

N.H. EMERGENCY MEDICAL & TRAUMA SERVICES
COORDINATING BOARD

March 20, 2014
NH Fire Academy – Concord NH

Non-approved Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jason Grey, Eric Jaeger, Stacy Meier (Vice Chair), Richard O'Brien, Michael Pepin, Greg Placy, Peter Row, Dennis Tobin, Eric Schelberg, David Strang (Chair) – via conference phone.

Members Absent: Rosemary Durning, Rae Mello-Andrews, Susanna Ayers.

Excused: Michael Cloutier, Grant Turpin, Helene Zeilinski, Doreen Gilligan.

Guests: Fred Heinrich, Mark Hastings, Jeanne Erickson, Steve Erickson, Jason Preston, Jeffrey Stewart, Aaron McIntire, Steve Robbins, Mary Ellen Gourdeau, Scott Schuler, Richard Riley, Scott Hodgkins.

Division Staff: Director Pendergast, Vicki Blanchard, Chip Cooper, Shawn Jackson, Richard Cloutier, Bill Wood, Janet Houston.

Welcome/Introductions – Stacy Meier, Vice-Chair

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Stacy Meier. Chairman Strang was present via conference phone. Introductions were made.

Vice-Chair Meier called for a moment of silence for FF/Paramedic Stephen McKenna who passed away on March 18th.

Acceptance of 01/16/14 Meeting Minutes – Could not be voted on as there was not a quorum. Acceptance will be tabled until the May meeting.

Chairman Strang said he had reviewed those minutes and had nothing else to add or change.

NH EMS Medical Control Board (MCB) Report – F. Hubbell

F. Hubbell was not present. Vicki Blanchard updated from the MCB meeting that morning. A draft of those minutes is available for review on the website.

Vicki also announced that Tom D'Aprix (Chairman – MCB) would be stepping down from the MCB as of May.

NH Bureau of EMS Report

Bureau Chief Mercuri was not present. The EMS Bulletin was submitted.

Data Advisory Committee Update – Chip Cooper

Chip Cooper said the Advisory Committee met last week and reviewed the entire data set. The next step is to take that and put it into a publishable format. Imagetrend is not expecting to have a solid product out until after July. They have been getting constant feedback. Maybe by September they will be doing some piloting.

Updates on EMT-I to AEMT – Shawn Jackson

Shawn updated everyone on the AEMT transition. He said Intermediates continue to perform well. 33% have taken the exam and 25% have actually transitioned. NH continues to do more than 10% better than the national average (in our test passage rates). PearsonVue mobile testing labs are out and about. Exam prep classes are doing well and have received overwhelmingly positive reviews. Mike Kennard's mobile simulation is being well received. The National Registry will be here in May to promote their National Continued Competency Program, which is their new refresher model. Shawn asks that the CB hear what they have to say and think it over.

Equipment Sub-Committee Update – Chip Cooper/Rich Cloutier

Chip said they are still reviewing and refining language. Rich Cloutier said they have come up with a basic structure and overview. Now the members are working on fine tuning the details.

Best Practices (Mass Gathering) – Chief Richard O'Brien

This Committee has met a couple of times with a goal of guidance for agency heads and fire departments that learn of a mass gathering event in their community (there was a handout for everyone present). This guideline/resource tool is to show the EMS services who they need to get involved with and who they need to speak to and what procedures they need to follow. It breaks it down on different levels: medical oversight, risk assessment, planning for event medical services, level of care, human resources, public health and access to care. The guideline outlines the risks and attempts to score them. There is also a deployment matrix. Please look the handout over and give any comments or suggestions to Kathy Doolan. As soon as any feedback is received the committee will meet again.

Saf-C 5903.10 Update – S. Meier/D. Strang – via phone

A copy of the March 10, 2014 letter written by Dr. Strang and co-signed by Bureau Chief Mercuri (already emailed to all Board members), along with a copy of Saf-C 5903.10 was made available. Dr. Strang spoke about a specific complaint (without naming the individual involved) which resulted in a formal Bureau investigation. The EMT in question was notified of the investigation, as were the heads of every unit with which the EMT was affiliated (not just the unit for whom the EMT was working at the time of the incident). As a result, this EMT was put on administrative leave by the head of one of the uninvolved units. If this action were duplicated by all notified unit leaders, it could mean that someone could potentially be out of a job while an investigation was on-going (which in some cases is more than a year). Is this the best way of doing things? To complicate this matter, the EMT first learned of the investigation when the uninvolved unit notified this EMT of being placed on leave. When the EMT called the Bureau to ask about the investigation, the EMT was allegedly told no information could be shared at that time.

This issue was brought to the attention of (first) Vice-Chair Meier and then Chairman Strang around the time of the January CB meeting. Consequently the Chair and Vice-Chair met with Bureau Chief Mercuri, Director Pendergast and Dept. of Safety Attorney David Hilts on February 4, where several concerns were raised. Firstly, the Chair and Vice-Chair felt that no unit leader should be informed of an investigation until the Bureau is certain that the EMT under investigation is aware. This can and should be done by Certified Mail. Secondly, the Chair and Vice-Chair felt that the letter of notification did not make it clear that the individual had the ability to participate in the investigation before a decision would be made. As a result, it was asked that the letter be changed to state that the individual had the right to participate in information gathering, come in for an interview, etc. before a decision was made and then, if they don't like the decision they can ask for a hearing (currently in rule). Bureau Chief Mercuri indicated that he could easily rewrite the letter of notification without any change to rule or NH RSA. The revised letter has been submitted to the AG's office for approval, although Chairman Strang and Vice-Chair Meier have not received a copy of this rewritten letter . Thirdly, Chairman Strang and Vice-Chair Meier expressed concern over the Bureau's practice of notifying the head of every unit (with which the EMT is affiliated), that an EMT is under investigation. It was felt that this likely would not contribute anything to the Bureau's investigation, but could be very damaging to an EMT's reputation, particularly if the investigation resulted in an acquittal. Furthermore, the Chair and Vice-Chair felt that the rules (as currently written) contained conflicting language on the topic of notification/confidentiality of the investigation. It was agreed by all at this Feb. 4th meeting, to ask the CB to review this process beginning at their March meeting.

Dr. Strang then referred everyone to Saf-C 5903.10 – Section E – “*A provider's head of unit shall be notified of any complaint filed pursuant to this section and the results of any investigation.*” However, it does not state “**THE** head of **THE** unit for which the provider was working at the time” shall be notified. Section M however, states: “*No information shall be released to a head of unit until the division has completed its investigation and notified the complainant and the respondent of its findings.*” The Chair and Vice-Chair feel these 2 sections conflict and should therefore be amended to conform to the intent of this Board. Chairman Strang stressed that he was not talking about a situation that

represented a threat to the public (e.g. illegal drug use/diversion, patient assault, etc.) that would generate an immediate license suspension, but rather a routine investigation. Chairman Strang and Vice-Chair Meier want to make sure this complex issue is addressed fairly. **A lengthy discussion followed and the consensus was to form a (sub)committee to review the concerns raised at the Feb. 4th meeting and report back to the full CB. Vice-Chair Meier suggested that all those interested in serving on this committee to please contact Chairman Strang by email.**

Bariatric Project- E. Jaeger/B. Wood

Eric Jaeger and Bill Wood gave a presentation with handouts. The Division has been working on this program with Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM). Currently, there are over 500 calls annually in the State of NH, involving patients who are severely obese. The Bariatric Task Force was created in July 2012 to bring attention to the challenge of moving these patients. The Task Force then formed committees to study the issue further. E. Jaeger went on to point out the challenges encountered in the transfer of these patients from their homes. Bill Wood had a display including pictures of the equipment involved. He said HSEM received a \$160,000 grant to purchase equipment, however there is a very short window of opportunity to utilize these funds. The equipment eligible for purchase has been broken down into 4 components: ramp system, bariatric stretcher, HoverMatt Air Transfer System and Evacuation HoverJack Device. Purchasing this equipment would allow for approximately 10 caches around the state, one cache per county. In practice, there will be equipment access for each department. Although there will be no money in the grant to provide training or do exercises, the goal is to seek additional funding for these purposes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 15, 2014
Location: Fire/EMS Academy, Concord