedures. It was at that point that PPE in the state of Florida became a major topic. Director Dick stated that proper cache management of PPE is very important and restated the need for a severe viral illness response team.

Director Dick stated that a cache of PPE should be maintained in county health departments located in central and south Florida. She encouraged the fire service agencies and EMS non-fire providers to discuss it and see if it is something viable.

Chief Donatto then stated that the EMS State Plan should indicate how Florida and its EMS responders are prepared to protect the public in the case of severe viral illness outbreaks.

Dr. Ballard-Ferguson stated that now is the time to partner with local hospitals since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had begun supplying equipment to those agencies. Director Dick stated that the CDC had established cooperative agreements with PPE manufacturers so that if there was an outbreak in any particular state, those responders and hospitals needing equipment would be elevated to the top of the PPE distribution list. While the CDC is acquiring some PPE, they are not equipping anyone.

Dr. Nelson then stated that the upcoming training provided by the EMLRC will familiarize EMS personnel with the various types of PPE available.

Chief Donatto then motioned that the EMSAC suggest to the state EMS office to include severe viral illness in the development of the EMS State Plan. Mr. Griffin seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Next, Leah Colston, Bureau Chief of Emergency Medical Oversight at the DOH, stated that the bureau is responsible for building the continuum of care within the trauma system. She requested any feedback and recommendations from the EMSAC on this process.

Professional Resource Network (PRN) Presentation

Dr. Penny Ziegler, Medical Director and Chief Executive Officer of PRN, provided an overview of her organization. Dr. Ziegler stated that the most common impairing condition is a substance abuse disorder with alcohol or other drugs. Health care providers are vulnerable to these disorders since they work in close contact with controlled drugs.

Since PRN has begun working with EMTs and paramedics, 22 providers have successfully been enrolled. All referrals have been made by DOH. They receive an evaluation and are signed up for a monitoring contract.

Dr. Ziegler then stated that although each of the local fire departments and other systems have access to an Employee Assistance Program, they are not set up to deal with major impairing conditions such as an addiction to a controlled substance. That is what PRN is all about. Currently, PRN is monitoring more than 1,000 health care professionals.

Dr. Ziegler then stated that PRN does not intend to provide duplicate services to those already receiving adequate treatment. She stated that PRN does not provide care, but instead, monitors people who are in a care program to be certain that they are complying with the program from which they are receiving treatment.

She stated that if anyone has questions about how PRN works, that they are welcome to call her or someone at her office to talk.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Education Committee

Danny Griffin reported that the Florida Association of EMS Educators (FAEMSE) has completed its recommendations with the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) and has been awarded a 503 (c) – 501 (c). The FAEMSE is now allowed to take donations, give scholarships and pay tuition or books for underprivileged people who want to attend EMT/paramedic school. Mr. Griffin then thanked the Louis Mallory, Executive Director, for his voluntary work toward this recent accomplishment.

Mr. Griffin then reported that a year-long class that will begin in August 2015 will be the first class to take the National Registry Paramedic Exam for the state of Florida. The FAEMSE had concerns over the adoption of the national registry as the official state test. The educators will meet with representatives from the national registry in April to do training.

Lastly, Mr. Griffin stated that the FAEMSE discussed the issue of processing time for paramedics to sit for their licensing exam. There was an issue with many schools who had delays in processing applications for EMT students in December with the DOH's Division of Medical Quality Assurance. Some students had to wait 30, 40 or even 50 days to get a test date assigned to them, which is unusual. The FAEMSE identified that the delay was due to staffing issues at MQA, as well as a huge database transition. Therefore, the national registry assured the FAEMSE that the 90-day clock for testing would not begin until MQA was ready to test the student.

Medical Care Committee

Dr. Joe Nelson reported that the committee discussed the revision of trauma alert criteria in the state. It was determined that the trauma alert revision was not a rule that DOH has decided to conduct a rule workshop, therefore, the adult and pediatric trauma triage protocols remain the same.

Another topic of discussion was the evolving changes in spine boards utilization. The role of spine boards has been reduced to one of patient movement and extrication and little use as an immobilization device in trauma patients. This evolving change with spine boards is occurring across the nation.

Next, Dr. Nelson reported that the American Heart Association will be publishing new guidelines for advance cardiac life support sometime this year—likely in the fall. Local treatment protocols will likely be changed or updated to reflect the new American Heart Association Guidelines.

The Medical Care Committee would like one or more liaison positions for the upcoming Data Committee's Reporting Subcommittee. Once the number of liaison positions has been determined, the Medical Care Committee would be happy to contribute one or two members as liaisons. There was a lot of interest in the idea that EMSTARS users can run multiple reports in the 32 different subject areas. Steve McCoy then confirmed that multiple reports may be run. The 32 different measures were a

product of National EMS Performance Measures from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Lastly, Dr. Nelson thanked Mark Smothers for his assistance with preparing the Medical Care Committee report.

PIER Committee

Cory Richter extended thanks to those who participated in the September Falls Awareness Campaign. The Indian River Fire Rescue Department's local trauma center partnered to get the message of falls prevention out to the communities. The 2014 Florida Older Adult Falls Prevention Webcast can be seen on YouTube.

Chief Richter then encouraged local departments to educate their citizens on heart health and CPR. Also, April Pools Day at the pool event is coming up in April, as well as Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Chief Richter then encouraged the EMS agencies to partner with the trauma centers to work on the 2015 Elderly Falls Awareness Campaign, which will take place on September 23, 2015.

Strategic Visions Committee

Chief Richter stated that he has received great support on the EMS strategic plan. It is still ongoing and the committee still needs reports from the group as they work on the objectives and strategies in the strategic plan. He stated that communication is key throughout this process.

Disaster Committee

Mike Lozano reported that the committee reviewed the disaster protocols. There was concern about the wording over the administrative implementation and intent of the protocols. The introductory paragraph has been reworked and approved by the committee. The next step is approval from the council.

Dr. Lozano reported that the State Medical Response System is becoming more nimble and cost-effective. He stated that EMS is continuing to have a seat at the health care coalitions.

Active shooter protocols were updated and will be forwarded over to Dr. Nelson for inclusion in the disaster protocols.

Currently, the Sort, Assess, Lifesaving Interventions, Treatment/Transport (SALT) Triage Method is being put forward and is more data-driven. A white paper is coming out in the next quarter evaluating how data-driven SALT is. Dr. Lozano urged those agencies who are considering a change to wait until the paper is published.

EMS for Children (EMSC) Committee

Julie Bacon stated that the EMSC grant will be awarded on March 1, 2015. The EMSC Committee is trying to strengthen its partnerships with the council and throughout the state. Dr. Lori Romig has been in discussion with the medical directors regarding their assistance in helping us to further find and identify gaps when it comes to pediatric online medical direction.

The EMSC Program has become partners with the Florida Children's Disaster Preparedness Coalition. When it comes to pediatrics and disaster, one vulnerable situation is the preschool population. Therefore, the EMSC Program is looking for voluntary training to help daycare centers become more prepared for disasters. A second vulnerable situation is reunification of lost children with their parents.

Next, Ms. Bacon stated that registration will open up for classes that are being held in four areas: St. Petersburg, Bonita Springs, the Keys and Miami. Registration will be for a pediatric one-day trauma/pediatric pig lab sponsored by Peds-R-U's. The cost is \$20 per person.

Also, there are two programs that are available to agencies. One is “Friday Night Lights Out,” a train-the-trainer program that focuses on mild traumatic head injuries. The second is pediatric safety in restraining children in the back of ambulances.

Access to Care Committee

Jane Bedford reported that hospital acuity levels are going up; they are functioning with more than their legal capacity. This means that the emergency rooms (ERs) are being used for hold patients and then there are insufficient beds for actual ER patients. Manatee County has three county hospitals and three of them were on diversion at the same time. In Orange County, hospitals have begun using EMS systems. They reported that when delays start, staff is sent to the hospitals to facilitate moving patients out of their EMS beds so they can get back in service.

Ms. Bedford then stated that the Community Paramedicine workgroup met the previous day. There was a presentation on how data is being transferred from EMS ePCR to hospital options for connecting and receiving data back and forth. Data needs to be received from hospitals more seamlessly for EMS providers.

Dr. Kendra Siler-Marsiglio presented “My Health Story,” and Rena Brewer, Director of Southeast TeleHealth Resource Center, presented on an ongoing program in the panhandle for telehealth.

Mike Hall reported on quality measures for community paramedicine—a project that is called the Mobile Integrated Healthcare Performance Measurement Project. It includes members from 17 different states (Mike Hall represents Florida). The objectives for this measurement project is to build an evidence-based, uniform set of measures to look at reimbursement methodologies and program integrity to identify ways to prohibit fraud, abuse and waste prevention.

Ms. Bedford then detailed the report that was given by Mac Kemp, President of the Florida Council of EMS Chiefs. One topic of discussion was the upcoming legislation that will challenge balance billing and telemedicine. Also, there are new initiatives on the performance measures project to create national EMS performance measures to enable improved patient care at the local level. This is being closely watched by DOH’s Children’s Medical Services. This will likely change the face of how EMS is paid. Our health care organizations will be paid based on performance measures and not for transport.

Communication Committee

Carlton Wells reported that FloridaNet hosted representatives from FirstNet on December 12, 2014. Chief Rubin from Miami-Dade Fire Rescue participated as Florida’s statewide EMS representative on the executive committee. They discussed Florida’s plans for a broadband emergency communications system.

There was a Federal Communications Commission rulemaking on other public safety 700 megahertz frequencies. For EMS, there are eight air-ground frequencies or air-to-ground channels that were created.

Mr. Wells then stated that broadband operation for FirstNet has been discussed for EMS by the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council. Part of their goal states: “To document what EMS needs as opposed to public or vendor perception.”

Lastly, Mr. Wells reported that Florida’s EMS Communications Plan is past the working draft level. It is now a proposed draft and undergoing the Department of Management Services’ review so it can be distributed statewide for vetting and feedback.

Public Comments

Cory Richter from Indian River Fire Rescue requested to speak about Advanced Automatic Collision Notification (AACN). Chief Richter stated that NHTSA had just created a committee to develop a

program to distribute this notification system nationwide to all EMS, fire, first responders, police and public safety answering points. This training program will be offered in Florida free of cost. One version will be in video format and the other will be a PowerPoint presentation with all the speaking notes.

When a car crashes, the AACN, such as OnStar, will call their center and give them a classification based on the injury severity score. Certain forces in the collision will tell them whether there is a high probability of severe injury. Chief Richter stated that his agency will be one of the beta testers for OnStar. Currently, they are evaluating crash data from dispatch centers to help develop AACNs.

Chief Richter stated that more information on this will be provided at the July 2015 EMSAC meeting.

A final motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the meeting was then adjourned at 12:11 p.m.