



**PEHSC Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, June 10, 2020**

**Minutes**

**CONVENE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

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

- Welcome

**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./Ron Roth, M.D.  
Centre LifeLink EMS – Kent Knable  
Chester County Department of Emergency Services – Harry Moore/Michael Murphy  
City of Allentown EMS – Eric Gratz  
Community Life Team – Barry Albertson  
Cumberland Goodwill EMS – Nathan Harig  
Emergency Nurses Association, PA – Kay-Ella Bleacher, CRNP  
Good Fellowship Ambulance and Training Institute – Kimberly Holman, RN  
Main Line Health – Keith Laws  
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 Fire and Emergency Services Institute – Jerry Ozog  
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  
Thomas Jefferson University – Jean Bail, Ed.D.  
Tower Health – Mervin Wertz  
Western Berks Ambulance Association – Anthony Tucci  
Williamsport Area Ambulance Service Cooperative – Gregory Frailey, D.O.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

American Trauma Society – Krista Brands  
Cetronia Ambulance Corps. – Larry Wiersch  
Chester County EMS Council, Inc. – John Applegate  
Cranberry Township EMS – Ted Fessides  
Geisinger-Lewistown Hospital – Craig Wheeler  
Forbes Hospital – Jeffrey Wess, M.D.  
LTS EMS Council – Wendy Hastings/Donna Snyder  
Myerstown First Aid Unit – David Kirchner  
Northwest EMS Inc. – James Leaming/Scott Kingsboro

Pennsylvania Neurosurgical Society – Jack Jallo, M.D.  
Portage Area Ambulance Association – Terry Sloan  
Southern Chester County EMS – Robert Hotchkiss  
UPMC Presbyterian – Myron Rickens  
Uwchlan Ambulance Corps – Emily McCarthy  
VFIS/Education & Training Services – Justin Eberly  
Volunteer Medical Service Corps of Lower Merion & Narberth – Alvin Wang, M.D.  
Wellspring 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.  
John Englert

### **OTHERS**

DELCO Memorial Hospital – Conlen Booth  
Mastersonville Fire Company QRS – Lori Shenk  
PA Office of Rural Health – Jennifer Edwards  
Stephanie White

### **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. Bleecher to accept the March 18, 2020 Board of Directors meeting minutes as drafted. Motion carried.**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

J. David Jones reported the following:

There were 4 line of duty deaths; three from COVID-19 and one from cardiac arrest.

Kevin Bundy – served with Crozer-Keystone EMS  
Jeremy Emerich – served with Lehigh Valley Health Network's MedEvac  
Rick Johnson – served with Bucks County Firefighters  
Doug Zima – served with Northwest EMS

Ms. Swade and Mr. Jones participated in several conference calls over the last two weeks.

- Senator Casey's office wanted input on how federal government was handling the response to COVID-19 in order to assist EMS and fire services from the special Medicare initiative that was put in place. Mr. Jones informed the Senator that about 25-50% of services gave the money back because there were a lot of strings attached and they would have received less money from the federal government and not been able to balance bill the patient. Mr. Jones also addressed the Senator regarding the status of Medicare and Medicaid funds being below the cost to provide the service, this is a critical time that needs to be addressed.
- Mr. Jones spoke about a report from the county commissioner's association, which is being considered in the Senate Veteran Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. The report

recommends county-wide authorities to provide a stable funding stream to support regionalized EMS operations. Currently, municipalities can form an EMS authority if they feel that approach would ensure the availability of local EMS resources.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dr. Ronald Roth, Treasurer provided a report, a copy of which is on file for the members' review.

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

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Swade reported on the following:

1. In referring back to the call with Senator Casey's office, this was a multi-disciplinary meeting, which included law enforcement and fire service representation. Our position was on clear on reimbursement, but one message that was consistent across the board was the availability of PPE for first responders. You may see something coming from Senator Casey's office stemming from this meeting and the comments made during this call.
2. The takeaway from the meeting with the County Commissioners Association was that local input on any proposed plan is essential. We did a survey early on this with Council members; if you have any additional thoughts, please contact Ms. Swade.
3. PEHSC staff is working remotely with each member in the office at least one day a week.
4. The upcoming EMS Conference will be held virtually this year in September. The Executive Committee, on behalf of the Board, discussed the concept and concurs with the staff's recommendation. The money already expended for the venue at Spooky Nook will be shifted to 2021; please note, these funds are from the secondary account and are not contract funds. Also, because of some religious holidays and venue scheduling conflicts, next year's EMS Conference will be held the week of June 21, 2021.
5. We have received from the Department of Health the EMSOF and EMSC contracts. EMSC has a contract from April 2020 to June 2020 and then June 2020 to March 2021. Our FY 2021 EMSOF allocation from the DOH has been reduced by \$17,000. We requested and received approval for a current-year budget revision, which will allow us to move money between budget categories. We asked the Department of Health if, due to the current public health emergency, current-year EMSOF monies could be carried over to the next fiscal year - we are waiting for the DOH to respond to our question.
6. During COVID we were connected by the Office of Rural Health and a group that wanted to provide donations to EMS in Pennsylvania. After a proposal was written and calls back and forth, they are planning to provide gowns to the entire state. We are waiting for the gowns to be available, but there is no guarantee that we will receive them.
7. Over the past 3-4 months, a considerable amount of information about initiatives and waivers has been published by the Department of Health. We encourage members to access the PEHSC website to view these information bulletins. PEHSC is reviewing several the initiatives and waivers to determine if recommending their sustainment beyond the declaration of public health emergency is appropriate.
8. Through the Office of Rural Health, PEHSC had another opportunity to participate in a call with CMS about rural health concerns. If you are in a rural area and have a specific concern, please reach out to Ms. Swade. One issue that was discussed was payment by Medicare for non-transport. Our position on this issue is consistent with that of NAEMT.

9. Discussions occurred with the Department of Health regarding EMS involvement in contract tracing. PEHSC performed a member survey to determine EMS interest; the results of which were forwarded to Director Ferguson.
10. There was a survey done about fire service capacity in Pennsylvania over a seven-year window and that was conducted through grant money. PEHSC submitted a grant proposal to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania to conduct a survey of EMS agencies similar to the one they conducted for Pennsylvania's fire service. The survey will be repeated periodically to develop a trend related to call volume, staffing, etc. The total amount of the grant was \$15,000 to do the survey or as an alternative, we may request the Center for Rural Pennsylvania conduct the survey and PEHSC would play more of a supporting role
11. There are a several pieces of legislation in today's meeting materials that have passed either the House or Senate. We provided input on House Bill 1459 (mental health bill) and responded to a Senate request to contribute to the language of this bill. We also spoke to the Pennsylvania Coroner's Association regarding the future role of CISM teams.
12. We are looking at technology options future board meetings, maybe a video conference.

### **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REPORT**

Director Dylan Ferguson reported on the following topics:

1. The Department of Health is still teleworking and will do so for the foreseeable future. Even in the Green phase, telework is still recommended. Director Ferguson, Aaron Rhone and Jay Taylor are still in the office every day.
2. The requested FY 19-20 EMSOF budget carryover it is in the Governor's budget office. At this point we are unsure if the carryover request will be approved; should this not be the case, the council should be prepared to expend their remaining budget prior to July 1, 2020 no approved.
3. Regarding contact tracing, the survey information received from PEHSC has been forwarded to the appropriate area within the Department. At this point there are numerous large organizations, including medical/nursing schools, hospitals, etc., stepping up to perform this function. Should a gap in resources be identified that EMS can fill, it can only do so if appropriate funding is provided.
4. As it relates to COVID-19, Overall EMS call volume has been down during the health emergency. In April, both 911 calls and scheduled transports were down 25%. In May, 911 calls down 17% and scheduled transports down 13%. It's important to note, these are statewide statistics; some areas were down as much as 50%.
5. EMS certification programs are resuming. The NREMT is making possible for candidates to take online exam anywhere they have internet access. Candidates will be monitored through a web camera and additional testing sites will be opening through Pearson-Vue statewide.
6. The certification extension is till July 1<sup>st</sup> and then normal cycles after that point.
7. The reinstatement process exception: the Bureau of EMS has processed over 700 applications under exceptions. 957 total reinstatements, which is over a 600% increase compared to last year.

Questions asked to Mr. Ferguson:

- Ms. Altenberg asked if there are shortages of PPE for EMS services.
  - Yes, and when the Department receives PPE, we are trying to push those supplies out through the county EMAs, who will disburse it to priority locations.
- Ms. Altenberg asked if there is a state plan to have all EMS providers tested for COVID since many positive cases are asymptomatic?
  - Specific to EMS, the answer is no. There are more and more testing sites opening, so they are becoming more available and a provider can register to be tested at those sites.

- Ms. Altenberg suggested the Department should explore a statewide plan for COVID testing of EMS providers.
- Dr. Frailey asked about a replacement plan with NREMT to use the new skills portfolio as a replacement of paramedic psychomotor exam?
  - The portfolio has reduced the number of skill sessions, but no word on a total replacement process. Currently, all psychomotor exams are suspended. Pennsylvania will issue certification without completing a psychomotor exam. If a provider wishes to gain national registry, they will need to take a psychomotor exam at a future date.
- Mr. Tucci asked about a COVID pre-plan for the fall?
  - Bureau of EMS will use lessons learned going forward in preparing for possibility of increased COVID cases in the fall.

## **TASK FORCE/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Medical Advisory Committee**

Dr. Wang reported the following:

The medical advisory committee met by webinar on Wednesday, April 22nd.

Dr. Kupas thanked everyone for their efforts and updated the committee on the Department of Health's response to COVID-19. The Bureau of EMS has issued numerous information bulletins related to the current public health emergency. The bureau continues to stress the consistent and appropriate use of PPE to protect both providers and patients.

Nasopharyngeal swabbing, used for COVID testing, is an approved skill for providers at the paramedic level. To avoid potential false negatives, providers participating in testing should receive training prior to performing the procedure. It's important to note that EMS involvement in testing is voluntary and should be coordinated with local health systems.

Dr. Kupas reviewed the interim COVID-19 cardiac arrest guidance and reminded the committee that this is intended to only be guidance and not a statewide protocol. The document emphasizes the importance of PPE, including considering the use of a hood/draping device and following the current cardiac arrest protocol. EMS agency medical directors should provide direction on what method of advanced airway control they prefer. Dr. Kupas noted a recent statement by the American Heart Association supporting endotracheal intubation, however the statement was not evidence-based. Field termination of resuscitation is no different in a suspected COVID patient and should follow current protocol. The MAC suggested a few wording changes within the guidance, which will be incorporated into a revised document.

The committee discussed EMS Information Bulletin 2020-13: Substitutes for Aerosol Treatment. The bulletin recommends use of an MDI w/ spacer, epinephrine or terbutaline as alternatives to aerosol treatments and permits administration of epinephrine prior to contacting medical command.

The members discussed the availability of terbutaline; some medical directors indicated they do not have the medication in their hospitals, while others said they have an adequate supply. Dr. Kim Roth suggested a maximum dosage from pediatrics; a list of contraindications for use in pediatrics; and a requirement to contact medical command prior to administering terbutaline to a pediatric patient. The MAC resolved to recommend several changes to Protocol #931 – Viral Illness, including permitting administration of terbutaline [in adults] prior to medical command; permit IM v. subcutaneous administration; list adult and peds dosages; list contraindications for pediatric patients; requirement to contact medical command prior to peds administration.

At MAC's January meeting, the BEMS asked the committee for its opinion on the use of breath analyzer CO devices in the prehospital setting. Dr. Anderson, Tammy Whiteman and Butch Potter met with the manufacturer's representative to learn more about the technology and have an opportunity use the device. In the interest of time at the April meeting, the topic was tabled to the August meeting to ensure there is adequate time for discussion and to make a recommendation. The next meeting of the medical advisory committee will be a webinar on Wednesday, August 12th at 1000 hours.

### **EMSC Report**

Mr. Fessides reported the following:

The EMSC Committee met by webinar on Monday June 1, 2020.

1. The previously scheduled Federal Partners in-person site visit was postponed until next year due to travel and meeting restrictions in place due to COVID-19.
2. 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 was received back from the Bureau of EMS as approved and allowing a delayed implementation until September 1st due to COVID-19 restrictions. The EMSC program will be adopting the delay due to required office activities associated with the implementation that could not occur until just recently.
3. Members of the Committee and the EMSC Program Manager are working on developing a virtual train-the-trainer program for the Safe Transport in Ambulances training in order to prepare additional instructors and expand its availability across the state. Additionally, Pennsylvania is working with several other states to develop a national training program outline.
4. The 2020 EMS survey closed on March 31st. Survey results will be available in late summer. Pennsylvania's overall survey response was only 21% of all 911 agencies statewide however COVID-19 preparedness and response was well in progress during much of the survey period.
5. The 2020 National Pediatric Readiness Survey for Hospital Emergency Departments scheduled to open in June 2020 has been postponed. A new date has not been determined.
6. The Pediatric Voluntary Readiness Program activity for 2020 has already met 2018 and is approaching 2019 annual totals for new agencies added with 10 new programs through June 1st. The EMSC program took the opportunity of the western part of the state going yellow just prior to EMS Week and recognized with in person events the City of Pittsburgh as one of its newest Expert level agencies along with Cranberry Township EMS for their Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator efforts.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Ms. Bail reported on the activities of the committee and introduced the slate of candidates for the 2020-21 Executive Committee:

J. David Jones, President  
Representing: Pennsylvania State University  
Anthony Deaven, Vice President  
Representing: Lower Allen Township EMS  
Anthony Martin, Secretary

Representing: Tower Health  
Ronald Roth, MD, Treasurer  
Representing: Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania, Inc.  
Douglas Garretson, Member-at-Large  
Representing: Ambulance Association of PA  
Robert McCaughan, Member-at-Large  
Representing: Allegheny General Hospital

President Jones thanked the Nominating Committee for their work.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Conference Update**

Mr. Snavely reported the following:

1. The conference will be held virtually September 2-4, 2020. This will involve live seminars and will be recorded for future viewing.
2. The schedule is being finalized and will be sent to the Department of Health for approval. There are 16 planned sessions and if a provider attends every class, they could earn 23 con-ed credits.
3. We are working on sponsor support for the conference. Currently we have two sponsors, Penn Medicine of Lancaster General is a gold sponsor and Penn State Health is a bronze sponsor.
4. We are still moving forward with EMS Awards and exploring options to present the awards since they are usually delivered at the annual EMS conference. Duane Spencer will be coordinating the awards this year.

### **EMSC Project Update**

Mr. Spencer reported the following:

1. We have purchased a SIM junior and supplemental support package for statewide use. We will have training available from Laerdal on the operation of the simulator.
2. We have a final review on the online pediatric scenario book. Once completed, it will be posted for hands-on tabletop type scenarios. We expect to have the document posted within the next two weeks.
3. Also looking at some other virtual SIM training for in-person education/meetings at EMS agencies so they can continue pediatric level education at minimal or no cost.

### **911 Commission and Senate Resolution 6 Update**

Mr. Jones reported the following:

1. The SR6 has not moved in legislature due to COVID. We did give testimony to the Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee regarding several of the report's recommendations.
2. The 911 Commission meeting has been postponed until next week. Janette Swade will be attending this virtual meeting in place of Mr. Jones.
3. Proposed new funding for 911 centers by Act 12: all PASPs will get a base equal amount and then the remainder of funds will be distributed using a funding formula. Some will gain money, and some will lose. We do not have a vote on the committee.
  - Mr. Frailey asked who are the voting members?
    - Mostly they are 911 administrators and county commissioners.

## **ADJOURN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**A motion was made by Mr. Laws and seconded by Mr. Knable to adjourn the 2019-2020 Board of Directors meeting. Motion carried.**

**Board of Directors Meeting FY 2020-2021**  
**Wednesday, June 10, 2020**

**Minutes**

**Convene 2020-2021 Board of Directors Meeting**

Mr. Jones, President, called the meeting to order at 1145 hours.

Mr. Jones thanked the Board Members that served during 2019-2020

**Executive Committee Election for FY 20-21**

There were no nominations from the floor in addition to the slate of candidates previously presented by the nominating committee.

**A motion was made by Mr. DeReamus and seconded by Mr. Buchle to accept slate of executive committee members as submitted by the nominating committee. Motion carried.**

**Organizational Reports**

**ACT 26 (Additional Fire and EMS Grant Funding)**

Mr. DeReamus reported the following:

1. Senator Pittman said a change in the funding formula at this time would have delayed the process and require a change to the current statute.
2. Fire received \$44 million and EMS received \$6 million.
3. There is \$19 million currently left over and discussions are ongoing as to what they are going to do with that money.
4. The next allocation is at the end of June.

**Other Business**

- Mr. Fessides stated that he did a grant data analysis:
  - Last year 491 EMS organizations received a grant averaging \$9,100
  - Fire had 2,009 grants given out with the average being \$12,000
- Mr. Gratz commented that if an EMS agency shares an EIN with a fire department, they will not be eligible to apply separately for funding.
- Mr. DeReamus also reported that House Bill 2537 is still pending and contains \$300 million.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

**A motion was made by Mr. Wertz and seconded by Ms. Blecher to adjourn the Board of Directors meeting. Motion carried.**

**The next scheduled meeting of the PEHSC board of directors will be on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 10:00 am**