



## FLORIDA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) ADVISORY COUNCIL

Proceedings from the meeting of April 15, 2005

Betty Easley Conference Center  
4075 Esplanade Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

### Members Present

Linda Swisher, R.N., Ed.D., Chairperson  
Don Bennett, Chief, Bureau of EMS  
Joe Nelson, M.D., State EMS Medical Director  
David V. Shatz, M.D., Vice-Chair  
John Scott, Air Ambulance Operator, Secretary  
Greg Rubin, EMT, Fire  
Chuck Kearns, M.B.A.  
Keith Gaston, Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles  
Ruben Almaguer, Paramedic, Fire  
Chad Reed, Dixie County EMT Non-Fire Service  
Pat Pieratte, Department of Transportation  
Judy Conlin, Department of Education  
Randy Pierce, Department of Management Services  
William Bingham, EMS Administrator Non-Fire  
Jaime Caldwell, Commercial Ambulance Operator  
Craig Fugate, Department of Community Affairs  
Michael Patterson, EMS Administrator, Non-Fire  
Amy Paratore, Emergency Nurse  
Salvatore Silvestri, M.D., Physician  
Ferne G. Moore, M.D., M.P.H., Lay Elderly  
Dave Casey, Department of Insurance

**Note:** A verbatim transcript of the entire meeting is available for review at  
the State Bureau of EMS

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Linda Swisher called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Chairperson Swisher opened the meeting with a moment of silence to prepare themselves for the discussions and decisions that they needed to make during the meeting. Following the moment of silence, Mr. Chad Reed directed the audience and council members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Swisher asked if there were any corrections to the minutes, which followed with two minor corrections.

Also, she announced that Dr. Agwunobi, Department of Health Secretary would be addressing the council later in the agenda.

### **STATE EMS BUREAU REPORT**

Mr. Bennett began his report by announcing that the next EMS Advisory Council will be held July 5-7, 2005 and that the fall meeting would be held in November. He further shared that the Advisory Council has four vacancies and that the Bureau would be accepting nomination until May 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Bennett went on to report that the licensure unit is one of the components that are moving to Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) to increase the efficiency and quality of customer service by May 15- July 1<sup>st</sup>. He also stated that the new national scope of practice came out and encouraged everyone to get their comments in by June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Bureau will incorporate all comments into a full document and send directly to the National Council. He announced that the Bureau is now publishing a monthly newsletter on the website at [www.fl-ems.com](http://www.fl-ems.com). Mr. Bennett further reported that NEMSIS will be phased in the next 12-18 months, which will be the biggest change in EMS history. He continued to report that the Investigations Section is continuing to clear out old cases and that they are down to about 100 remaining cases. Continuing with his report, Mr. Bennett stated that the Statewide Injury Surveillance Data Systems is available on the website, giving plenty of information about deaths in hospitalization through motor vehicle crash, etc. and a report on the Safe Kids bicycle program. He continued with announcing that the Governor had proclaimed that March 30<sup>th</sup> is Suicide Prevention Day.

### **STATE EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT**

Dr. Nelson began his report by stating the Florida Association for EMS Medical Directors has started a project to update a publication entitled the Physician's Guide to EMS, a document designed to educate non-EMS physicians on what the purposes and functions of the EMS system. He further announced that the Scope of Practice update version 2.0 is out on the scope of practice website and that anyone with an interest in submitting comments will have until June 1<sup>st</sup>. Lastly, Dr. Nelson asked the council to consider an Ad Hoc committee on Access to Care. He mentioned that during his travels statewide and personal practice, he has come to realize that the issue with hospital waiting time, paramedic release time, is growing and that they are anticipating working on some solutions.

Chairperson Swisher opened the floor for discussion from the council.

Mr. Kearns stated that he support the proposed idea from Dr. Nelson and mentioned that it is a wonderful idea to work cooperatively with the hospital industry and all affective parties.

Amy Paratore stated that she chairs the Hillsborough County Hospital Diversion Committee and that the committee called for an emergency meeting with the EMS community about their concerns. She stated that they all agreed upon the expectations that ERs have to have EMS communication offer instructions within 20 minutes so that they can get back in service.

Mr. Kearns stated that he would like to make a motion support Dr. Nelson's idea.

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORT**

Chairperson Swisher announced that Mr. Leo Deshat will take the place of Craig Fugate.

### **Leo Deshat, Division of Emergency Management**

Mr. DeShat reported that we have 47 days until Hurricane Season. He also announced that the Governors Hurricane Conference will be held in June and to find out more information relating to the conference please visit [Floridadisaster.org](http://Floridadisaster.org).

### **Michael Patterson, EMS Administrator Non-Fire**

Chief Patterson stated that he was appreciative to Dr. Nelson's report of the issues with waiting time and transport units being unavailable. He reported that there is data of hospital wait time, which often exceeded 1-2 hours sometimes more, which results in performance decrease.

### **Amy Paratore, Emergency Nurses**

Ms. Paratore reported that ENA didn't meet but were planning to meet in Orlando the week after the April council meeting. She stated that they will be discussing the stroke-act bill and its impact and conversion issues, and referrals for stroke patients to primary comprehensive centers. She stated that they will be discussing the specialist availability in hospitals and other issues. Finally reporting about the disaster types programs/drills.

### **William Bingham, EMS Administrator Non-Fire**

Mr. Bingham reported about the paramedic shortage issue. He reported that there are several geographical areas in the state that face the problem of hiring paramedics. He further stated that he wasn't convinced about the white paper that was issued stating that there is a statewide problem. He mentioned that in his opinion, this white paper lacked Florida's specific objective statistical data and failed to identify the other areas in the state that have paramedic surplus. He stated that the two ways of dealing with this issue are 1) dismissing it or; 2) facing the issue and resolving it. He mentioned that he was very interested in receiving comments from other council members on how to move with this issue.

### **Randy Pierce, Department of Management Services**

Mr. Pierce reported about the National Public Safety Telecommunications Week held April 10-16. He further mentioned that Lafayette County has just gone to an enhanced 911 system and that there are 2 counties remaining to update to this new system, which are Union and Dixie. Once these remaining counties have been updated, this will complete the project, which was started in 1974. Mr. Pierce also reported that there may be an equal number of wire line 911 systems as well as wireless. He mentioned that in a December report that there were 11.2 wires

lines in 911 and 10.8 wirelesses in 911 cellular industries. Mr. Pierce further reported they're working with the statewide law enforcement's interoperability \$32 million project and of those

199, 187 had walk-through and 70 of those systems have been installed. He further described that the long term goal on this is to resolve the interoperability problems between the 800 MHz systems that are proprietary in nature so that we they can actually try to communicate across different systems. He stated that they are continuing to work with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) on hospital inspections for the com centers on their designated med channels.

### **Jim Bomford, Lay Person**

Mr. Bomford reported that the USF college of Public Health has put Seminole County down at the bottom of the number of paramedics available; he further mentioned that it is about .21 to .50 paramedic per thousand people. Mr. Bomford described that according to their figures, 39 counties are below what they have established as a median line for paramedics. He further mentioned that he put together Seminole County Community College leadership, which consist of fire fighters, supervisors and ran by the Seminole County School Board and Health Care Medical School Staff. He further reported that they have implemented a program for August 2005 and the objectives are to develop and implement the Curriculum for emergency medical services for grades nine through twelve at Seminole High School that will proceed through a post-secondary program at the Seminole Community College.

The second objective was to implement a recruitment program in the emergency medical services program to all interested students by February 2005. The next objective Mr. Bomford mentioned was that by August 2005, they will open fully equipped emergency medical training laboratories at Seminole High School Academy of Health Care Careers. Furthermore, by October 2005, they anticipate developing and implementing the mentoring program that would team all emergency medical service personnel with participating students to better prepare the students for the challenges physically, mentally, and emotionally in this field. Also with this program, they foresee heightening student awareness in our own community and to develop the relationships that will encourage students to initiate and sustain employment in this particular career.

### **David V. Shatz, M.D., Physician**

Dr. Shatz reported that the Governor requested a study of Florida's Trauma system. From the study, it revealed that the 21 trauma centers in the state are operating at an annual deficit of \$92 million. He further stated that they are trying to get a recurrent funding source, and that there is a bill that went through the legislative that would increase fines from about \$60 to \$125, basically targeting the people who cause the traumas and \$65 would go to each trauma center. He further reported that if this gets approved and passed it will generate about \$20 million a year. Dr. Shatz also mentioned which was about a mass casualty event, a mass burning event. He mentioned that the distances are still significant and that he and Dr. Nelson are going to start working with others to set up an evacuation plan of action incorporating both ground and air medical support.

### **John Scott, Air Ambulance Operator**

Mr. Scott reported that in relation to the stroke transport issue, they feel that there will probably be an increase in air transport for those stroke patients going to stroke centers beginning July 1. He further mentioned about the concerns with the new patient safety in

the air medical industry. Furthermore, he mentioned that they invited Dr. Hunton Brameans a representative from the national organization to come to our Air Ambulance meeting and present to us on that issue.

**Greg Rubin, EMT (Fire)**

Mr. Rubin reported that the national scope of practice deadline is June 1<sup>st</sup> and that he encouraged everyone to participate with providing comments to the Bureau.

**C.T. Chuck Kearns, Paramedic (Non-Fire Service)**

Mr. Kearns began by commending the work on the stroke tools. He further mentioned the increase in call volume and how it's becoming a statewide increase. He reported that they transported 1,000 patients more in each of January and February than the prior year, also in March; they exceeded that and transported more than 10,000 patients in one month. Additionally, Mr. Kearns pointed out that in Pinellas County they fund 18 different fire departments and to add at least one paramedic on a fire truck in \$30 million a year. He further mentioned that when they are responding to a call and there's no ambulance available or an ambulance is having extended responses, the fire rescue crews are stuck on the scene doing extended care of the patient while waiting for a transport to arrive. Further detailing, that it isn't the fault of the transport provider that the trucks are stuck in hospitals and the crews are standing in hallways with patients on stretchers. Mr. Kearns stated that this issue more than just impact ambulances, but that it impacts the rescue system, because it is taking the first responders out of their ability to respond to the next call.

**Ferne G. Moore, M.D., M.P.H., Lay Elderly**

Dr. Moore began her report by announcing that April is Florida Injury Prevention for Seniors (FLIPS) month and that there are several activities taking place around the state to increase awareness of injury prevention in seniors.

**Chad Reed, Dixie County EMT Non-Fire Service**

Mr. Reed began his report offering support to Chief Bingham, stating that it was needful to look at the paramedic shortage paper one more time. He stated that he didn't think it was a statewide issue, but a geographical issue that faces the rural service providers. He also mentioned that Dixie County received a Health Resources and Services Administration planning grant to network plan and to bring forward all the rural EMS providers in the state and have one voice for them and to discuss and focus on the issues that are facing the EMS rural providers throughout the state.

**Pat Pieratte, Department of Transportation**

Ms. Pieratte opened her report with announcing that the DOT safety office has received their concept papers for the grants for next year and that they are beginning the process of acknowledging the concept papers, reading through them and beginning the ranking process in building the highway safety plan. Additionally, she reported that they are still waiting for the six year federal transportation bill to pass to find out if the grant funding will go up. Furthermore, Ms. Pieratte reported that the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida conference was successful. During the conference national keynote speakers were John Bingham, Federal Highway Administration, Andy Clark, League of the American Bike Association, Dan Burden, Walkable Communities, based in Florida and Bill Wilkenson, National Center for Bicycling and Walking.

### **Judy Conlin, Department of Education**

Ms. Conlin began her report by sharing information regarding the nursing shortage. She also mentioned that there are bills for career education, along with numerous other bills waiting to pass dealing with the shortage issue.

### **BREAK**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Dr. Shatz briefly discussed the necessary changes in the rule revision. Following he made a formal motion to the advisory council to approve the revisions to 64-E as distributed. Mr. Rubin seconded the motion to approve with revisions.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Education Committee, John Scott, Air Ambulance Operator**

Mr. Scott reported that numerous things were discussed, scope of practice, instructor qualifications and instructor qualifications. He reported that they discussed the transfer of Certification to Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) issue. And finally they covered the concerns for mobile education units. He stated that the Emergency Medical

Learning and Resource Center planned to unveil their mobile lab on May 12<sup>th</sup> at the Orange County Fire Rescue Hangar.

### **Medical Care Committee, Dr. John Scott**

Dr. Scott reported that they were very happy to see that the 64-E Rule had pass. He mentioned that they had lengthy discussion about the pending stroke law.

### **Injury Prevention & Public Safety, Ferne G. Moore, M.D.**

Dr. Moore reported that during their meeting Lisa Vanderf-Hourigan gave an update on injury prevention activities. Additionally, Dr. Moore reported that the steering committee was formed to develop a state plan for injury prevention. Dr. Moore stated that there were eight goals established for this plan. They are: 1) to establish a sustainable infrastructure to provide leadership and coordinate, monitor and evaluate a strategic plan implementation, 2) to increase public and private funding for injury prevention, 3) to build the capacity of communities to reduce and prevent injuries to high risk groups and effectively address injury prevention priorities, 4) to increase the state of the art knowledge and skills in the injury prevention work force, 5) to increase the use of the evidence based injury prevention intervention statewide, 6) to increase the quality and availability of statewide and community specific data for planning, surveillance and evaluation, 7) to build capacity and resources statewide for evaluation of injury prevention initiatives and intervention, 8) to strengthen advocacy and public policy to reduce and prevent injuries. In addition to this, Dr. Moore reported that there were some discussions as

to further activities for the peer panel. They are planning to hold a telephone conference for the peer members to be able to discuss issues that concern them for the future.

### **EMS Futures Forum, Jim Bomford**

Mr. Bomford reported that in their meetings they discussed last year issues, concerning the paramedics out in the field in an effort to relieve some of the issues concerning treatment in the field and what is necessary to take to the emergency room.

Furthermore, he stated that the committee has concerns skills degradation as it relates to recertification.

**Regulatory Review, C.T. Chuck Kearns**

Mr. Kearns reported that the committee discussed looking at how a bill becomes a law and the bylaws of the EMS Advisory Council.

**Data Committee, Greg Rubin**

Mr. Reed reported that the data committee met and the Bureau was soliciting for volunteers from the EMS community to attend or to sit on a committee. Mr. Rubin also turned over his chairmanship and asked Dr. Swisher to solicit volunteers to replace his seat.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Dr. Swisher introduced Dr. Lottenberg who served on the advisory council years ago, and now serves as the newly appointed State Trauma Medical Director. Dr. Lottenberg stated that the Assessment of the Florida Trauma System is out and available on the Office of Trauma website and available in print. He further reported that the purpose for this study was to look at several areas of trauma systems in the United States. The study pointed out that 15-19% reduction in mortality is available in the states with mature trauma systems. He continued that the study pointed out that the most severely injured patients are triaged in trauma centers throughout the United States without question. It further pointed out that finance and human resource availability are the two largest barriers for most trauma systems. This study went on to discharge data for all trauma patients for the year 2003 through an analysis through an AHCA discharge data. Finally he reported that through CDC and HRSA, \$130,000 was given to each of the 21 trauma centers for burn supplies and training for disaster preparedness, and of the four hospital trauma centers that have burn units, an additional \$130,000 was given to upgrade their burn units and training as well.

**PRESENTATION**

Dr. John Agwunobi, Secretary of the Department Health and Nancy Humberg, Deputy Secretary were invited to address the numerous questions surrounding the transition of the certification section over to MQA.

After calling for any further business, and there being none, Chairperson Swisher called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made and the meeting was adjourned.



---

Tisa D. Dennard