

Northwest Georgia Region 1 Emergency Medical Services Council
Bremen, GA
August 25, 2011

MINUTES

Chairman Randy Pierson welcomed everyone to the Council meeting. He recognized guests to M.D. , Bill Hightower, owner of Ambucare EMS and Dave Wade from Haralson County Fire Department.

Bill Hightower gave the invocation and a meal was served sponsored by Ambucare EMS.

David Foster called the role and a quorum was determined to be present. Mr. Foster announced that one member has been absent for three meetings in a row and therefore will be removed from the council. Mr. Foster will notify the member by letter.

The meeting was called to order by the chair.

The first order of business was approval of the previous minutes as circulated. A motion was made to approve the minutes as circulated by Rick Cobb, seconded by Alex Case and approved.

Chairman Pierson requested that the agenda be modified so that Director Wages and Dr Mabley could give their reports early in case they needed to leave. There were no objections and therefore the Status of the Council report will be given later in the agenda.

Randy Pierson gave the Executive Committee report. He reported that all issues discussed would be covered in other agenda items and that no actions were taken.

Keith Wages and Dr. Jill Mabley gave the Office of EMS report. Mr. Wages commended Chairman Randy Pierson for his commitment to GAEMS and the Trauma Commission. Mr. Wages reported about the progress of the conversion of Georgia license levels to the new national levels. Each Georgia licensed EMT-B, EMT-I and Paramedic must log into the Office of EMS on-line classroom and complete a training course which includes passing an exam. The process is being monitored by Mickey Moore, Deputy Director of the Office of EMS. Mr. Moore reported to Keith Wages that over 60,000 courses were taken on the on-line classroom. He also reported that Georgia is halfway complete on updating the 500 currently licensed Georgia EMS instructors. He asked if there were any problems in completing the training. There were no questions. He stated that there was no truth that Georgia Paramedics will have to take the National Registry exam to retain Georgia Paramedic licenses. The current Georgia EMT-I level will be retained as will the Georgia CT level. There are currently over 10,000 Georgia EMTs and 60 Cardiac Technicians. He further reported that the only Georgia EMS personnel who will have to take the National Registry exam in this process are Georgia EMT-I's who wish to upgrade to Advanced EMT level. The Georgia EMT courses varied in content and length over the last few decades and therefore the upgrade course will be necessary to upgrade to the Advanced EMT level as well as the National Registry

exam. Mr. Wages stated that this process is now dominating the time spent by all employees of the Georgia Office of EMS.

Dr. Mabley reported on the progress of STEMI centers in Georgia. STEMI stands for ST elevation in myocardial infarctions. This means if a heart attack is detected in a 12-lead EKG then the patient is immediately transported to a hospital with a cardiac catheterization lab so that the clot blocking the coronary artery can be removed. If done within 1-2 hours then cardiac damage can be minimized. Dr. Mabley reported that the STEMI centers are concentrating on the door to balloon (cardiac catheterization) time. The centers have been able to reduce this time from 90 minutes to 60 minutes with some reducing the time to 30 minutes. Dr. Mabley asked that EMS services concentrate on the event (beginning of heart attack) to door (of STEMI Center) time. The overall goal is to deliver the right patient to the right place in the right amount of time. The anticipated result will be a better patient outcome.

Keith Wages reported that a rule revision will be submitted soon to enable a change in the requirement of criminal background reporting to the Office of EMS. The change will be from the use of websites to the use of fingerprints at kiosks. The goal is to have this in place before January 1, 2012. This change is in the method and not the evaluation of the results of the criminal background check.

Mr. Wages called David Loftin to give a report of the process of the designation of stroke centers in Georgia. Mr. Loftin reported that despite his retirement he is still working with the Georgia Stroke Committee on the creation of a Stroke System in Georgia. A major advance in the treatment of stroke came from the realization that 80% of strokes were caused by blood clots which can be dissolved by a drug (TPA). If hemorrhagic strokes can be ruled out by a CAT Scan and the TPA given within 3-4-1/2 hours then permanent damage can be prevented to the brain. Hospitals that are capable of this are Stroke Centers and Georgia established a method of designating Primary Stroke Centers by recognizing Joint Commission certification. The Coverdell-Murphy Act was passed in 2008 to combat this problem and establish a statewide system of stroke care. Two Stroke advisory committees were combined into one Georgia Stroke Committee. However, the committee recognized that some rural hospitals located in South Georgia within the United States Stroke Belt are in the area called the Stroke Buckle. Some of the rural centers still are experiencing problems with giving the drug because of the fear of potential side effects. The stroke belt and especially the stroke buckle have the highest mortality from stroke in the United States. Therefore, an additional type of stroke center was created - remote stroke centers. Remote Stroke Centers are different from Primary Stroke Centers because they are connected to larger Primary Stroke Centers by telemedicine. The neurologist in the larger center evaluates the patient remotely and makes the decision to give the drug. There was no method of designating Remote Stroke Centers and therefore rulemaking was necessary. The completed rules were approved in June by the Board of Community Health. The next step in inspection of the remote stroke centers by approved inspectors as part of the process of state designation. Annual submission of data to the State is required for all stroke centers and this is 70% complete for the existing centers.

Mr. Wages recognized David Foster who was recently promoted to Region 1 EMS Program Director.

Dr. Mabley reported on EMSMDAC (EMS Medical Director Advisory Committee). There was no report on the last EMSMDAC meeting since the committee has not met since the last council meeting. The next EMSMDAC meeting will be held at Emory on Clifton Road in Atlanta on September 28, 2011. Ray Fowler will present a program on Risk Management/Quality Assurance.

A task force has been established to review and revise the Georgia EMS Protocols. The task force members are:

1. Mark Bandy - Training Coordinator, Mid Georgia Ambulance; Macon
2. Matthew Jackson - Deputy Chief, Dept. of Fire and Emergency Services, Forrest Park
3. Jake Lonas - Operations Manager, Puckett EMS; Austell
4. Mary Hill - EMS training officer, Southside Fire/EMS; Chatham County
5. Nita Ham - GAEMS

The goal will be to complete the process by December 2011. The Georgia Protocols have not been revised since 2007 and the committee will consider using the format from Wake County EMS, North Carolina. The new Georgia protocols will be evidence based and will conform to the 2010 guidelines. The committee will eliminate some protocols and will add others such as Mass Casualty/Terrorist Attack Response protocols developed by Chief Jackson and Dr. Augustine. The long term goals will be to create a web based format for the new protocols to include skill sheets, drug information and standardized forms. The completed product will be reviewed by Dr. Salomone, residents from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Scottish Rite Campus and emergency medicine fellows from Grady Hospital. The completed protocols will be current, user friendly and evidence-based.

Bud Owens gave the EMSAC report. The committee met on Tuesday at the Medical Center of Central Georgia in Macon. He has supplied a copy of the agenda and minutes on the table in the back of the room. Many of the issues which were discussed have already been covered in this meeting. The main focus was the new National Practice standards and the changes in the Georgia Rules and Regulations. The next meeting will be on November 15, 2011 at Medical Center of Central Georgia in Macon. The next Georgia Conference will be the EMS/Educators Conference in Savannah from October 22-25, 2011. Dr. Mabley also stated that a new on-line EMS Medical Director training program will be offered free to all Georgia EMS Medical Directors soon. The cost of the program is usually \$300 per person. The program roll-out is waiting on the release of the final Georgia EMS Protocols.

Kelly Buddenhagen gave the EMS-C report. Ms. Buddenhagen reported that the Broselow tapes for EMS units have been purchased but delivery has been delayed due to changes to be made on the tapes. There have been so many drugs and administration notes added that the tape cannot contain all the information. Some of this information has been deleted and added to resource documents. A free EPC (pediatric) provider/instructor course will be available at the EMS/Educator conference in Savannah. Mini-grants are available for EMS training courses and the next EMS-C conference in Gainesville will be funded. Two Broselow Bags are available for each region this year from the EMS-C program. An EMS service must be a 911 provider and must have not received any previous Broselow bags from this grant to qualify. Please contact David Foster to apply.

Randy Pierson gave the Georgia Trauma Commission report. The last meeting was on August 9 and a special called meeting is being scheduled for September, 2011. The budget of the Trauma Commission will be reduced by 2% for the 2012 budget year. The commission has decided to reduce the number of ambulances awarded in the next ambulance grant by 2-3. The remaining funds will be moved to the training equipment grant. Some verification is necessary for grant awards by EMS services and many services have not applied. There were 60 grants available for first responder training courses last year and there will be a second round of grants this year including some for EMT-B courses. Dr Broselow is

working on changes to the Broselow Tape and the information removed from the tapes will be available on a web-based system and also a Safe Dose system accessible by cellphones to EMS personnel. The rollout will be at the Savannah EMS/Educator program. The trauma communication system which includes vehicle locator systems were piloted in Region 5 and 6. The contact person for the program is Mike Watts at Georgia Public Safety Training Center. The uncompensated care grant cutoff date will be August 26, 2011. Carlton Firestone gave more details on the vehicle locator system. EMS services must verify that they are 911 providers and must give the number of units needed to qualify for the system through the grant. The grant will pay for installation of Garman vehicle locator units, cell phone cards and phone service for 18 months. Supervisors can view the location of all units through a web-based system and the dispatch centers can communicate with units through text messaging. The rollout of phase 3 will be in October 2011.

Randy Pierson gave the Georgia EMS Association report. He reported that the next conference sponsored by GAEMS will be the EMS/Educator conference in Savannah from October 22-25, 2011. The interviews for the GAEMS Executive Director position are in progress. The new office of the GAEMS Educators division is now open at Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. Nita Ham, chairman of the Educators Division is located in this office. ASPAR grants are available for a number of training programs including Burn courses and TNCC courses. A meeting on these grants was attended by Randy Pierson and Kelly Buddenhagen representing Region 1. They were able to obtain 3 courses from the 14 courses available. A calendar will be available for all ASPER courses soon. The grant will pay for all those attending. Travel and lodging expenses are available for travel of more than 50 miles.

David Foster gave the Region 1 Office report. Mr. Foster reported that he is the sole remaining employee in the office due to budget cuts. Monique Wheeler was laid off and has obtained another job in the district health office. [Mr. Foster was promoted to the position of EMS Program Director and his former position will not be filled] He also reported that the telephone number formerly used by David Loftin before his retirement (706-295-6154) has been reassigned to Monique Wheeler in her new position. Her old telephone number (706-295-6175) has been rolled to David Foster's telephone number (706-295-6176). David reports that due to his work load, he will be out of the office most of the time and may not be immediately accessible on the telephone at the office. You may call his cellphone number if there is an urgent issue and he will return your call as soon as he can. He asks for patience in processing paperwork and therefore you should submit license packets at least 30 days before expiration. Mr. Foster reports that there were 144 continuing education courses approved in Region 1 this year for 3112 hours and 1815 contacts. That is 40% ahead of last year. The Georgia Department of Developmental Disabilities will be sponsoring a program on Georgia Crisis Management. This course is designed to be a train-the-trainer program so that those attending can return and present the program for their services. There will be two courses in Region 1 as follows:

Dalton, GA at Winkler Building near Hamilton Medical Center on September 19 from 10 to 1
Cedartown, GA at the EMA building on GA Highway 278 on October 4 from 10 to 1

David encourages hospitals to also send employees to this program. Personnel from behavioral units of Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton and Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee will be attending the Dalton program. David encourages all services to send 2-3 people to this course. Mr. Foster thanked the region for their support in his transfer to the program director position.

The chair asked if there were any old business.

Paul Arnold gave a report from the Awards Committee. He reported that the contact person for the contracted site of the 2012 awards banquet has resigned and will be soon replaced. He does not foresee any problems because of this since the facility has been secured with a signed contract. Vendors for sponsorship are being sought. More details will be presented at the October council meeting.

Kelly Buddenhagen gave a report on the Region 1 Education Committee. The committee met in early July with a goal to increased availability of continuing education courses in Region 1. The meeting had good attendance with 17 people representing the services in Region 1. The committee decided that in order to achieve the goal the region must survey instructors, available textbooks and other supplies necessary to teach the various continuing education programs. The committee decided that it should develop an accessible database displaying the available resources in Region 1 for these courses. It was later decided to expand this database to include the rest of the state. Nita Ham of the Georgia EMS Association was contacted and agreed to post the database on the GAEMS website. The database will include information on limitations for instructors such as travel distance. Ms. Buddenhagen also reported on the new EMS Safety course sponsored by ASPAR grants. This course is designed to be a provider/instructor program. Mr. Foster stated that he will send survey sheets to all services to obtain information for this database to council members, services and educators. Ms. Buddenhagen stated that no date has been set for the next meeting of the Education committee. Mr. Foster stated that Region 1 has Affiliate Faculty in all of the common continuing education courses and his goal is to make all services self sufficient. The chair thanked the committee for their work.

Randy Pierson gave a report on the progress of converting the council to a 501C3 non-profit corporation. David Loftin has agreed to assist and has found a mechanism using Legal Zoom which costs \$500. He suggests that if we use that mechanism we could fund it by billing each council member \$25. (Randy Pierson has agreed to also explore other options).

The chair asked if there were any new business.

Scott Radeker gave a report on the progress at Hutcheson Medical Center in Fort Oglethorpe. Erlanger Medical Center is working to rebuild Hutcheson Medical Center and will be approaching the council at the next meeting to apply for designation as a level 4 trauma center. It is expected that the designation will progress to level 3 in the future. It is anticipated that this designation will increase the volume of trauma patients transported to Hutcheson Medical Center from Dade, Walker and Catoosa counties.

The chair announced that the next meeting of the council will be at Trinity Baptist Church in Calhoun on October 20 at 11:00 a.m. The church is located on Georgia Highway 53 south of Calhoun, Georgia. Highway 53 can be accessed off Interstate 75 at exit 312.

A motion to adjourn was received from Rick Cobb, seconded by Paul Arnold and passed.

The meeting was adjourned.