

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 ADVISORY COUNCIL (EMSAC)

### Meeting minutes from the meeting of July 17, 2014

Caribe Royale  
Orlando, Florida

#### **Members Present:**

Danny Griffin, Chair  
Charles E. Moreland, Ed.D.  
Doris Ballard-Ferguson, Ph.D.  
Darrel Donatto, Chief  
Jane Bedford  
Alan Skavroneck  
Sheila Bradt  
Charles F. Hagan, III  
Captain Timothy Roufa  
Preston Bowlin  
Carlton Wells  
Tracy Yacobellis  
John Scott  
Cory S. Richter  
Maria Fernandez  
Joe Nelson, D.O.  
Julie Bacon

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 Griffin called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Griffin then conducted a roll call of the members. A total of seven members were present, therefore a quorum was not met. The motion to approve minutes from the last meeting was delayed until the next advisory council meeting in October.

### **State EMS Bureau Report**

John Bixler welcomed Dr. Bill Anderson, Director of Emergency Preparedness and Community Support, to the meeting. Mr. Bixler also introduced Leah Colston as the new bureau chief for the Bureau of Emergency Medical Oversight.

Mr. Bixler stated that once the state surgeon general makes a decision on who he will appoint, he will let the council know.

Input from the January Emergency Medical Services Tracking and Reporting System (EMSTARS) rule workshop is still being considered. The goal is to have each EMS provider in the state of Florida participating in EMSTARS. Patient outcomes and incident level patient management need to be evaluated by the premier EMS data collection system that exists in the world today, which is EMSTARS. The Department of Health (DOH) stands firm in having all EMS professionals in the state of Florida reporting to EMSTARS.

Mr. Bixler reported that there are currently 69 schools and 179 EMT/paramedic programs. Site visits are up to date, as well as inspections of providers. There are currently 273 licensed EMS providers and over 4,500 permitted vehicles.

Mr. Bixler stated that there are still deficiencies in pediatric oxygen masks among other items. He advised the council members to re-visit their programs to verify that pediatric supplies are on their trucks. He also stated that in order to use adult electrodes on a pediatric patient, a letter from a medical director is required.

The 911 Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs) program is on track with 178 state-approved training programs. The exam is still being offered statewide for whoever needs to take it. Also, since the Florida Legislature gave the DOH the responsibility for training and licensing 911 PSTs, more than 8,600 certifications have been completed. The Legislature had estimated that some 7,000 were out there that needed certification. Mr. Bixler thanked Wendy Parkinson and Luke Remillard for their work toward the program's success.

Mr. Bixler reported that over \$2 million in grants were distributed on June 13, 2014 by the DOH.

### **Medical Director's Report**

Dr. Nelson began his report by stating that the Medical Directors Association met the day before and discussed topics such as spine boards and spinal immobilization. There is a nationwide trend to decrease the use of spine boards. Dr. Nelson stated that one of the important aspects of revisiting spine board protocols is for its profound effect on training, especially for EMTs and paramedics in

training. The Medical Directors Association will come out with a position paper on this subject as it further evolves.

Next, Dr. Nelson reported the discussion of the current drug shortage, especially the shortage of normal saline. There is an acute shortage of intravenous normal saline occurring across the nation. The medical directors are revisiting their protocols to utilize normal saline only when absolutely required. Substitutes and alternatives to normal saline are being explored as well.

Dr. Nelson stated that the medical directors conducted a survey as an association on cardiac arrest. Due to low participation, the membership will retake the survey to obtain better data for the next council meeting.

The medical directors also discussed the use of Narcan by both law enforcement officers and lay public. Florida has not yet changed any scope, rules or statute to allow non-certified law enforcement officers (meaning if they are non-paramedic) to administer Narcan for opiate drug overdose victims. This can be a lifesaving procedure.

Dr. Nelson stated that he does not know of any law enforcement agencies that are currently administering Narcan in the state of Florida, unless they have licensed paramedics and a medical director doing so under protocol.

Next, Dr. Nelson stated that the medical directors support the use of tourniquets by law enforcement officers. There is currently a large scale pilot project going on within the DOH to equip law enforcement officers with tourniquets and provide training to use them in lifesaving events.

The medical directors also discussed closing out the parts of the strategic plan in which they have a role.

Lastly, Dr. Nelson reported that Dr. David Meurer from Gainesville was elected as the new president of the Florida Association of EMS Medical Directors.

Chair Griffin then mentioned how the majority of the medical directors who attended the Gathering of Eagles Conference in Dallas, Texas commented on their efforts to reduce spinal immobilization. This was based by data that patients who spend too much time on a spine board end up with more injuries or more back pain issues after being removed from that board.

### **Council Member Reports**

#### **Chuck Hagen, Office of the Governor, Division of Emergency Management**

Mr. Hagen reported that hurricane season is through the end of November. There have been a couple of initiatives including a statewide hurricane exercise that was conducted in May.

Mr. Hagen then stated that Florida was reaccredited by the Emergency Management Assistance Accreditation Program. Florida is the first state to be accredited for the third time.

#### **Julie Bacon, Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC)**

Ms. Bacon welcomed Bonnie Newsome as the new EMSC Program Manager.

Ms. Bacon also thanked Nature Coast EMS for allowing EMSC to be a primary sponsor of the Intubation Rodeo, an event that gave first-line providers the opportunity to hone their intubation skills.

Next, Ms. Bacon announced a new program called Friday Night Lights Out. This program focuses on mild traumatic brain injuries and it was written, authored and presented by Chair Griffin. Another new program is Pediatric Safety in the Back of an Ambulance and the appropriate ways to restrain and transport children.

Darrel Donatto Florida Fire Chiefs Association (FFCA)

Chief Donatto stated that if the EMS data, trauma or emergency preparedness programs are contemplating any regulatory changes, to please make the council aware as soon as possible. Open, timely dialogue involving all the constituency group members will make for a better EMS system in Florida.

Chief Donatto reported that the FFCA will continue to oppose the DOH's efforts to impose regulations requiring mandatory submission of EMSTARS. The use of EMSTARS would cause a significant fiscal impact to our providers and a loss of control over some data management systems in the future. Chief Donatto then stated that the FFCA supports a voluntary process of data submission based on collaborative and cooperative efforts amongst fire service EMS providers.

Chief Donatto stated that any funding provided by the state could best be used for a long-term web-based data entry system for EMSTARS seeing as it is very unlikely that providers will give up control of their data on a short-term basis just to provide the state with access to data.

The committee supports the effort to create a combined fire and EMT curriculum since it will provide the needed access to educational grants for students interested in this career field. Chief Donatto applauded the DOH and Mr. Bixler's support in this as well.

Next, Chief Donatto stated some concerns regarding the need for proposed statewide disaster medical protocols as opposed to allowing the use of the already-existing Department of Homeland Security FEMA protocols. The committee also has concerns of the existing wording, as well as the medical oversight of these protocols.

Chief Donatto then encouraged the DOH to start working with the constituency groups on the issue of the federal specifications for ambulance design standards.

The committee would like to reach a consensus on a solution for the state of Florida that takes into account safety and fiscal impact through collaboration and cooperation. Chief Donatto requested for Chair Griffin to appoint an ad hoc committee.

Chief Donatto then stated that the committee sees an opportunity for the state to take a leadership role in an effort to work with law enforcement, as well as other first responder agencies to allow the ability to administer Narcan.

Lastly, Chief Donatto announced that the FFCA will be holding its annual business meeting as well as executive development conference and EMS section meeting on August 1-5, 2014 at the Harbor Beach Marriott in Fort Lauderdale.

Preston Bowlin, Department of Financial Services

Mr. Bowlin reported that the committee is still waiting on the Memorandum of Understanding in regards to combining the EMT and fire programs.

Mr. Bowling also announced that the State Fire Marshall's Office will be providing the SAVE program in August. This program will combine training between law enforcement and the fire services.

John Scott, Air Ambulance Operator

Mr. Scott reported that the Aero Medical groups had a meeting in July. Topics of discussion included the Safety Summit that will take place on November 3, 2014 in Tampa at the CAMLS Learning Center. There was also a presentation on a new product called Life Shield, which is a membership/insurance product that covers air medical transport.

Cory Richter, EMT (Fire)

Mr. Richter thanked Bonnie Newsome, Melia Jenkins, Melissa Keahey, Rickey Stone and Steve McCoy for their work in putting together the awards ceremony on the previous night.

Charles Moreland, Ed.D. (Paramedic Fire)

Dr. Moreland stated that regular pediatric training is a must and encouraged the council to take advantage of the training that EMSC provides.

He then requested for the council members to look at their schedules to ensure that the advisory council meets at times when maximum participation will take place.

Shelia Bradt, Emergency Nurse

Ms. Bradt stated that, when talking about EMSTARS in relation to what hospitals have to report out of the emergency room, one major factor that affects EMS is arrival to bed. Another major factor is the arrival of pain management for long bone fractures (we have 37 minutes to give pain medicine for a patient with long bone fractures).

Jane Bedford, Paramedic (Non Fire)

Ms. Bedford reported that the agencies represented at the Florida Council of EMS Chiefs meeting were in favor of the limited use of the long spine board. There was a determination that whoever carries an automatic external defibrillator (AED) is considered a first responder, such as law enforcement, fire, EMS and even dentists.

Ms. Bedford then stated that during her attendance at the Emergency Cardiovascular Care Update in Las Vegas, the importance of education and feedback on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) was greatly emphasized. Ms. Bedford also reported that the Centers for Disease Control's trauma transport protocols would increase the number of trauma alerts in all of our agencies.

Next, Ms. Bedford stated that the Florida Council of EMS Chiefs would be composing a letter of support for the EMS Advisory Council to inform the public of all of its work.

Lastly, Ms. Bedford reported that the Florida Rural Health Association will conduct an educational summit on November 19-20, 2014 in Orlando, Florida. More information for the upcoming education can be found at: [www.floridaruralhealth.org](http://www.floridaruralhealth.org).

#### Tracy Yacobellis, Department of Education

Ms. Yacobellis reported that EMT, paramedic and public safety were identified in the General Appropriations Act to generate additional funds through the Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List. Once the list is finalized, students who are at the districts and the colleges who sit for the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians will generate additional funds for the districts and colleges to continue those programs. This will include dual-enrollment students as well. The list will be finalized by the Chancellor of Career and Adult Education and Florida Colleges and will be published on: [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org).

Ms. Yacobellis stated that the Occupational Education Council, as well as Florida college liaison Wendy Sikora are reviewing all of the EMT/paramedic articulation agreements that are currently in place and are discussing new articulation agreements that guarantee credit toward the EMS Associates Degree.

### **Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

#### Education Committee

On behalf of Chair Griffin, Jane Bedford reported that the draft document on the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions' (CoAEMSP) process, Standards Revisions can be found on the website and are open for public comment.

Next, Ms. Bedford reported that Mark Ullman was appointed to the board position that was opened.

There were special presentations for the founders of the Florida Association of EMS Educators to include Dr. Richard Clinchy who has been in EMS education for 55 years.

Lastly, Ms. Bedford stated that they discussed the 2016 implementation of requiring the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) certification exam as the initial certifying exam for paramedics.

#### Medical Care Committee

John Scott reported that the committee had met the previous day to discuss Goal 1 of the strategic plan, which is to improve the EMS system through effective leadership and communication.

The committee discussed how information is poorly disseminated because of three reasons: there are quarterly meetings only; there are a limited amount of attendees for each meeting; and the current website being used by the state is difficult to navigate. The committee will aim to come up with recommendations on how to close this communication gap.

Next, Mr. Scott stated that the second topic of discussion for the committee was Goal 6, which is to improve the performance of key EMS processes through benchmarking and partnerships. Mr. Scott stated that quite a few people at the meeting were not aware of the spine board immobilization concept and others were not certain it should be embraced as quickly as it should.

It is a task of the Medical Care Committee to try and find a way to support this possible change. Mr. Scott stated that science and data would be the key factors to support this new concept.

Next, Mr. Scott reported that there is still a lot of research being done on tranexamic acid (TXA) in regards to hemorrhage control. In the interim, the use of tourniquets and new products such as Quik Gauze seem to be taking the place of TXA very effectively.

Lastly, Mr. Scott reported that the committee discussed Objective 6.4, which is a measure to identify opportunities for improvements in the EMS system process. It was suggested that the council bring the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reassessment recommendations back to the next meeting for discussion on which ones to implement.

#### PIER Committee

Mr. Cory Richter on behalf of Bob Smallacombe reported that the committee is working on a training program that will take place during EMS week on May 20, 2015 in conjunction with the Florida Department of Transportation's Pedestrian Bicycle Coalition and the EMSC. The training program will provide continuing education units to participants.

Mr. Richter then announced that Falls Prevention Day will take place on September 23, 2014. The Injury Prevention section will conduct a webinar on falls prevention on September 10, 2014.

#### EMS Strategic Vision Committee

Mr. Cory Richter requested reports for the old plan that closed out on June 30, 2014. Reports may be emailed to Mr. Richter, Julie Bacon or to the Survey Monkey link that was created by Ms. Bacon. Mr. Richter will email the Survey Monkey link to the constituency group presidents.

Mr. Richter then stated that the renewal survey is taking place again this year. For those who are doing online bulk renewals, the Division of Medical Quality Assurance now provides a payer code to make the administrative side of renewing easier for agencies.

Lastly, Julie Bacon stated that in regards to collecting the final report for the strategic plan, the Survey Monkey is the easiest way to collect everyone's information since it is all on the same Excel spreadsheet.

#### Legislative Committee

Alan Skavroneck reported that the committee met the previous day with 35 people in attendance. Chief Rubin from Miami-Dade Fire Rescue spoke about the FirstNet Communications initiative.

Mr. Skavroneck reported that during the 2014 Legislative Session, 1,812 bills were filed and 264 bills passed, representing 14.6 percent. This is approximately a 22 percent reduction than the year average of 338 bills. Chief Kemp reminded the group that this is an election year, and when trended, election year sessions usually result in the passage of fewer bills. The EMS fared very well this session with little-to-no impact.

Mr. Skavroneck stated that a recap of the bills tracked by the committee will be submitted with the legislative report for posting to the bureau's website.

Mr. Skavroneck then reported that Medicaid Managed Care is up and running in a majority of the counties; however, there have been numerous complaints reported by EMS providers concerning payment issues and the authorization process. The use of the term “nonemergency” is causing confusion as the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and managed care companies view these types of transports as para-transit, meaning wheelchair and nonmedical stretchers. Mr. Skavroneck stated that the Florida Ambulance Association is working with AHCA representatives in an attempt to address these issues.

Mr. Skavroneck then reminded all providers that it is their responsibility to ensure that employees and vendors with whom they interact do not appear in the Office of the Inspector General’s (OIG) exclusion database. Updates are released monthly and require constant monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance. Information on this can be accessed on the OIG’s website.

#### Data Committee

Dr. Charles Moreland reported that regulatory impact review is ongoing with the data through surveys after the rule workshop.

Dr. Moreland then stated that the old strategic plan is being closed out and the submissions will be appropriately sent to the right people to survey. Dr. Moreland then reported that EMSTARS is moving to a different reporting software collection system called EMSTARS CDX web application. This program is going to improve submissions tracking and communication capabilities. The state is currently grouping the agencies that are on different platforms right now.

Next, Dr. Moreland stated that when the EMSTARS project first started, the main goal behind it was to evaluate what we are doing as an agency. The only true reliable way for the council to evaluate what we were doing is to have accurate data.

Dr. Moreland stated that EMSTARS is the only reliable way to evaluate the responsiveness and effectiveness of Emergency Medical Services on the state and national levels. It identifies areas or levels of services that may need further evaluation for improvement.

The EMSTARS allows for the dissemination of accurate public information and development of meaningful, educational and prevention programs. It also promotes decision-making and resource allocations that are based on solid evidence rather than isolated occurrences, assumptions, emotions or politics.

#### Access to Care Committee

Jane Bedford added to the Education committee report by stating that she and Rickey Stone were working to get the National Registry to conduct a workshop at either the October or January meeting. The purpose of the workshop would be to help the schools and programs that might need some more information on how to transition to the National Registry.

Ms. Bedford then reported that the Access to Care Committee had discussed doing crash testing in support of Goal 9 of the strategic plan, which states, “Increase access to care by improving patient safety, responder safety and the safety of the general public.”



Next, Ms. Bedford stated that there are upcoming changes for the Triple K specs for ambulances. The Committee on Accreditation for Ambulance Services is doing a rewrite on vehicle standards. There are options available, but they are expensive.

New ambulance standards were discussed and if these standards include these new options, the agencies will have some problems because it will increase the costs of the ambulances by approximately \$30,000. Increased costs may also equal older ambulances remaining in service, which does not increase safety.

Ms. Bedford then stated that there are many components to safety issues—safe driving practices, safe ambulances, etc. The committee had a discussion on response versus lights and sirens versus not, and the committee was in agreement that the lights and sirens are an issue for safety. So in light of that, the committee will evaluate data from EMSTARS to see if the lights and sirens response has any effect on the patient outcomes at all.

The committee will also hold a workshop for the community paramedic. Most of the goals can be addressed with the community of para-medicine; the Mobile Integrated Healthcare program of which the state of Florida has become involved.

Lastly, Ms. Bedford reported that the committee will do a workshop with the Florida Partnership for Telehealth. The workshop will include Kendra Siler-Marsiglio from the Florida Health Information Exchange to help discuss topics such as Mobile Integrated Healthcare Programs.

Chair Griffin then congratulated Ms. Bedford on becoming the new president-elect and Angel Nater on becoming the new president of the Florida EMS Educators.

#### EMS Communications Committee

Carlton Wells reported that the committee has discussed the idea of closing out Goal 10 in the old EMS strategic plan, as well as anticipated strategies and measures in the expected new EMS strategic plan that will likely associate with the EMS Communications Committee.

Mr. Wells then stated that the EMS Communications Plan, Volume I, is expected to progress from a working draft to a proposed draft on or before August 31, 2014. This is contingent upon the Department of Management Services approving that plan to be distributed for the first round of vetting.

Lastly, Mr. Wells reported that FirstNet (or, FloridaNet) was presented the previous day by Larry Gowen. The committee had increased participation particularly for the FirstNet presentation. Mr. Wells thanked Greg Rubin for coordinating Larry's presentation for the Communications Committee.

Dr. Nelson then stated that opening up the wavelength of that electromagnetic spectrum to public safety will have a huge impact on the practice of prehospital medicine. Full participation in the FloridaNet project will result in the best possible product. Dr. Nelson stated that EMS and EMS medical direction will want to maintain a tight involvement with that project.

#### EMS Drug Shortage

Mr. Cory Richter reported that the main issue currently is the shortage of saline. It is obtainable but it costs close to \$9-\$10 per bag as opposed to \$1.50, which was six months ago.

The Federal Drug Administration has made provisions to get it from overseas, but it is still expensive. Mr. Richter then suggested a change in protocols to conserve saline until the shortage is over, such as giving very little fluid or not hanging the bag of saline when it's not necessary.

Mr. Richter then reported that there is no real end-date on this shortage.

Lastly, Mr. Richter stated that the Minnesota Multi-state Contracting Alliance for Pharmacy (MMCAP) has been helpful in terms of an alternative means of ordering medication.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Bixler then recognized Patty Stadler, Trauma Administrator at the DOH and thanked her for her representation at the council meeting.

### **Voting and Committee Assignments**

There were no voting or committee assignments. Chair Griffin entertained a final motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the meeting was then adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Bethany Lowe  
Administrative Assistant II, EMS Section