



County of San Diego

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE COMMITTEE (EMCC) Prehospital/Hospital Subcommittee Meeting Zoom Meeting

Chara Cote, R.N., Chair / Brian Covell, R.N., Vice Chair

Minutes

Thursday, February 10, 2022

IN ATTENDANCE

Members

Brainard, Criss – SD Fire Chiefs' Association (Alt)
Cote, RN, Chara – Base Hospital Nurse Coordinators
Covell, RN, Brian – District 2
Froelich, Dan – County Paramedic Agencies Committee
Murphy, Mary – County Paramedic Agencies Committee (Alt)
Scott, MD, Christopher – SD County Medical Society
Wells, RN, Christine – Base Hospital Nurse Coordinators (Alt)

County Staff

Abedin, Sanaa
Christison, Brian
del Toro, Nicole (recorder)
Erickson, Kirk
Gall, RN, Jessica
Martin, Adilver
Parr, Andy
Pitner, Jaime
Rogers, Cody
Schoenheit, Paige
Smith, PhD, Josh
Stepanski, Barbara

Agency Representatives

Beckert, Mark – Carlsbad FD
Behm, Jeff – Falck
Clyons, Jeffrey – SD Fire Rescue
Hinton, William – Mercy Air
Mercer, Kevin – AMR
Pearson, Danielle – Vista FD
Pearson, Nate – Carlsbad FD
Rauto-Shin, Roxanne – Vista FD
Ruiz, Sal – CSA 17
Schadegg, Rochelle – Mercy SD
Smith, Ray – CVFD
Stauffer, Kimberly – SDFR
Sullivan, Don – AMR
Zimmerman, Stephanie – Mercy Air

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- Chara Cote, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.
 - In lieu of introductions, attendance was captured online.
 - There were no announcements.
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II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Dan Froelich, seconded by Brian Covell, to approve the January 13, 2022 EMCC Prehospital/Hospital Subcommittee meeting minutes. Motion carried.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/PETITIONS

There were no public comments or petitions.

IV. STAFF REPORT – Jaime Pitner

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- EMSA waivers come to a close MARCH 31, 2022:
In March 2020 EMSA, under the authority granted by Executive Order, implemented an array of waivers and alterations to standard EMS rules. These changes included:
 - Substituting simulations or other adjustments for clinical and internship contacts for EMT and paramedic students
 - Waiving the biannual EMT skills competency verification
 - Authorizing EMTs, AEMTs, and paramedics to practice their respective scope in stationary settings
 - Approval for Local Optional Scope of Practices for COVID-19 testing and vaccination administrationCoEMS expects that all emergency standards that were extended from September will conclude on March 31, 2022, including for training courses that began prior to this date.
 - American College of Surgeons - Trauma Center Verification Surveys:
The triennial ACS verification visits for all 6 County Trauma Centers have been scheduled for this winter and spring. Two of our Trauma Centers have completed these visits and four more are coming up in March and May. Each of the Trauma Center's will report on their own findings - but we'd like to let you know that County EMS Staff is assisting on these reviews and completes our County Trauma Center compliance surveys concurrently with the ACS reviews.
 - County EMS Personnel Fees mark year two of three incremental increases:
In the next few months an updated schedule of fees will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval. Among the fees being adjusted, EMS personnel fees will increase by \$20 again this year marching toward the CoSD Board Policy B-29 requirement for cost recovery for providing EMS credentialing services. The new recertification fee for EMT Certification, Paramedic Accreditation and MICN Authorization will be \$126. Other EMS fees are being adjusted and those adjustments will be presented at the February (2/24) EMCC Meeting.
 - County Meetings are Still Virtual (for now):
County EMS holds several community meetings each month. Up to 6 of these meetings are so-called "Brown Act" meetings and require specific notification and recordation. The California State Legislature has passed a law (AB361) allowing partial relief from the public meeting requirements. This relief must be reaffirmed at each regular meeting held virtually. This relief ends at the Advisory Committee's discretion or until 2023 whichever comes first.
 - Capacity Plan: The All-Hazard Health Service Capacity Management Plan was lowered to a Level 2 Escalated Activation. The plan level was de-escalated on February 9 with the input of the Health Services Capacity Task Force's Operational Core Group. EMS Epidemiologists have continued the system monitoring that has proven critical throughout the pandemic response. The current Plan Level is prominently posted on the County EMS webpage at SanDiegoCountyEMS.com.
 - Flu: The Flu Season is still here and still impacting the community. The "PHO Flu Order" is evergreen and is in force through the designated influenza season (November 1 – March 31). The flu letter requires, among other things, that healthcare personnel (including EMS Credentialed Personnel) wear a mask in patient care areas if they choose to not be vaccinated for the flu.
 - Procurements: County EMS encourages interested parties to register with the County's BuyNet webportal to receive procurement information as soon as it is released. There are instructions posted on our website. Upcoming procurements include:
 - RFP for Evaluation of Base Station System and Trauma Catchment area designation (upcoming)
 - RFP for Paramedic Ambulance Services for CSA 17 (Note: That due to unavoidable delays
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in the RFP approval process CoEMS, with the support of CoDPC, has extended the CSA-17 contract with AMR until July 1, 2022. However, CoEMS expects the CSA-17 RFP to be released in the first quarter of 2022.)

- EMS Protocol Review for 2022
The EMS team is completing the final review of protocol revisions for 2022. Thanks to all those who submitted suggested revisions. The revised protocols are expected to be finalized by February and provided for education in April. Implementation of the revised protocols is scheduled for July 1st, 2022.
- Base Hospital / 911 Transport Unit Re-Assignment Update - ON HOLD
We thank all agencies for returning unit updates to us. Because of the current COVID surge, we are putting this update project on hold. We hope to have more information available in the next few months.
- EMSA Paramedic Basic Scope of Practice Medication Expansion Underway
Four medications are in the process to be added to the state ALS formulary and will no longer require Local Optional Scope Approval. These medications are acetaminophen, ketamine, ketorolac and tranexamic acid (TXA). **Currently, acetaminophen and ketamine are approved for use in San Diego County.**

V. POLICIES FOR REVIEW (Jaime Pitner)

There were no policies for review. The request from EMCC was to work on merging Policies P-806: Advanced Life Support First Responder Inventory, P-807: Wildland ALS Kit Inventory, and P-834: BLS First Responder Inventory. Currently in progress.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- Prehospital Experience regarding Diversion Suspension

The overall feedback was the “no diversion” policy is fully supported:

- Transport and Non-Transport Agencies – Strongly encourage the continuation of the no diversion policy. It allowed to get units back in service, and increase levels to their communities by not having as long of ambulance delays.
- Have seen significant drops in offload delays, and has helped in bed delays.

- Hospital Experience regarding Diversion Suspension

The overall feedback was they have some concerns:

- Difficult to handle potentially critical patients without any mechanism to slow the flow.
- Being told cannot stop patients from coming in via ambulances; sicker patients can be offloaded into the waiting rooms without any consent by nursing staff; and we are responsible for those patients, if something happens in the ED.
- There is no capacity to monitor or take responsibility for the patients coming in.
- Anticipate increase in patient volume
- Easier for the larger hospitals; smaller hospitals greatly affected.

- Fire/EMS Fee Schedule

As a reminder, 3-year phase for EMS personnel fees in 2021. The fee schedule for EMTs, paramedics and MICNs will go up by \$20 in July 1, 2022. There are some other fees in the budget process being evaluated and will provide more information when we receive it.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- Diversion Suspension Memo – Discussion
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(Brian Christison) During the four weeks of diversion suspension, the analytics showed a decrease in the EMS system impacts. The availability of the ambulances was improved as well as offload times. The new version of diversion that was implemented in July was intended to raise the bar and not be used quite as frequently but was not working to relieve pressure in an already overly strained system. In the lead up to suspension of ED diversion, we had multiple incidents where virtually every emergency department in San Diego County was declaring diversion at the same time, which led to CoEMS intervening and undoing diversion on several consecutive days. (It is worth noting that even at the height of the surge, average Transfer of Care time was elevated from our baseline, but still was in the 20–30 minute range).

CoEMS is fully aware that there are impacts on both sides; for the hospitals, diversion is tool to manage an overwhelmed emergency department. CoEMS appreciates the input from multiple steering groups and committees with suggestions and comments, including the EMCC Executive Committee and the Operational Core Group of the Health Services Capacity Task Force.

The message that we've heard is diversion is a safety net is desired by our hospital systems, as we work to refine our diversion policy for the next policy year. In additions, we will take information from the past four weeks as well as the experience with County Ambulance Diversion that went into effect this morning.

We anticipate a significant revision of the standing S-010 policy for the next policy year, which will be brought to this group and the full EMCC. County Ambulance Diversion is a very high bar and anticipate in using it very selectively and strategically, possibly a few times a week. County Ambulance Diversion will be at the duty officer's discretion and informed by a number of EMS metrics. We look forward to refining the standing S-010 for the next policy year, possibly including some version of County Ambulance Diversion.

Long group discussion was followed by Q and A.

VIII. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

The next EMCC Prehospital/Hospital Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2022 at 9:30 AM. Meeting adjourned at 10:39 am.