NYS DOH Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services
Briefing for EMS Agency Leadership and Providers
Thursday 9/23/21, 4:00 PM to 4:40 PM

Unofficial Notes

This is not a verbatim transcript of the call. Outline notes of what was said were typed during the call, reviewed and wording added to as needed afterward.

There was no prepared agenda distributed before the call. Questions could be submitted before or during the call. 2 questions were submitted in advance and the rest were submitted through the Q&A Box during the call.

Links to other forms or documents are highlighted

There were about 110 people listening on the today’s call.

Panelists:
Ryan Greenberg, Director, Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services  
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Peter Brodie, Deputy Chief, Data and Informatics (Host)  
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Jean Taylor, Deputy Chief, Education Branch  
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Edward Mager, Deputy Chief, Western Region, Buffalo  
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Richard Robinson, Deputy Chief, Metropolitan Area Regional Office, New Rochelle  
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Amy Eisenhauer, Program Administrator, EMS for Children (EMSC) Program  
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Valerie Ozga, Vital Signs Academy and Executive Secretary to SEMSCO and SEMAC  
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Edward Mager

- Continuing to monitor significant increases in demand, increases in hospital "drop times". Have had the Regional EMS Program Agencies send out the link to the survey builder that agencies can use to report extensive delays & unusual delays.
- Data & Informatics Branch continues to monitor “drop times” at the hospitals across the state but we are seeing the region impacted by significant demand for EMS resources but also the hospital turnaround times are growing. We are monitoring that, doing our best to keep our fingers on the pulse of this and work with agencies to implement solutions.
Other than that, routine investigations, complaints and coordination and follow-up with agencies continues.

Amy Eisenhauer

- EMS for Children Advisory Committee meeting is Tuesday 10/12/21 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. It will be virtual. The link to register and the password is on the webpage at https://www.health.ny.gov/events/meetings. A notice will be sent out in the next few days to Regional EMS Program Agencies to pass on to EMS agencies so agency members can register and join.
- Vital Signs Conference will have a Pediatric Pre-Conference. There will be a panel on Pediatric Education with some experts from the advisory council who are on the Pediatric Education Sub-Committee and will answer questions. Second half of the pre-conference will be Safe Transport of Pediatric Patients skills with 6 stations that participants can rotate through, lots of information, lots of techniques, tips from educators from across the state.

Richard Robinson

- Essentially, all is well in MARO area.
- Nothing to report.
- Keep an eye out for renewal e-mails. If you know your agency is expiring and have not gotten it yet give us a call or e-mail one of the District Chiefs or myself.

Jean Taylor

- Nothing to report today.

Peter Brodie

- Receiving concerns about some [ePCR] rules. Send them to us when you have them, not 2 weeks later. Received another one today when we had schematron ready to send out and no we have to figure out what to do with it. If having issue send e-mail to EMSdata@health.ny.gov. Tell us early, tell us often. Let us fix the issues for you or tell you where you may be doing something incorrectly. We are happy to help you out.
- Have a class coming up and will make that announcement in the next couple of days. For ImageTrend NYS Elite sites there will be an evening program for users and a day program for agency administrators and QA coordinators.
- Question: What is the new Protocols app? Answer: MURU is the new Protocols app.
- Question: I have some MURU issues. Is there a NYS DOH contact I can e-mail? Issue: West Danby Fire Department DOH #5464. Our zip is 14883 - Spencer, Tioga County, but we are Tompkins County, CNYEMS. My protocols are SREMS. Answer: Contact Amy.Eisenhauer@health.ny.gov.
- Question: Will the regions get any of the data that is coming in from the hospital delay Drupal form? Answer: Will talk to Ryan Greenberg & Steve Dziura about that and get back to you.

Michael Linehan (verbal report delivered by Peter Brodie)

- Emergency Preparedness continues to support the vaccination sites within the state.
- Survey seeking interest in NYS contract for ambulances at mass vaccination sites was sent out yesterday with responses due by 6:00 PM today. Link to survey is: https://apps.health.ny.gov/pubpal/builder/survey/sept-2021-ems-mobilization-contr. Even if your agency is not interested in entering into a contract we ask that you please answer the survey.
- Be aware and ensure your agency is ready for upcoming weather events.

Ryan Greenberg

- Question: Still waiting for an answer on what constitutes patient contact on an EMS call. I would think that at least 6 feet for an air borne virus like COVID-19 and a must for a mask when entering a residence or scene. Our chief wants a state mandate. Thanks! Answer: We will look into that and reply back to you. Essentially, patient contact would be at the point you start communicating and you determine they are a patient or possible patient would be patient contact. The person that turns to you and says they did not call EMS or something wouldn’t be or a third party caller, fill in the blanks. We will look into that.
• Question: Can you confirm that the COVID-19 mandate for healthcare workers applies to volunteer EMS crew members, even if they are drivers and not certified providers? Answer: The COVID-19 mandate goes into place 9/27/21 and is not directly related to all EMS providers but it does apply to many. Please keep in mind that if you are employed by those specific facilities or a required entity that are required to have it...then the EMS agency is required to comply e.g. a hospital owned or affiliated agency the vaccine mandate could be required for it. If not associated with a hospital meaning only taking patients to the hospital there are some different interpretations on that one and we are waiting for legal to come back on some additional ones. But there are some that absolutely are required, some of those being hospital based or hospital affiliated. Some questions have been asked about what constitutes affiliated and are with Division of Legal Affairs. Many hospitals internally around the state are starting to make the determination that affiliated equals a contract with a large commercial agency that could be deemed as an affiliated partner and that the vaccination requirement would fall into play. Additional guidance is coming out on this. Hopefully in the next couple weeks you will see something further. In addition, we have gotten questions if this will apply to all agencies as a federal requirement. We have seen from the feds that they are looking to do vaccine mandates for qualified entities that receive federal Medicare or Medicaid funding for the services that they provide. They have not given the specific regulations or statutes related to who would qualify under that and who would be required to meet the requirement. That is not set to the same effective date on 9/27/21. Please keep in mind that the mandate may not effect EMS in the immediate future - meaning the next couple of days - depending on the agency that you are but it could have an effect on you if your agency is billing and falls under the federal requirements.

• Question: When will the recipients of the annual awards be announced? Answer: Do to things going on in some of the Regions and requests the deadline for receipt of submissions was extended to 10/1/21. That is for the Innovations Awards as well. Will then meet with the SEMSCO review team. Expect announcements by mid-October.

• Question: Can EMT basics vaccinate children if all other requirements are met? Answer: Have to be eligible for vaccination - currently 12 and above. DAL 21-06 allows for the COVID-19 vaccinations.

• Getting more feedback about these calls and we are trying to stay in constant communications. Encourage providers and leaders to join us on these calls. We try to get as much information out there as possible and this is one of the fastest ways to share information and concerns and issues that are going on right now.

• **DAL (Policy Statement) 21-06 on EMS Vaccine Administration** which allows EMS providers to vaccinate has come out. The Governor made that announcement about a week ago. They do have to meet the training requirements. If an EMT went through the training once they do not have to do the training and skills assessment again.

• At this time EMTs cannot do COVID-19 testing. Expressions of interest by people looking to do testing have been passed on to DOH leadership. Hopefully we will hear if they will bring EMTs back for testing but at this time EMTs cannot do testing but they can do vaccinations.

• DOH Commissioner is resigning. He has been with the department for about 7 years and has been through a lot with the Department. He will be here during the transition period till next Commissioner comes into play.

• Steven Dziura & I have spent a tremendous amount of time on dealing with not just EMS issues but also the hospital world. In particular in multiple regions around the state hospitals are having capacity and flow issues and we are seeing a series of domino effects occurring from that. Some of that could be predicted because of the coming Monday mandate on vaccinations. Some of this has been going on for some time and small things are making for bigger problems right now. What we are seeing in some Regions are ER offload times becoming extremely extended, upwards of 45 minutes to 2 to 3 hours. In some Regions there are multiple hospitals on diversion, not just courtesy diversion but a DOH diversion meaning any patient really not in extremis or life threatening should not be taken to that hospital. We take all these things really seriously and are in regular communication with the hospitals and on the phones with hospital leadership on a daily basis in some of the regions in order to help facilitate that and in order to work together in a collaborative manner to ensure that there is a pathway for EMS to take their patients and have decent offload times and so forth. This is not just a hospital going on diversion but in many cases it has been worked out and in some places has even been orchestrated. There have been questions about if every hospital in a
region goes on diversion because of staffing or capacity or fill in the blanks and the reality is if the patient is not of a critical nature they should be going to next most appropriate facility. DOH is working on pathways to help communicate where hospitals are in their statuses, diversions, capacity issues. New software should be coming online over the next year to help get the most up-to-date information out to the EMS providers as quickly as possible.

- Use the on-line Drupal form Increased Wait Time Survey for EMS agencies to report long wait times at hospitals. Be genuine in what is being written and not be upset about what is going on. Avoid inappropriate comments. Forms allow DOH reach out to assist process at facilities. We are trying to be proactive vs reactive.

- **NYS DOH EMS Memorial Service** will be held Thursday 9/30/21 starting at 11:00 AM on the Empire State Plaza in Albany. There is limited attendance but the service will be broadcast. Will be adding 17 names, the most in a long time.

- 2 days ago had opportunity to join the **National EMS Memorial Bike Ride**. The **East Coast** segment went through New York. On each stop there was a ceremony reading the names going on the National EMS Memorial wall in Washington, DC. The NY sponsor is the Muddy Angels.

- Attended the Dutchess County EMS Council annual awards on Wednesday 9/22/21. It is important to recognize people. Mention was made of EMS agency growing stronger throughout the pandemic, a quick thinking dispatcher who handled call with language barrier and 1 patient turning into patients and another provider with 35 years as firefighter and EMS mentor. Has your agency or Region recognized people lately? Afterwards spent 2 and a half hours in the parking lot talking to people in interesting conversations about what is going on in the county.

- Share ideas with SEMSCO Systems Committee on issues and suggestions for better ways to manage EMS across the state.

- Question: Any update on the extended wait times or possible solutions? Answer: Director Greenberg addressed this during the call!

- Don’t assume BEMS&TS knows of a problem.

- Question: Can 17 year old EMTs vaccinate? Answer: Great question. Have not been told anything different. Will draft quick question to Division of Legal Affairs (DLA).

- Question: Who can do the skills sign-off for EMT vaccinators? Answer: Skills sign-off can be done by an MD, PA and NP or a paramedic who is CIC or CLI approved by their Medical Director or site. If signed off once that counts but it is also up to the individual site to sign-off again as well.

October briefing call dates will be finalized after State Trauma Advisory Committee (STAC), EMS for Children (EMSC), SEMAC & SEMSCO meetings are verified and there are no conflicts.

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Saturday October 2, 2021, 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

14 fast paced virtual CME presentations by recognized subject matter experts.

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