



**RECOMMENDATION FOR CONSIDERATION**

Board Meeting Date: **December 14, 2011**

**Subject: Voluntary Rescue Service Recognition Marketing Program**

**VTR#: 1211-03**

**Committee/Task Force: Rescue Task Force**

Recommended Goal

Recommended Policy Change

Other:

**Recommendation:**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SHOULD DEVELOP A SHORT AND LONG TERM MARKETING PLAN TO IMPROVE AWARENESS IN AN EFFORT TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE VOLUNTARY RESCUE SERVICE RECOGNITION (VRSR) PROGRAM.**

**Rationale [Background]:**

The Voluntary Rescue Service Recognition Program is a joint program of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of EMS and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner. The program, which was launched over 20 years ago, is based on the concept of medically-directed rescue operations and provides standards for manpower, training, equipment and operations.

The program, which was originally focused on vehicle/machinery rescue, was expanded in 2009 to include swift water rescue in response to the identified need for typed-resources that could be deployed to regional or statewide flooding incidents. Participating organizations are eligible to receive recognition in each specialty area at the basic, operations or advanced level. The long range vision is to expand the program into additional areas of technical rescue, e.g. trench/confined space rescue and high angle rescue.

The Bureau of EMS estimates the current number of VRSR program participants to be 100-115 organizations; this represents a small percentage of the fire departments and EMS organizations currently operating in the Commonwealth that provide some level of rescue services.

The PEHSC Statewide Rescue Task Force asserts that the VRSR is a value-added program for the EMS system because:

1. It provides the rescue organization with minimum standards in the areas of manpower, training, equipment/supplies and operations.
2. A VRSR organization demonstrates to the community their commitment to provide professional, medically-directed rescue services.
3. Resource typing is achieved using the three (3) recognized levels of VRSR recognition; important information for local and state emergency management officials when deploying resources in a disaster situation.

For the reasons enumerated above, the Task Force believes the Department should develop marketing campaign to increase awareness of, and hence participation in, the VRSR program. The task force has identified the following target audiences:

- Emergency service organizations currently providing some level of rescue services, including but not limited to fire-based, EMS-based and independent rescue squads.

- County or regional task forces providing specialized rescue services, e.g. swift water rescue.

**Medical Review [Concerns]:**

N/A

**Fiscal Concerns:**

The cost of a marketing campaign will depend to a large extent on its depth and breadth, and if such expertise currently existing within state government or if the project will require the involvement of an outside vendor.

In recognizing the constraints placed on budgets due to the current economic climate, the Task Force would like to suggest the Department of Health explore partnering with other state agencies with involvement in the VRSR program or agencies that would derive benefit from increased participation in the program, i.e., e.g. Office of the State Fire Commissioner, PA Fish and Boat Commission and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. For further assistance, the Department should explore if sources of outside funding may be available in the form of federal grants or sponsorships from the private sector.

**Educational Concerns:**

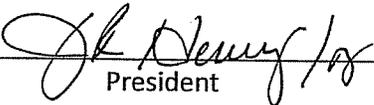
The Task Force regards education of all stakeholders to be an essential element of a successful targeted marketing campaign.

**Plan of Implementation:**

This project should be guided using the advice of a marketing professional. The PEHSC Statewide Rescue Task Force offers consultation to the Department in regard to the content of this Vote to Recommend (VTR). The task force specifically offers staff or member support to participate in Department discussions and/or meetings with any marketing professionals the Department may choose to engage for this project.

**Board Meeting Comments/Concerns:**

None

Signed:   
President

Date 12/22/11

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Accept: \_\_\_\_\_ Table: \_\_\_\_\_ Modify: \_\_\_\_\_ Reject: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Date of Department Response: \_\_\_\_\_