**THE PULSE**

**Hurricane Sandy Special Edition**

**Chairperson’s Message**

We’re now 5 months post Hurricane Sandy and can step back and do a short review on how the VFD/VAC departments on the south shores of Brooklyn and Queens were affected and what recovery help District, NYSVA&RA and other organizations were able to provide. These efforts were but one part of the massive relief and ongoing recovery effort that has involved numerous people and organizations.

District 4’s efforts could not have been possible without individuals and other organizations pitching in to collect and deliver the massive amount of equipment and supplies that came to the collection/distribution site on Woodhaven Boulevard. NYSVA&RA President Mike Mastrianni’s e-mails and updates were instrumental in letting everyone know the extent of the help needed. NYS DOH Bureau of EMS passed on information through their e-mail listservs. Volunteer fire and ambulance services around the state coordinated local and countywide collections, packed trucks and delivered items to the District 4 receiving facility. Canandaigua ES, Berlin FD, Bethel VAC, Sullivan County, Orange County, Windsor Fire, Leon Fire, Cattaraugus County, Tompkins County, Beekendaal Fire, New Paltz Rescue, Brocton FD, Chautauqua County, Mohawk Ambulance, Goshen VAC, Larchmont VAC, Eastchester VAC, Mamaroneck VAC participated in major efforts – just to name a few.

Local elected officials involved included Assemblyman Michael Miller’s and his staff, especially Dorie Opitz, Senator Joseph Addabo and staff, and Assemblyman Philip Goldfeder and staff who were directly affected and operating out of Assemblyman Miller’s office. Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley and her staff were instrumental in opening an additional receiving center at the Atlas Mall in Glendale. I want to thank an ad-hoc group of individuals that came together to do grunt work at one or both sites: Martin Grillo (Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC), Jon Miuta (LKMR/CERT), Michael Grabowski (Glendale VAC), Sal Starace (Glendale VAC), Stephan Albrecht (Middle Village VAC), James Downey (Jamaica Estates VAC), John Wilson and friends from Houston (DE) Fire/Rescue and Delaware State Fire Police, Jessica Hock (Glendale VAC) and Fred Grey; VP, NYC Volunteer Fireman’s Association. In December, efforts switched to a toy drive for the holidays. A special thanks to Samantha Gunning for helping with the toy drive and to those who donated over 1,200 toys. If I missed anyone, I apologize.

We continue to keep in regular contact with affected departments by phone and site visits, monitoring their needs and trying to help in their rebuilding.

Also included in this special edition is information on healthcare facility evacuations, the FEMA ambulances that came to help, communications, lessons learned, etc. from a volunteer EMS perspective.

Be safe and always be prepared

Ryan
VICE CHAIRPERSON’S MESSAGE

As we are still dealing with the effects of Super Storm Sandy, we are trying to move forward. Many squads and members including myself were affected. As reported by the Chair the District Officers went around to the many squads to assist in any way we could. We delivered supplies, medical equipment and acted as a resource in getting information out since the normal lines of communications were out.

Many thanks to those who donated supplies, especially to those squads from upstate.

On a personal note I would like to thank those who came out and helped me with the clean out at my house … I still have a long way to go.

The Mutual Aid plan was finally passed. Please submit your signed copy to the District so your squad will be in compliance with Article 30.

The Annual Districts 4 & 18 NYC Region Memorial and Volunteer EMS Recognition Dinner Dance is quickly approaching. Please purchase your tables soon. For information go to www.emsdinner.com

Lastly, narrow banding is still a pending issue. Anyone who is in need of help with this, please contact me.

I hope this year is very productive not only for the District, but for the squads.

Be Safe

Martin L. Grillo

NYC VFD/VAC VEHICLE LOSSES AND REPLACEMENTS

Breezy Point VFD
Damaged or lost vehicles
- 2010 International/KME 4x4 pumper
- 1994 International/KME 4x4 pumper 750 gpm/300 gal.
- Chief’s car

Donated.
- None

Broad Channel VFD & VAC
Damaged or lost vehicles
- Ambulance Ford Type III
- Ambulance Ford Type III
- Engine 209 1989 Hahn pumper – water damage and subsequent fire
- Engine 207 1978 American LaFrance pumper
- Chief Ford Crown Victoria
- Chief SUV

Donated
- Glendale VAC – Ford Type III ambulance
- Sag Harbor VAC – 2002 Ford Type III ambulance 11/10/12
- Madison EMS (CT) – 1998 Ford/Wheeled Coach Type III ambulance 11/28/12
- Bethel Park VFD (PA) – 1988 Pierce Arrow pumper
- Chanhassen VFD (MN) – 1981 Ford 4 door commercial chassis pumper 11/7/12
- Collingdale Fire Company #2 (PA) – 1987 Hahn pumper
- Sleepy Hollow VFD (North Tarrytown Columbia Hose Co #3) – 1991 Simon Duplex/E-1 1750 gpm/500 gal pumper. Although re-lettered for Broad Channel, the vehicle retains is Headless Horseman logos.
Gerrittsen Beach VFD & VAC
Damaged or lost vehicles
- Ambulance 3 2003 E350/Medtec
- Engine 1 2001 HME/Darley 4x4 1,000 gpm short wheel base pumper
Donated
- None

Rockaway Point VFD & VAC
Damaged or lost vehicles
- Ambulance Rescue #1 4x4 2008 Ford/Wheeled Coach Citimedic
- Ambulance Rescue #2 4x4 2010 Ford/Wheeled Coach Citimedic
- Water rescue truck
- 2 Chief's SUVs
Donated
- Millville VFC (DE) - Pierce pumper
- NEASV provided a vehicle
Loaned
- Sparta Center VFD - Mack pumper
- Edgewater Park VFD - 4x4 mini pumper

Roxbury Emergency Services (VFD & VAC)
Damaged or lost vehicles
- Ambulance 1997 Ford E-350/PL Custom Type III
- 1991 International 4x4/Amthors 750 gpm/208 gallon short wheel base pumper
Donated
- Western Area Volunteer Ambulance (WAVES) – 1998 Ford/Braun Type III extended cab slant side ambulance

West Hamilton Beach VFD & VAC
- 1999 Ford E350/Horton Type III ambulance – survived Hurricane Sandy
Damaged or lost vehicles
- Ambulance 1995 Ford E350/Emergency Vehicles Type III
- Ambulance 2006 Ford E350/Wheeled Coach Type III
- 1984 American LaFrance pumper
- 1978 Mack CF-600 pumper
- 1977 Dodge/Pierce 4x4 mini pumper brush truck
- 1999 Ford Expedition Chief's car
Donated
- Georgetown VFD (CT) – 1997 Ford E350/Wheeled Coach Type III ambulance
- Berlin VFD (MD) - 1984 American LaFrance pumper 11/16/12
- Gulf Park Estates VFD (MS) – 1998 E-1 Hurricane pumper
- Hooversville VFD (PA) - 1981 Mack CF-600 pumper 11/6/12
- Larimer VFD – 1989 GMC 4X4 pumper
- Royerstown (PA) – 1980 Ford/Saulsbury rescue truck
Loaned
- NS-LIJ Center for EMS – Ford E450 4x4 ambulance on loan since 12/3/12 (previously at RP VFD-VAC)

Unassigned, pending or offered vehicle donations
- Maimonides Hospital EMS SCT-3 2005 Ford E350/Wheeled Coach Custom Series
- Maimonides Hospital EMS #3808 2005 Ford E350/Wheeled Coach Custom Series
- Scho-Wright VAC – 2006 Chevy 4500 medium duty Type III ambulance (subsequently donated to Bellmore-Merrick VAC in Nassau County
- Volunteer Heart Ambulance – Freightliner Type I ambulance
- Wyckoff Heights Hospital EMS – Type III ambulance (subsequently donated to Queens Village-Hollis-Bellerose VAC which lost an ambulance due to a fire on 11/18/12)

NS-LIJ Center for EMS, through the efforts of Paul Power, Assistant Director of Operations, loaned a 4x4 ambulance that was equipped with a Wi-Fi hotspot. This feature came in handy as many areas in south Queens were without internet access. After seeing service at Broad Channel, the ambulance was also utilized at Rockaway Point and is now at West Hamilton Beach.
Sag Harbor ambulance at Broad Channel

Maimonides ambulances at Breeze Point Cooperative

Collingdale pumper at Broad Channel

Broad Channel damaged vehicles

WAVES ambulance for Roxbury

Rockaway Point damaged vehicles

Bethel Park pumper at Broad Channel

Royerstown rescue & Berlin pumper at WHB
DISTRICT 4 ACTIVITIES IN RELIEF EFFORT

Immediately after the hurricane passed the district surveyed squads for damage assessments and critical needs. Phones and power was out in most shore areas. District 4 Vice Chair Martin Grillo made calls to NYC OEM and Verizon was able to reroute calls to Broad Channel VFD/VAC and West Hamilton Beach VFD/VAC to members’ cell phones. Portable light towers with generators were also secured through NYC OEM for the firehouses that lost power. The towers were on their way within an hour of Grillo’s request.

E-mail blasts were sent out by NYSVA&RA and NYS DOH and we received donations from multiple volunteer ambulance services and volunteer fire departments throughout the New York State, Pennsylvania and far as Indiana and Texas. NYS Assemblyman Mike Miller of Glendale arranged for vacant space next to his district office on Woodhaven Boulevard to be made available as a point to receive, store and distribute the supplies and equipment literally pouring in. Initial relief and recovery efforts were concentrated on helping Broad Channel VFD/VAC, Roxbury Emergency Services VFD/VAC, Rockaway Point VFD/VAC and West Hamilton Beach VFD/VAC in South Queens and Gerrittsen Beach VFD/VAC in south Brooklyn.

The district through the efforts of Glendale VAC delivered boxes of medical gear including gloves, BLS equipment, new tech bags, 10 plus full sets of turnout gear, helmets and boots to the heavily damaged volunteer departments. As available, AEDs, a Porta-Brace, Jaws of Life, fire hose and Scott air packs were provided.

Point Breeze VFD received donated fire equipment and Richmond Engine Company #1 on Staten Island received 10 sets of turnout gear.

In addition to vehicles, medical equipment and supplies, all forms of cleanup supplies as well as non-perishable food, toiletries and clothing came to the Woodhaven Boulevard location. These were broken down and delivered to the volunteer fire department facilities that, although damaged and operating on generator power, had become de-facto local relief centers in their communities. Gerrittsen Beach and Roxbury were set up like general stores where residents came for food and supplies needed to continue their lives.

Notable in terms of the size of the donation, Finger Lakes Region providers combined their efforts to help. On Monday evening 11/12/12 Ken Beers and 3 others from Canandaigua came arrived with a 12 foot cargo trailer and 24 foot box truck full of EMS equipment and supplies, AEDs, stretchers, fire bunker gear, boots, EMS jackets, food, water, pet supplies, child car seats and bags of general clothing to the District 4 collection site on Woodhaven Boulevard. He also had about $300 in cash and cookies from his wife.

The district worked with the Glendale Civilian Observation Patrol (GCOP), Glendale VAC and Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC on distribution efforts. There were several thousand pounds of supplies, 500 cases of water and over 1,000 bags of clothing. Well over 100 trips were made to the volunteer departments in the Rockaways and Brooklyn and churches in Far Rockaway.

MONETARY DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISERS

Huntington Community First Aid Squad, District 7, donated $1,000 to District 4 relief efforts.

Suffolk Regional EMS Council Donated $1,000 to District 4 relief efforts.

Uno Chicago Grill locations in Queens (Astoria, Bayside and Forest Hills) participated in a 12/12/12 fundraiser with 20% of all checks donated to NYC volunteer fire and EMS agencies devastated by the storm. In addition, t-shirt sale proceeds were also donated. Original contacts for the event were made with Glen Oaks VAC, which coordinated with District 4 and NYSVA&RA.

Affected VFD/VACs in south Queens and south Brooklyn were sent applications to apply for a share of the donated funds.

LOCAL NYSVA&RA MEMBER AGENCIES THAT PROVIDED ASSISTANCE

Glendale Volunteer Ambulance Corps members cut and removed over 50+ downed trees blocking roadways in their area. They then started collection efforts and began delivering supplies from the Atlas Mall and the District 4 collection sites to the Rockaways. They also assisted a Kentucky disaster relief team in setting up cooking facilities for the Red Cross at the Aqueduct Racino, provided them clothing and transported the team to and from temporary housing in Glendale.
Glen Oaks Volunteer Ambulance Corps in Floral Park accepted:
- non-perishable food items and water
- canned pet food
- men's, women's, and children's clothing
- toiletry items
- baby care items (i.e. wipes, diapers)
- toys
- bedding items and other linens (i.e. towels)

Donations were brought to service organizations directly helping victims.

Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC loaned each of the 5 VFD/VAC shore agencies 6 each Saber radios, chargers and batteries and provided other advice and assistance in restoring communications.

New York Emergency and First Response, a BLSFR group, accepted donations of bleach, face masks, work gloves, rain boots, mops, shovels, cleaning supplies of all kinds, flashlights, buckets carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms. Donations were brought to service organizations directly helping victims.

**ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMERCIAL COMPANIES THAT PROVIDED OR OFFERED ASSISTANCE**

Blauer
Carhart
Certified Ambulance Group
Coffee.org

EverDixie EMS Supply Company, 10101 Foster Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11236, (917) 578-7457 offered to help with donating or loaning agencies equipment such as cots, chairs or bags. Being local Ferno dealers, they indicated a willingness to lend an ambulance cot or extra stair chair for a couple of weeks until things settled down.

Henry Schein Medical Supply’s local representative Sal Eppolito e-mailed offering “bare bones discounts” to any squad in need of purchasing new equipment.

Hess Oil Corporation worked with NYS DOH and Kim Lippes, Rockland County EMS Coordinator in setting up 10 sites around the city, 2 in each Borough, to provide priority access to ambulances, marked supervisor vehicles and ambulettes to purchase fuel.

Hancock Hope Foundation offered help and long-term assistance to hurricane affected squads.

Home Depot
JEMS Magazine/PennWell Publishing assisted Sandy affected families in Hamilton Beach and Stony Point.

LI Proliner, Inc., 16 Peconic Avenue, Medford, NY 11763, (631) 447-9558 provided information on their inventory of emergency vehicles and out-of-state resources.

MedLine

New York State Bar Association offered free legal advice on storm-related questions about insurance, real estate issues (landlord-tenant and other property disputes) and general legal matters, such as replacing missing wills and other documents, etc.

Philips Healthcare local representative Ed Mackin, ed.mackin@philips.com (845) 790-6409

PortaBrace

Specialty Vehicles, 60 Engineers Lane, East Farmingdale, NY 11735, (516) 349-7700, www.specialtyambulance.com
Bob O'Neill offered their experience in working with insurance companies to provide accurate damage and repair estimates to facilitate emergency equipment replacements. They also had a large supply of new and used vehicles available.

Zoll

**FDNY – HOSPITAL – COMMERCIAL AND OTHER VOLUNTEER AGENCY LOSSES**

Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC, an active BLS First Responder and event coverage group, suffered major equipment losses when chief officer Martin Grillo's home in Broad Channel was flooded with over 4 feet of seawater. Lost were computers, laptops, AED’s, mobile and portable radios, repeaters, video equipment, test equipment, medical bags and supplies.

FDNY EMS severely damaged vehicle losses awaiting salvage according to Fire Apparatus Journal included seven Ford/Horton ambulances (three 2004, a 2005, a 2006, a 2008 and a 2009). There were also battalion vehicles, passenger cars, SUVs, gators, service vehicles, etc. A number of EMS Battalion Stations were flooded including Station 4 on Pier 36, Station 7 Midtown West Station on West 23 Street, Station 10 Yorkville at 1st Avenue and East 99 Street, Station 43 Gravesend at Coney Island Hospital and Station 47 Rockaway at Beach 49 Street.

Hatzalah VAC, hospital and commercial agency losses have not been published.
COMMUNICATIONS WITH VOLUNTEER EMS AGENCIES IN NYC

Operational communications with the volunteer EMS sector in NYC from governmental agencies during the emergency period were limited.

- NYS DOH passed on four e-mails. The first on 10/26/12 was about possible activation of the NY Statewide EMS Mobilization Plan. The second on 10/29/12 covered activation of FEMA’s National Ambulance Contract, the third on 10/30/12 started off “We seem to have dodged a bullet (for the most part)” and then talked about not deploying NYS resources, downstate NY, NYC and Long Island taking the brunt of the storm, healthcare facilities being evacuated and the help provided by the FEMA NAC ambulances. The fourth on 11/2/12 was about priority fueling locations for emergency vehicles to “cut the line”.

- NYC REMSCO’s DOITT radio network was monitored by District 4 officers and apparently sat unused even as squads called for guidance. A District 4 officer’s phone call to the REMSCO desk at NYC OEM asking for specific help for a squad received a response that the representative was too busy. A call to the OEM Watch Commander got the needed help. REMSCO did send post hurricane e-mails: 11/3/12 about priority fueling locations, 11/6/12 for completing a damage assessment survey and 12/14/12, asking about how volunteer sector squads fared. REMSCO officials did a field visit to the Rockaways in late November. The only information about transporting patients to affected hospitals was a short NYC REMAC Advisory on 12/7/12 saying “Be advised, although Bellevue Hospital has announced the opening of its Emergency Department, the New York State Department of Health has not yet approved Bellevue Hospital to accept patients via ambulance. REMAC will issue an announcement once Bellevue Hospital is again approved by NYSDOH to accept ambulance patients”.

- FDNY EMS’s Mutual Aid Radio System (MARS) was monitored by District 4 officers. Squads asking for resource assistance received no answer on the radio. The chief of FDNY EMS said he would look into what happened. FDNY EMS has issued no information on any subject to the volunteer sector since June 2010.

- The Lead Public Information Officer in charge of the FDNY’s Incident Management team was e-mailed at fdnymiptio.sandy@gmail.com and asked to put the PULSE on the list for updates on recovery activities. No reply was received.

FEMA/AMERICAN MEDICAL RESPONSE (AMR) NATIONAL CONTRACT AMBULANCES

The National Ambulance Contract (NAC) through FEMA was activated with the Governor’s emergency declaration and an e-mail from the NYS DOH Bureau of EMS initially advised 139 ambulances were deployed from other states to New York State. They were staged in central New Jersey, New York City, Long Island and the Hudson Valley. Ambulances were also sent to Stewart Air Force Base ready to deploy to upstate areas should there be a need. DOH reached out to County EMS Coordinators to assess the availability of ambulances to deploy to other regions of New York State. Since the predicted storm was so large and the exact impact unknown, no New York State resources were asked to re-locate so that they would be available first for their own areas.

To facilitate NYC planning and response, a Healthcare Facility Evacuation Coordination Center – a multi agency sub group located within NYC OEM in Brooklyn – was established, composed of officials from NYS DOH, NYC DH&MH, NYC OEM, NYS OEM and other government agencies and NYC REMSCO. The Greater NY Hospital Association (GNYHA) and North Shore-LIJ Health System emergency management were heavily involved in decisions and responses.

As situations developed, massive additional ambulance resources totaling about 350 vehicles and crews were brought into the NYC metro area under the NAC. Many were staged at Floyd Bennett Field in south Brooklyn. 90 ambulances were dispatched to Nassau and Suffolk counties. 150 ambulances were sent to the Rockaways to knock on doors and do “wellness checks”. A Crain’s report on 12/14/12, however, recounted a nurse from Staten Island University Hospital saying they “had to beg on a daily basis” for two FEMA dispatched ambulances on standby to take volunteers out to check for people needing help and finding “a lot of people with chronic illnesses who couldn’t get prescriptions and people who needed battery powered nebulizers to help them breathe.” As of 11/27 there were still about 5 out of state ambulances in NYC slated to depart on 11/30/12.

When the FEMA/AMR national contract ambulances from out of state were withdrawn ambulance service in the Breezy Point Cooperative area (Point Breezy, Rockaway Point and Roxbury) on the western end of the peninsula as of about 12/1/12 was provided by SeniorCare EMS under a NYC-OEM Emergency Procurement. Units were stationed at Rockaway Point VFD-VAC and Roxbury VFD-VAC. The NYC Comptroller issued a notice on 11/6/12 indicating emergency contracts had been approved for a number of city agencies. NYC OEM was listed for “$4,846,500 for a host of goods – oxygen, ambulances, ambulettes, buses, MREs, livery cabs, sandbags”, etc.
HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CARE FACILITY EVACUATIONS

Preparations for and response to Hurricane Sandy hitting the downstate metropolitan area on Sunday 10/28/12 through Tuesday 10/30/12 were a bit different from Hurricane Irene in 2011. Although both storms involved predictions of storm surges, in 2011 there were major pre-storm evacuations vs. the “shelter-in-place” decision in 2012 for most health care facilities.

Listed below are some of the bigger situations that developed pre and post hurricane. Numbers are approximate, as different sources may have provided varying numbers.

Bellevue Hospital Center – Evacuated post-hurricane. Basement flooded, power went out, water and plumbing were shut down. Emergency generators were not enough to keep hospital running. Fuel had to be carried up 13 flights of stairs. 550 patients were relocated. 10 patients went to NSUH-Manhasset and 9 psychiatric patients went to Zucker-Hillside Hospital. 30 patients including 10 psychiatric patients went to Mount Sinai Hospital. By 12/24/12 the ED was reopened to ambulances but patients were not yet being admitted. On 2/7/13 the NYS DOH advised that all in-patient medical, surgical, pediatric, behavioral and ancillary services have been fully restored.

Coney Island Hospital – Pre-hurricane transferred about 40 mostly non-critical ventilator patients to Kings County Hospital. About 180 patients were evacuated post-hurricane due to generator failure. On 2/20/13 the NYS DOH authorized the hospital to start accepting low-acuity patients via ambulance transport conditioned upon maintaining two non-FDNY ambulances on standby outside the ED. Pediatric patients who require admission will be stabilized and transferred to other hospitals.

NY Downtown Hospital – evacuated pre-hurricane. 125 patients were transferred with most going to NY Presbyterian Healthcare System hospitals. Montifiore received 20 patients including 5 mothers with newborns and 10 adults needing medical and surgical care. Steam service was restored on 11/4/12 enabling the hospital to begin accepting patients into the Emergency Room. On 11/5/12 the hospital was providing emergency, medical, obstetrical and surgical services to the residents of Lower Manhattan. On 11/6/12 full services were restored.

NYU Langone Medical Center – About 100 patients were discharged early. Evacuated about 300 patients post-hurricane after basement and elevators flooded with water and generators began to fail. 70 Patients went to Mount Sinai Hospital and others went to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, St. Luke's Hospital, New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center and Long Island Jewish Hospital. Prior to the hurricane a reporter noted a double line of ambulances stretching around the block. An EMT commented that they had been waiting hours for what they had been told was a pre storm evacuation. The hospital’s Public Affairs Director said she didn’t know why the ambulances were there and assured the reporter the hospital was not evacuating. As of 1/14/13, all obstetrics and gynecology physicians returned and resumed labor and delivery, neonatal ICU and pediatric ICU services. Inpatient psychiatry, cardiac rehabilitation, dialysis services and the emergency department remain closed but an Urgent Care Center is in operation until major renovations to the ED are completed.

VA NY Harbor Healthcare-Manhattan Campus – evacuated pre-hurricane. 94 patients went to NS-LIJ system hospitals with most going to Lenox Hill Hospital. 64 patients went to Mount Sinai Hospital. Montifiore took 27 patients including 6 from the NICU. News reports indicate hurricane caused significant damage. Flooding in the basement and ground floor triggered the failure of electrical switches, mechanical systems, medical gas equipment, steam and fire-suppression system. Floodwaters also destroyed clinical equipment, including an MRI, shutting down the ED. Various clinics are reopening in stages but inpatient services are not expected to resume until early July.

Nursing homes:
- Brooklyn - 12 adult care and nursing homes in Flood Zone A were evacuated pre hurricane.
- Another 4 of 53 facilities evacuated post-hurricane

One knowledgeable source listed 7,294 hospital and nursing home patients evacuated.

Greater NY Hospital Association reported that no patients died during the evacuation. However, there are anecdotal reports that some patients deteriorated because of the disruption and died shortly thereafter. There was 1 known injury.

NYC volunteer EMS agencies seen in TV or other reports of Manhattan hospital evacuations included Central Park Medical Unit, Corona VAC, Forest Hills VAC, Glen Oaks VAC and Park Slope VAC. Central Park also participated in helping evacuate a nursing home in the Rockaways.

A good review of decisions and responses to Hurricane Sandy is at http://www.propublica.org/article/in-hurricanes-wake-decisions-not-to-evacuate-hospitals-raise-questions

LINE OF DUTY DEATH

Regrettably, on Sunday 12/2/12 Steve Stevenson, EMT-P, a member of a FEMA NAC ambulance crew from AMR Western Michigan died at North Shore University Hospital, Nassau County after surgery for an aortic aneurysm. According to an obituary in a local newspaper, Steve was born Sept. 8, 1960, in Plainwell, MI. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from Davenport University in 1985. Once he received his paramedic certification, he worked for Mall City Ambulance
in Kalamazoo and Community EMS in Farmington before returning to Plainwell with Plainwell Ambulance Corp. in 1986. Later that year he began working for AMR in Plainwell. He was currently employed as operations supervisor with AMR, transferring to Grand Rapids with AMR when the company moved in 2003. Steve began a career as a firefighter with the Otsego Fire Department in 1988 serving as Captain since 2000. He was also an instructor for the Allegan County Fire Academy. He leaves behind a wife and daughter.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM EXPERIENCE

Some issues that have come up as needing attention are:

- Additional NYC REMSCO representatives need to be trained to participate at NYC OEM’s Emergency Operations Center.
- EMS agency involvement is needed in hospital plans for patient evacuations.
- Single Emergency Coordinator point of contact at hospitals and nursing homes for interface with EMS.
- Effectiveness of knowledgeable commercial ambulance supervisors responding to evacuation sites to direct utilization of ambulance resources. This will require a re-evaluation of providing NYC REMSCO vehicle security stickers to response vehicles operated by non-FDNY EMS supervisors. In the past FDNY EMS has maintained and NYC REMSCO has acquiesced in the position that non-FDNY supervisors have no function at major incidents. NYC REMSCO vehicle security stickers have been supplied to non-ambulances only for crew relief and resupply activities.
- Need for FDNY EMS chiefs to respond to and oversee hospital and nursing home evacuation sites.
- Better reference information needs to be provided to FEMA NAC ambulance crews coming into the region such as hospital/nursing home address lists, maps and directions taking into account potential road closures and detours.
- Sartin Services, Inc., a maker of medical evacuation busses, reported on its web site: “In New York, there was confusion at many homes about where patients should be sent. Some sat for hours aboard unmoving ambulances as the drivers waited for orders, only to be taken to the wrong place. Some facilities accepting evacuees wound up overloaded with more patients than they were prepared to handle. With the phones knocked out, relatives struggled to learn where loved ones had been taken. Medical records that were supposed to accompany displaced residents never arrived.”
- Guidance is needed on when to discontinue responses due to hazards to ambulances and crews. Sustained wind speed can make driving difficult and if high enough can topple a vehicle. Personnel cannot walk let alone carry equipment or move patients in high winds and rain. The FEMA approved policy with the National Ambulance Contractor is to take the ambulances off the road and secure them when wind speeds are greater than 40 MPH sustained. Other documents mention 50 and 55 MPH sustained winds. Operational water levels for personnel and vehicles also need to be considered. NYS DOH BEMS is said to be working on a policy statement.
- In 2011 commercial ambulance services in NYC participated in Hurricane Irene hospital and nursing home evacuations but were denied reimbursement because they lacked a contract with the city – the NYC REMSCO Regional Mobilization Agreement did not suffice. The subsequent position of private ambulances is they want a contract with FEMA or NYC OEM before they will commit with future disaster activations. The last heard on the issue was that it was sent to the Executive level of the NYS DOH Commissioner’s Office.
- While communications were occurring behind the scenes between government agencies, front line volunteer emergency service agencies felt left out of the loop. A better effort is needed to keep all stakeholder informed before, during and after major situations.

NYC REMSCO has established a committee to review preparations and response to Hurricane Sandy. Members include Martin Grillo – volunteer, Christine Mazzolo - FDNY EMS, Maryanne Sawyer - private and Dominick Battennilli – hospital.

We understand that the Greater NY Hospital Association will or has been facilitating or hosting a meeting to review aspects of the Hurricane Sandy response and District 4 representatives specifically asked at the 11/27/12 NYC REMSCO Ambulance Committee meeting to be included in any upcoming citywide reviews. There was a meeting at NYC REMSCO on 2/26/13 for transportation providers but no representative from the volunteer sector was invited.

NYC OEM is planning to create a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on Hurricane Sandy. The project will include a review of weather information from the National Weather Service, NYC executive decision making process, Costal Storm Plan and the applicability to other plans, response/recovery efforts, and a review of the operational components of OEM’s Emergency Operations Center including its ability to integrate other agencies and organizations. An After Action Report will also be produced.

Note: No after action report, review or recap of the 2011 Hurricane Irene response has yet been circulated to the city’s volunteer emergency service agencies.
RELATIONSHIP

NCEMSC + NYVAMA = $aving$

The North Central EMS Cooperative (NCEMSC) is affiliated with the New York State Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association (NYSVARA) ... therefore, if your service is part of the NTSVARA, you are part of us! NTSVARA members automatically become members of the NCEMSC. NYSVARA elects to pay your services annual NCEMSC membership dues ($75 value)! Your involvement is important. We share revenue! A percentage of your purchases are returned to the NYSVARA, which helps NYSVARA recoup the annual NCEMSC membership dues and support other projects.

The NCEMSC is a group of more than 3,200 EMS organizations that have joined together to take advantage of volume pricing discounts on a wide array of EMS products and services. As a NYSVARA member, you will have the opportunity to share in these discounts.

Are you tired of paying catalog prices? If so, the NCEMSC can help you!

The NCEMSC assists members in providing cost-effective, quality service by negotiating discounted contracts for the following equipment and supplies:

- Ambulances
- Billing & Collection Services
- Dashboard/Analysis/Alerting Software
- Defibrillators/AEDs & ALS Monitors
- Electronic Patient Care Reporting
- EMS Legal Services & Seminars
- Fleet Fuel Cards
- Medical Supplies & Equipment
- OnBoard Mobile Gateway
- Panasonic Toughbooks
- Patient Safety Straps
- Patient & Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Promotional Clothing & Items

NYSVARA Members, to access the member's only site, you must have a user name and password. If you have not received yours via e-mail, please contact us at 1-888-603-4426 or office@ncemsc.org. Thank you!

This flyer was created in April of 2011. Please refer to our website for up-to-date information on all of our products, services and vendors.

NYS VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE AND RESCUE ASSOCIATION
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East Schodack, NY 12063

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