

**N.H. EMERGENCY MEDICAL & TRAUMA SERVICES  
COORDINATING BOARD**

**July 18, 2013  
NH Fire Academy – Concord, NH**

**Approved Meeting minutes**

**Members Present:** Susanna Ayers, Mike Cloutier, Doreen Gilligan, Jason Grey, Frank Hubbell, Eric Jaeger, Stacy Meier (Vice Chair), Richard O'Brien, Peter Row, Eric Schelberg, David Strang (Chair), Mark Tetreault, Grant Turpin, Helene Zielinski

**Members Absent:** Rae Mello-Andrews, Michael Pepin

**Excused:** Don Johnson, Ron O'Keefe, Greg Placy, Dennis Tobin,

**Guests:** Jeanne Erickson, Steve Erickson, Mark Hastings, Fred Heinrich, Jason Preston, Kurt Rhynhart, Scott Schuler, Jeffrey Stewart,

**Division Staff:** Vicki Blanchard, Richard Cloutier, Kathy Doolan, Janet Houston, Shawn Jackson

**Welcome/Introductions – D. Strang, Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone, especially Kurt Rhynhart the new representative from the NH Chapter of the American College of Surgeons whose appointment is awaiting approval by the Governor. Introductions were given by all present. Everyone was thanked for their attendance and involvement.

**Acceptance of 5/16/13 Meeting Minutes – D. Strang** – J. Grey made a motion to accept the minutes as written, S. Meier seconded the motion and all present voted to approve the minutes.

Director Plummer was given the floor to update everyone on the Division Director and Bureau Chief positions. He outlined the process that had been followed for the recent Bureau Chief interviews. Three individuals "certified" through Human Resources had already come before two, four-person panels for scenarios, exercises and oral board questioning. At the end of the day each individual panel member scored the candidates and then the group came together to discuss their observations. Members ranked the three candidates in the same order and the top candidate has been offered the position. There is not a final answer as of yet but one is expected within the next 24 hours. The start date of the new Chief will be announced once the position is accepted and arrangements can be made.

D. Strang stated that he appreciated the Director's update and mentioned that being a part of the interview panel was extremely interesting and it was an impressive process. It was mentioned that Board members Jason Grey and Stacy Meier were also part of the panel along with five others. D. Strang then thanked Director Plummer for setting up such an exceptional process. P. Plummer stated that this process is used by the Fire Service often and it gives the candidates the opportunity to show their true selves over a full day of presentations and questioning.

P. Plummer then brought the membership up-to-date on the status of his own position. He has been asked to permanently take the Director of Homeland Security position where he has also been serving on an interim basis for the past several months. The position is a 4-year appointment made by the Governor. If approved (as is expected) he does plan on accepting the position. If anyone knows of qualified individuals interested in the Director of FST&EMS

position, names should be forwarded to the Commissioner who is already accepting resumes from candidates. He then thanked the Board for all the support that he has been shown while at FST&EMS and assured everyone that he is confident that EMS will keep moving in a positive direction under the hands of this and the other advisory Boards along with the new Bureau Chief and Director.

Commissioner Barthelmes has asked if as many Board members as possible (quorum not required) would attend a special meeting in August to interview his selection for Director. D. Strang has been asked to report the members' perceptions after this meeting. More than half of the Board members present, with a show of hands, said that they would make themselves available for the meeting.

D. Strang asked the Director to explain what his role is and would be at Homeland Security and what responsibilities the agency maintains. P. Plummer explained the many critical duties carried out each day by Emergency Management and Homeland Security. He invited all members to come over for a tour of the facility on the day of the September Board meeting. D. Strang expressed gratitude that P. Plummer and the Board will still be interacting in the future and thanked the Director for all the work he has done for emergency medical services in NH.

Chairman Strang stated that some may be unsettled about all the changes coming to the Division and Bureau, but that now is an opportunity to put strong leaders in place to move EMS forward into the future. He felt that the chosen Bureau Chief candidate would be an excellent first step. Knowing that Director Plummer is still accessible, and will be working with the Board into the future may also ease the unsettled feeling. S. Meier expressed pleasure with the Bureau Chief oral board/interview process and stated that the Director did a great service to EMS by putting this process in place. J. Grey also agreed with that assessment.

#### **N.H. EMS Medical Control Board (MCB) Report – F. Hubbell**

F. Hubbell gave a summary of the morning meeting – complete minutes can be viewed on the Division website once approved.

Discussion at the morning meeting / topics: (See MCB minutes for details)

- Acting Bureau Chief, C. Coopers' letter was read at the morning meeting as he is attending a conference with Image Trend out of state at this time.
- Various protocols were reviewed and the largest discussion was about the future spinal assessment protocol which no longer requires long spine boards "all the time". With specific questions and observations in place, the long board may not be necessary as some research indicates that this device maybe harmful to some patients that are not in true need of immobilization. Concern was raised about this being a big culture change for the EMS field provider and that a great deal of education will be needed. It was also expressed that emergency room staff will need education on this change so that EMS personnel are not reprimanded for something they are handling according to updated standards. Short Board/ K.E.D. will also be removed from protocol and use in the field, as it has been shown to potentially cause harm with excessive movement.
- The Critical Care Transport committee was discussed and the Board was updated on their progress by S. Prentiss. D. Strang asked F. Hubbell to ensure that the Coordinating Board is included in changes to Critical Care Transport level training and certification, as it is a licensing issue. F. Hubbell assured the Board that they would be kept in the loop. This lead to a short discussion on Community Paramedicine and the push-back that might be seen by VNA and others, much like what happened when paramedics started to work in emergency departments.

- NH Protocols are being adopted by many states, some for the format only, and others for both format and content. Some changes to content may be made but there is hope that in the future a regional set of protocols can be created.

E. Jaeger gave a quick overview of the EMS-C pediatric web site (not available to project) and its components. He mentioned that a Twitter page also exists and that eventually a Facebook page will be added to keep up with social media and stay connected easily. If there are pertinent links or training opportunities that anyone would like included on the site, please forward them to J. Houston or E. Jaeger.

[MCB Minutes are posted on website - draft and approved]

### **N.H. Bureau of EMS (NHBEMS) Report – Staff**

Acting Bureau Chief, C. Cooper is out of state and forwarded a letter with a compilation of notes and updates to be read to the Board. D. Strang gave a summary of the letter to the Board. He also mentioned that the EMS Bulletin would be sent out but was not ready at this time.

Summary: (C. Cooper letter/notes to be emailed out to the membership)

- Angela Shepard has stepped down from the Trauma Coordinator position and this position most likely will not be filled until the new EMS Bureau Chief is in place. The Trauma Registry is still being worked on and the Trauma Conference has been scheduled for Nov. 15 & 16 in Whitefield at the Mt. View Grand Hotel.
- Line of duty death (LODD) issues were then discussed. Reporting and investigation for EMS LODDs are much less coordinated than that of the Fire Service and are a necessary requirement to obtain death benefits. The Commissioner of Safety and the Governor are supportive of legislation to improve death benefits for EMS. The Bureau is working with the Medical Examiners Office and Fire Marshals Office to enhance the necessary changes.

[Please see written Bureau Bulletin for additional information]

### **Old Business:**

#### **Administrative Rule Changes – update – K. Doolan**

K. Doolan reported that the incorporation by reference documents are still being worked on and that some additional changes may be made by the Department's Attorney prior to sending the proposed rules to the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (JLCAR).

#### **Data Advisory Committee Update – R. O'Brien**

A brief update on the committee's progress was given by R. O'Brien. They have reviewed what is currently collected for data at the national level and have made recommendations on what New Hampshire (NH) should collect. They aim to make TEMSIS much more user friendly and sensible. Committee members and non-members have attended the meetings and have given input along the way. It was mentioned that the conference that C. Cooper is currently attending, is critical to this process. Many states look to NH for the process they should follow. In C. Cooper's notes presented by R. O'Brien, it is stated that of the close to 500 elements that NEMSIS (National EMS Information System) includes, the NH committee has agreed thus far to require a total of 396 elements. The committee will meet again and

then the list will be presented to the Board for approval. C. Cooper (via the notes read by R. O'Brien on his behalf) expressed thanks to everyone who has participated in the process.

### **EMT-I to AEMT Task Force – S. Jackson**

S. Jackson stated that the previously reported 63% first time pass rate of NH providers taking the National Registry (NR) AEMT exam as compared to a 61% national pass rate has been researched as it just didn't look right. After review, and further input from the NR it has been found that the NH pass rate is actually 70% for first time exam completion. 79% have passed by the third attempt which is also something that the NH EMS community should be proud of. He reported that the Division has invested \$20,000 in vouchers (268 awarded) and in the new fiscal year starting in July, another 295 vouchers will be made available.

S. Jackson reported that 76% of EMT-I's reregistered this year as "EMT-I '85s" (deciding to wait to transition to AEMT), 25% upgraded now to AEMT, 16 individuals dropped back to EMT-Basic (3%) and 10% upgraded to Paramedic level certifications.

The mobile exam is finally in place. Pearson Vue proctors are being approved and host sites are being reviewed. Eight people can test at a time with the amount of equipment the Division purchased and each exam session is 2 hours. R. O'Brien asked when the system would be live, to which S. Jackson responded that the hope is for the beginning of September.

D. Strang asked if a reason had been identified for the 30% failure rate for the first time exam takers. S. Jackson explained that it is difficult to find a specific cause as many factors are in play. Student motivation could be a piece of it, but no significant issues stood out. There was no correlation between candidates that completed a transition program or challenged the exam without a training program. S. Jackson noted that there really isn't enough data as yet to find any trends and mentioned that the next cycle will have a higher number of providers taking the exam and as the deadline (2017) gets closer, more will take the exam.

F. Heinrich asked what happens after a candidate fails the exam 3 times. Jackson reported that a 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> attempt can be made.

S. Jackson mentioned that there is no data on new AEMT student pass rates because it hasn't been tracked by the Division staff. He also reported that all of the EMT-I's that challenged the exam without a training program have passed. Most of these have been Instructor/Coordinators.

### **Ambulance/non-transport equipment and licensing – J. Houston**

J. Houston reported that the sub-committee has met three times and is being methodical in their review and comparison of ACEP suggested equipment, protocol requirements and administrative rules. The group is taking it a little at a time and finds themselves going back and forth between licensing and equipment discussions. Requirements and processes from other New England states are also being reviewed and various scenarios are being considered (EX: back-up ambulance, disaster ambulances, "permit" approvals). The group plans to meet often and will report back to the Board at the September meeting.

S. Meier asked that the committee remember the recent discussions to remove the KED/short board as required equipment. S. Jackson mentioned that based on studies and protocols, the Education Section with input from the Instructor Cabinet, will remove these items from skill testing. A concern was raised about how this change fits into the requirements laid out in national standard curricula (NSC) and S. Jackson stated that the NSC says what to cover in

the program, not what to test.

P. Row brought up the proposal he handed out at the May Board meeting concerning a new system for ambulance licensure. He feels that a service should be able to keep an “old” ambulance just in case they need one as back-up or in a disaster setting. It would not need to be stocked with equipment and could be moved into place for a disabled/out-of-service vehicle yet still be considered in-service. He then asked for thoughts from the Board members. The question was then asked if anyone had ever had such a situation and the suggestion was made to gather statistics on this.

E. Jaeger mentioned that their ambulance service had situations where a few times per year, large events were held in town and additional ambulances were required on a very short term basis. Since there is very little for trade-in value for old ambulances, they prefer to keep them and use them for special events as described and not have to borrow loaner vehicles. K. Doolan mentioned that waivers are available for short term use vehicles as long as there is a plan in place and details are laid out in the waiver request. J. Houston mentioned that the equipment sub-committee has this situation on the list of issues to be discussed. G. Turpin thought the idea of a back-up truck was sensible but that the “disaster” ambulance was awkward, F. Hubbell agreed and suggested forgetting about this category. D. Strang stated that he appreciated this being brought forward. R. O’Brien suggested that the enforcement focus be adjusted from levels of full inspections to “spot inspections” to test compliance. Many Board members agreed with the focus on spot inspections.

(5 minute break)

#### **New Business:**

##### **“Tough Mudder event” – D. Strang/R. Cloutier**

D. Strang explained the recent situation of the “Tough Mudder” event at Gunstock Mountain and the late notification to the Bureau and local emergency response personnel as to who would be “covering” this mass gathering. The group that was being held responsible for participant and attendee safety was woefully unprepared for what occurred. The heat during the event caused many medical emergencies which they neither considered nor were prepared to handle. He then described other mass gathering events that he has been involved with, such as the “Timberman” triathlon also held in Gilford each August, and the high level of planning and preparation that goes into each of them.

R. Cloutier described the situation this group had for hiring non-licensed and currently non-certified personnel to work this event. J. Grey and F. Hubbell each stated that the events they have been involved with in other states always required licensure specific to that state. All agreed that this created a very dangerous situation and cannot be allowed to happen again.

D. Strang detailed the after action meetings that were held at Gunstock and Lakes Region General Hospital (LRGH). It was his hope that the review of this event will make pre-planning for other large events, which are occurring more and more, much more organized. A great deal of discussion took place concerning preparedness for inclement weather and any other possibilities that can happen during a large scale open air event. A suggestion was made to see what other states have in place for similar events. D. Strang mentioned that this will likely be a multi-jurisdictional process. There will be further discussion on this topic at the September meeting.

#### **Items of Interest:**

S. Schuler brought up the current MCI tags that the division promotes and stated that many other tags out there appear to function better. His opinion was that these MCI tags are archaic. He felt that it is best for all units to use the same tag so that when an MCI happens, everyone works from the same plan. A suggestion was made to consider updating these tags. K. Doolan mentioned that this style of tag was approved by the New England EMS Council many years ago and that the Division purchases these MCI tags to distribute during inspections. J. Houston will bring this to the equipment committee.

**Motion to adjourn** was made by J. Grey and seconded by M. Cloutier.

Approved unanimously - **Adjournment:** 3:50 PM

**Next Meeting**

**Thursday – September 19, 2013**

**Location: Fire/EMS Academy - Concord**