



FALL 2010

# EMS UPDATE

Emergency Medical Services

## NHTSA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

### NHTSA WELCOMES NOAH SMITH

The NHTSA Office of EMS (OEMS) is happy to announce that Noah Smith has joined our staff. Noah was previously with Battelle Memorial Institute, providing support to the Navy's Fire and Emergency Services Program. He worked closely with headquarters staff to help develop Navy-wide policies and procedures for EMS. He has been an EMT for over four years and is currently a volunteer in Prince George's County, Maryland. He is working on a master's degree in public health, specifically in health policy. For OEMS, he is providing staff support for the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS) and the National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC). Welcome, Noah!

## GROUND AMBULANCE SAFETY

### DEVELOPING STANDARDS

NHTSA and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) continue to collaborate with our Federal partners on a four-year research-based project to improve existing standards with the ultimate goal of making patients and EMS workers safer in the rear compartment of ambulances. The General Services Administration and the National Truck Equipment Association's Ambulance Manufacturers Division are also participating in the effort, which launched in 2009. For more information, please contact Jim Green, NIOSH lead for this effort, at james.green@cdc.hhs.gov or 304-285-5857.

### SAFELY TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

OEMS and NHTSA's Occupant Protection Division are wrapping up their effort to develop recommendations for the safe transport of infants and children in ground ambulances. A national review meeting and webinar was facilitated by the contractor, Maryn Consulting, on August 5, 2010, to get additional comments and suggestions for improving the document. NHTSA plans to release the final version in late 2010.

### BUILDING CONSENSUS

NHTSA continues to participate as a nonvoting member in the National Fire Protection Association's Technical Committee on Ambulances (NFPA 1917) to develop consensus-based safety standards for use by ambulance manufacturers and their customers. For more information, please contact Larry Stewart, NFPA staff liaison for this effort, at lstewart@nfpa.org or 617-984-7493.

For more information on OEMS ambulance safety activities, contact Dave Bryson.

## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE GUIDELINES

If EMS were to adopt a process for developing protocols and guidelines based on scientific evidence, what would that process look like? After years of basing EMS practice on "we've always done it that way," a more scientific process may be on its way. A draft national model for a process to develop pre-hospital evidence-based guidelines has been developed. Both FICEMS and NEMSAC have conducted preliminary reviews of the draft model. In May 2009, the model was presented at

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the annual meeting of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine in New Orleans.

The model process is currently being pilot-tested by Children National Medical Center, which has assembled a group of experts in adult and pediatric emergency medicine, guideline development, medical library science, prehospital care, and nursing. Using the model process, these experts have developed draft, evidence-based protocols for prehospital pain management and for the helicopter transport of patients from the scene of injury. As part of this pilot project, both protocols are being reviewed by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). After the protocols have been accepted by the MIEMSS protocol review committee, and again, as part of this project to pilot-test the model process, training material will be developed to teach providers about the changes from existing protocols and the protocols will be implemented in the summer of 2011. An evaluation methodology will be developed to assess systemwide compliance with the new protocols and to document changes to patient care in the field.

For more information on the evidence-based practice guidelines project, contact Cathy Gotschall.

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## FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EMS

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FICEMS is a group of 10 policy-level Federal representatives from the Departments of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Defense, and the Federal Communications Commission, and one State EMS director. The committee was formed by Congress in 2005 to ensure coordination among Federal agencies involved with State, local, tribal, or regional emergency medical services and 911 systems.

The committee meets twice yearly, usually in June and December, and its Technical Working Group (TWG) meets monthly to address ongoing business and carry out initiatives as directed by FICEMS. The TWG is comprised of seven committees that meet regularly and report back to FICEMS on activities and progress. Highlights from the January and June 2010 meetings are outlined below.

### JANUARY 2010 FICEMS MEETING

#### \* National Transportation Safety Board Recommendations

- Mexican Hat, Utah, Motorcoach Accident Recommendations – The NTSB recommended development of a plan to pursue funding for enhancements to wireless communications coverage in rural areas and overall improvement to EMS response in high-risk rural roadways. The TWG presented to FICEMS a strategy to respond to the

recommendations that included a needs assessment and gap analysis, funding options, and potential collaborations. The plan also included details of future work with Institute of Medicine and the Highway Incidents Transportation System Committee of the National Association of EMS Officials.

- Helicopter EMS (HEMS) Recommendations – The NTSB recommended the development of enhanced guidelines for the use and availability of HEMS during system planning as well as national guidelines for the selection of appropriate transportation modes for emergent patients. The TWG presented a plan to respond to these recommendations that included developing national evidence-based practice guidelines for HEMS use in the field.

#### \* Technical Working Group Committee Reports

- Assessment – Providing guidance to the National EMS Assessment that is a collaborative effort between the University of North Carolina, the NEMSIS Technical Assistance Center and the Critical Illness and Trauma Center.
- Medical Oversight – Continuing to monitor the Evidence-Based Practice Guidelines pilot program being developed Children's National Resource Center.
- Data and Research – Continuing to focus on the exception from informed consent for emergency medical research and the expanded use of NEMSIS data.
- 911 and Medical Communications – (Ad Hoc Committee) Advising FICEMS on 911 issues related to NTSB recommendation implementation.
- Preparedness – Reported that this year's Homeland Security grant program includes language that allows funding for NEMSIS implementation, medical oversight, and development of State EMS systems.
- Safety – Coordinating safety initiatives among the member agencies and researching. Presented an EMS Safety Position Statement.
- Education and Workforce – The new committee did not meet prior to this meeting.

### JUNE 2010 FICEMS MEETING

- \* Transportation Safety Board Recommendations – FICEMS directed the TWG to draft letters to the NTSB updating it on progress made toward implementing recommendations regarding the Mexican Hat, Utah, motorcoach accident as well as issues relating to HEMS.

- \* National EMS Assessment Project Update – Dr. Greg Mears of the University of North Carolina updated FICEMS on the progress of the National EMS Assessment, which included

the recognition that there may be insufficient data to complete a comprehensive national assessment.

- \* EMS Stakeholder Meeting Report – Rick Patrick of the DHS Office of Health Affairs reported on the March 2010 EMS Stakeholders Meeting in Washington, DC. The meeting brought together experts and stakeholders in nearly every area in EMS. The group was able to voice concerns and provide insight into complicated national EMS issues.
- \* Evidence-Based Practice Guideline (EBPG) Pilot Program Update – Cathy Gotschall of OEMS reported that the EBPG program will be pilot-tested with protocols on pain management and HEMS in Maryland. In the Maryland pilot, the implementation process will be tested, not the clinical outcome of the protocol.
- \* FICEMS voted to hold an executive session in the Fall of 2010 to discuss the creation of a new State EMS system pandemic influenza preparedness grant program.
- \* Technical Working Group Committee Reports
  - Assessment – Engaging in work to facilitate EMS communications interoperability by reaching out the FCC and other entities that have already made progress on the issue.
  - Medical Oversight – After some personnel changes, the committee is continuing to oversee the Evidence Based Guidelines process.
  - Data and Research – Reported that the new NEMSIS 3.0 has passed the first round of voting to become HL7 certified and thus compatible with other forms of electronic health data.
  - 911 and Medical Communications (Ad Hoc Committee) – Continuing work on the response to NTSB recommendations regarding wireless communications and 911 systems.
  - Preparedness – Focusing on pandemic influenza preparedness and Mass Casualty Incident response preparedness. The committee is evaluating the CDC’s Model Uniform Core Criteria for mass casualty field triage.
  - Safety – Working closely with NHTSA, NIOSH, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the National Fire Protection Association to improve ambulance safety standards as well as provider and patient safety guidelines.
  - Education and Workforce – Focusing on Federal EMS education activities, the EMS Education Agenda for the Future, and the EMS Workforce Agenda for the Future.

- Health Care Reform (Ad Hoc Committee) – Andy Roszak of the HHS Emergency Care Coordination Center suggested a proposal for FICEMS to send four letters to various Federal agency heads requesting full implementation of EMS into health care reform activities and offering the support of FICEMS and the TWG. The letters were approved and have been delivered by the chair.

For more information on the FICEMS, please visit [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov) and click on “FICEMS” or contact Noah Smith.

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## NATIONAL 911 PROGRAM

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### 911 RESOURCE CENTER

The National 911 Resource Center went live in June. The resource center will make available a range of 911 information covering topics such as technology, operations, and governance. The resource center is seeking articles of interest to include in its information base. It was established via a cooperative agreement with a team led by L. Robert Kimball and Associates. Kimball’s partner in this effort is the National Emergency Number Association. If you would like to contribute an article, please visit [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov) and click on “National Resource Center.”

### CONSENSUS GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF A STATEWIDE 911 SYSTEM

The staff of the National 911 Resource Center is working with a group of 911 stakeholders to develop guidelines for the assessment of a statewide 911 system. These guidelines will serve as a basis for self-assessment or to facilitate the assessment of a statewide 911 system by an outside team. The guidelines discuss optimal technical, operational, and governance programs and processes that will enable a nationwide 911 network.

### 911 GRANT PROGRAM

The National 911 Office is charged with administering a grant program for the benefit of 911 Public Safety Answering Points. With an appropriation of \$43.5 million, the office awarded grants to 30 States and Territories for implementation and operation of phase II enhanced 911 services and for migration to an Internet-protocol-enabled emergency network. For additional details on the 911 grant program, go to [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov) and click on “Grants.”

For more information on the National 911 Program, please visit [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov), or contact Laurie Flaherty.

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## NATIONAL EMS ADVISORY COUNCIL

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NEMSAC was created to formalize NHTSA's long-standing collaborative approach to working with members of the EMS community, EMS consumers, and other EMS stakeholders. Since its April 2008 inaugural meeting, NEMSAC has been active in addressing national EMS issues and concerns.

NEMSAC finished 2009 with strong final reports and position statements on finance, systems development, medical oversight, research, health care reform, and safety. In July the Secretary of Transportation made his appointments to the second NEMSAC and the group has plans to meet in October and December of this year (meetings are open to the public), and dates will be announced.

For more information on NEMSAC, please visit [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov) and click on "NEMSAC" or contact Noah Smith.

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## NATIONAL EMS EDUCATION AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

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### NATIONAL EMS EDUCATION AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

NHTSA continues to support NASEMSO in leading the implementation of the education agenda. To get more information and to find useful tools and resources, please visit NASEMSO's education agenda implementation Web site at <http://nasemso.org/EMSEducationImplementationPlanning/index.asp>.

For more information on the EMS education agenda, please visit [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov) and click on "Education," or contact Dave Bryson.

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## NATIONAL EMS INFORMATION SYSTEM

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### PROGRESS REPORT

Over 10 million records and counting. Development of the National EMS database continues at the NEMSIS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) with 26 States now regularly submitting data. As of July 2010, an additional 14 States and Territories were working closely with the NEMSIS TAC to implement NEMSIS and submit data to the National EMS Database.

### NEMSIS VERSION 3 DATASET COMPLETED

The final Version 3.0 dataset was completed and posted in July 2010. In mid-August the NEMSIS TAC met with the software

developers and vendors to kick off the transition to Version 3. Also in mid-August the TAC opened up a 30-day comment period related to which of the Version 3 data elements should be designated as National level and recommended State-level data elements. This determination will be very important to the development of EMS performance measures related to several time-sensitive systems of care, such as STEMI, stroke, out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, and trauma.

For more information, please visit [www.nemsis.org](http://www.nemsis.org)

### NEXT GENERATION 911 INITIATIVE

The U.S. DOT's Next Generation 911 (NG911) Initiative project represents one of the first steps in moving our national 911 system out of the analog age and into the digital world. Specifically, the goal of the NG911 Initiative is to define a system architecture plan that considers the responsibilities, costs, schedule, and benefits of deploying an NG911 system nationwide.

The final project of the initiative is the "What's Next?" forum, which was conducted in Washington, DC, on September 23 and 24. Participants from law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, and transportation operations learned about the forms of digital data (photos, video, telematics data, and text messages) that can be shared with all first responders as the NG911 network is built. Using the NG911 model as a basis, each of the four disciplines will spend several months after the forum producing white papers, outlining the process they will undertake to decide which data will make their jobs safer, more efficient, and more effective.

The NG911 Initiative has been funded by the Intelligent Transportation System Joint Program Office. To learn more about NG911, please contact Laurie Flaherty.

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## PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS

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### FICEMS STATE PAN FLU PREPAREDNESS REPORT

In 2008 the Federal Government initiated an assessment of State pandemic influenza plans. The resulting report, *Assessment of States' Operating Plans to Combat Pandemic Influenza: A Report to Homeland Security Council*, found State EMS and 911 integration in the planning process for response to pan flu generally lacking. In response to this assessment, FICEMS directed its TWG Preparedness Committee to conduct a more detailed analysis. The resulting report, *State EMS System Pandemic Influenza Preparedness*, was published in December 2009. To view the report, visit [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov) and click on "FICEMS."



## OEMS-NAEMSO GUIDELINES

In 2007 NHTSA OEMS in conjunction with the NASEMSO published two documents to help State and local EMS and 911 authorities plan for pandemic influenza. These two documents were extremely useful during the H1N1 pandemic:

- \* *EMS Pandemic Influenza Guidelines for Statewide Adoption*; and
- \* *Preparing for Pandemic Influenza: Recommendations for Protocol Development for 911 Personnel and Public Safety Answering Points.*

To view these publications, please go to [www.EMS.gov](http://www.EMS.gov) and click on “Pandemic News.”

For more information on OEMS Preparedness activities, contact Gamunu Wijetunge.

## STATE EMS TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS

To date, 52 State, Territory, and program EMS assessments have been conducted, as well as 19 State EMS reassessments. During 2010 State EMS reassessments were conducted in Delaware and Missouri.

For more information on State EMS technical assessments, please contact Susan McHenry.

## THE EMS WORKFORCE

### COMING SOON! — A “VISION FOR THE FUTURE”

NHTSA and its partners are leveraging the findings of last year’s “EMS Workforce for the 21st Century: A National Assessment” report as they continue to draft the new EMS Workforce Agenda for the Future. Scheduled to debut in late 2010, this publication will provide a vision for the future of the EMS workforce. Look for it to post on [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov).

### NHTSA-NIOSH: WORKFORCE SAFETY PROJECT

NHTSA is involved in ongoing efforts to improve the safety, health, and wellness of EMS workers, including collaborating with NIOSH to improve worker injury surveillance and ambulance safety. Currently NIOSH and NHTSA are collaborating to use the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) to collect nationally representative data on EMS worker line-of-duty injuries.

For more information on EMS workforce publications, projects, and issues please contact Gamunu Wijetunge.

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