



# EMSUPDATE

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Emergency Medical Services

## Next Generation 911 and Emergency Responders: “What’s Next?”

Over the past few years, the American public has become accustomed to using personal communication devices to share text messages, photographs and video. There’s an awful lot of digital information out there! Some of it could be very useful to emergency responders and might help them respond more efficiently, effectively and safer.

But which information should be used? And who will decide? Many communities are already building secure Emergency Services Networks to share digital information. For emergency responders—what’s next?

The emergency communications system has three major components—depicted in Figure 1 on page three:

1. Citizen access—provided by telecommunications services (e.g., Verizon, AT&T),
2. 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), which serve as the communications hub, and
3. Emergency responders.

To provide safe, efficient, and effective help, it is vital that this system gets the right information to the right responders at the right time. That’s the goal of the “What’s Next?” project.

*Continued on next page*

## News from NHTSA

### Dear Colleague:

I write to you having just attended a gathering of stakeholders representing nearly every facet of emergency medical services (EMS) to provide input into a national strategy to establish a culture of safety—for both patients and providers. What an incredibly important topic for the entire Emergency Medical Services System.

Establishing an EMS Culture of Safety is the highest priority recommendation of the National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC). The conference, held last month in the Washington D.C. area, is part of a three-year initiative and cooperative agreement between the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), with support from the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) EMS for Children (EMSC) Program, and the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). This initiative is just one example of the many collaborative partnerships and stakeholder outreach activities that are so important for the Office of EMS.

NHTSA remains committed to improving the nation’s emergency medical services system—in close collaboration with our Federal partners. We continue to support projects important to enhancing our nation’s EMS infrastructure such as the National EMS Information System, the National EMS Education Agenda and the National EMS Workforce Agenda. Through NEMSAC, we solicit broad-based input to the EMS programs of NHTSA and the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS) continues to support interagency collaboration and sponsors projects such as Evidence Based Guidelines and the National EMS Assessment.

We appreciate the efforts of the many persons who dedicate such an incredible amount of time and talent to improving emergency medical services systems throughout the nation.

Best Regards,  
Drew Dawson, Director, Office of EMS

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## Update: EMS Workforce Agenda for the Future

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Emergency medical services (EMS) practitioners—first responders, EMTs and paramedics of various levels of training—serve on the front lines of our healthcare system, often in stressful and dangerous circumstances. Having a robust, well-trained and motivated EMS workforce is in everyone’s best interest.

In recent years there has been increased awareness of the urgency of EMS workforce issues. Media and anecdotal reports of EMS practitioner shortages, problems with recruitment and retention, declining volunteerism, low worker pay and poor employment benefits, and concerns about worker health and safety issues has raised uncertainty about the viability of the workforce. At the same time recent national disasters have brought new attention to the vital role EMS practitioners play in community health and public safety.

For many localities, the need for EMS is perceived to be increasing, especially as the nation confronts an older and increasingly diverse population, and the potential for global events such as pandemic influenza remains high. Industry leaders have said they believe urgent action is needed to ensure a pipeline of new, well-trained EMS practitioners is in place.

In 2005 NHTSA initiated a national project that led in 2011 to the publication “EMS Workforce Agenda for the Future.” The first step was a systematic and in-depth assessment of the national EMS workforce. The findings of EMS Workforce for the 21st Century: A National Assessment (EMS Workforce Assessment), included primary data collection, a synthesis of existing data and research, and the input of key EMS workforce experts and national stakeholders.

Development of the EMS Workforce Agenda for the Future used the findings of the EMS Workforce Assessment, steering committee guidance, and input from a group of national stakeholders composed of EMS industry leaders; experts from professional organizations; educational and credentialing organizations; public and private providers; state and federal EMS agencies; and other stakeholder groups.

The Agenda envisions a future in which all EMS systems have a sufficient number of well-educated, adequately prepared, and appropriately credentialed EMS practitioners who are valued, well compensated, healthy, and safe.

The Agenda identifies four components critical to developing a thriving EMS workforce that will be a driving force for achieving integrated, community-based EMS systems:

1. Health, safety and wellness of the EMS workforce.
2. Education and certification
3. Data and research
4. Workforce planning and development

The Agenda also proposes the establishment of a National EMS Workforce Technical Assistance Center (TAC), whose function will be to assist national, state, territorial, tribal, local, and private EMS stakeholders with workforce development. The vision of the EMS Workforce Agenda is ambitious but achievable with the continued collaboration of local, tribal, territorial, State, national and Federal EMS stakeholders. ■

*“What’s Next” continued from front page*

### The “What’s Next?” Project

“Begin with the end in mind.” It’s Habit #2 of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Stephen Covey. It’s also where the “What’s Next?” project begins—with emergency responders—the end users of the emergency communications system.

In September 2010, a “What’s Next?” forum was convened in Washington, D.C., bringing together subject matter experts representing national stakeholder groups in four emergency responder professions (law enforcement, fire-rescue, EMS and transportation operations). Also present were 911 technical experts and public safety experts, who acted as resources for participants. The presentations made during this forum are available and can be viewed by going to: [http://www.pcb.its.dot.gov/t3/s100923\\_NG911.asp](http://www.pcb.its.dot.gov/t3/s100923_NG911.asp).

Following a half-day overview of the changes taking place in emergency communications by nationally respected experts, the participants broke into four groups, one for each of the four disciplines, for a half-day session. During these breakout sessions, they were asked to identify major challenges facing their professions (to provide context), and to discuss ways in which Next Generation 911 (NG-911) could help them fulfill their missions as emergency responders. Each panel presented its initial findings to the larger group the following day.

In a series of follow-up conference calls, members of the four groups developed the corresponding sections of a written report, one for each discipline. Each of the groups identified background issues relevant to their fields, consensus points for future collaboration on NG-911, potential obstacles to NG-911 within their respective disciplines, desired benefits, potential data points/capabilities to be prioritized, and possible next steps. Each group also developed a comprehensive set of sample scenarios to illustrate the potential for NG-911 to support them in their respective missions.

Each group worked independently, to allow focus on the needs of its particular discipline. Each section of the report (law enforcement, fire-rescue, EMS and transportation operations) will represent the consensus of the panel members involved.

### The “What’s Next?” Report

The report for the “What’s Next?” project will be released this summer. It will include the initial recommendations of law enforcement, fire-rescue, emergency medical services (EMS), and transportation operations on the types of infor-

**Figure 1. The Emergency Communication System**



The emergency communication system consists of three components, the 9-1-1 call, the 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and the emergency response personnel.

mation that could be transmitted to them as end users of the emergency communications system, as well as suggested next steps. It will also include overarching issues, identified by all of the groups, which will be key in taking full advantage of what emergency communications has to offer for responders.

The “What’s Next?” report is intended to provide insight into the cultural, organizational and operational environments in which the next phase of emergency communications will be implemented. The participants, as well as the national stakeholder organizations they represent, have made a commitment to a collaborative process that ensures that whoever develops the emergency communications system will understand the needs and priorities of the nation’s emergency responders.

The “What’s Next?” report will be distributed to a variety of stakeholders, each with an interest or involvement in communications systems for emergency responders. It can serve as a starting point for national professional organizations and government agencies, in taking the next steps to provide emergency responders with the digital information they could use to provide more effective, efficient response in the safest manner possible. The report will encourage public and private organizations to consider the next steps in meeting the information needs of emergency responders.

The project, sponsored by the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)—Joint Program Office (JPO) and NHTSA’s Office of EMS, encapsulates the initial recommendations of subject-matter experts in law enforcement, fire-rescue, emergency medical services (EMS), and transportation operations on the types of information that could be transmitted to them as end users of the emergency communications system. The Transportation Safety Advancement Group (TSAG), an assembly of multidiscipline professionals that promotes technology for public safety, manages the project. The TSAG membership includes representatives of the four disciplines participating in “What’s Next?” as well as emergency communications, technology and telematics,

and academia and research; who functioned as advisors and facilitators to project participants.

By identifying the information needs of emergency responders and actively involving them in the process of making their ideas a reality, advancing technology can be merged with emergency communications to meet the public’s need for help. For more information on the TSAG and the “What’s Next?” project, go to <http://www.tsag-its.org/>. ■



**The National 9-1-1 Program** is proud to announce its support of the *Number to Know Campaign* created by the National 9-1-1 Education Coalition.

Visit [www.know911.org](http://www.know911.org) for more information.

## NEMSAC Announces New Chair *Reinert Assumes Leadership of National EMS Advisory Council*

Aarron Reinert has been appointed as the new chair of the National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) by NHTSA Administrator David Strickland. Reinert, a NEMSAC member since the council's 2007 inception, is the executive director for Lakes Region EMS in Minnesota. This rural ambulance service, which services a 450-square-mile service area, is composed of 40 full-time staff with a Paramedic/EMT staffing pattern.

"We are extremely pleased that Aarron has accepted the appointment," said Drew Dawson, Director of NHTSA's Office of EMS. "We know he will do an excellent job leading NEMSAC's efforts. I also want to thank Dia Gainor for the tremendous leadership and energy she brought to the position over the past four years." Gainor resigned from the council when she took on the role of executive director of the National Association of State EMS Officials.

Reinert is considered a national expert in EMS data collection and leadership training. He has served as a subject matter expert for numerous states, including Georgia, Nebraska, and New Hampshire as they began to develop statewide EMS data collection systems.

"I look forward to my new role within NEMSAC," said Reinert. "Five subcommittees within NEMSAC have been assigned a dozen topics to consider this year. We'll be using the upcoming meetings of the full council to deliberate the committee's findings and make recommendations."

A practicing paramedic for more than 20 years, Reinert has a B.A. in organizational leadership. He is also a member of the board of directors of the National EMS Management Association.

NEMSAC was chartered in 2007 to provide guidance to the DOT's EMS efforts as well as the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS. Representing 23 sectors of EMS, the current members of the council were selected for their expertise and experience, not as representatives of particular associations. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood announced the current appointees in July 2010.

As a discretionary advisory council, which is compliant with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, NEMSAC does not exercise program or regulatory development responsibilities. It does, however, aggregate expertise and opinions from experienced stakeholders and make educated and thoughtful recommendations to the Department regarding its programs and policies. NEMSAC welcomes the input of interested parties and organizations with an interest in EMS.

To learn more about NEMSAC, its members, and position papers, visit <http://ems.gov/nemsac>. ■

## Stakeholders and Experts Convene to Create Strategy for Safety Culture

Nearly 100 EMS experts gathered June 27–28 near Washington, D.C., to address NEMSAC's top recommendation, the creation of a culture of safety within EMS.

"The conference was an extraordinary experience," said Dave Bryson, NHTSA's contracting officer's technical representative. "So often we address issues on a micro-level, and this conference has provided a unique opportunity to step back and look at EMS at the macro level.

"The faculty shared so much information about how safety issues can be managed, which prompted great discussion," he continued. "This conference and the resulting strategy are opportunities to utilize lessons learned from other industries and create a plan that can make a difference for our patients and EMS personnel."

A first draft of the strategy is due at the end of August. After input from the Steering Committee and participating organizations the strategy document will be available for public comment before final submission to NHTSA in August 2013. ■

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