

ALASKA COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
MINUTES - Thursday, October 4, 2007

Call to Order:

Chair Karen O'Neill, MD called the fall meeting of ACEMS to order at 9:05 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions:

ACEMS Members in Attendance:

Karen O'Neill, MD, Chair	Steve O'Connor
David Hull, Vice-Chair	Roy Sursa
John Dickens, Officer-at-Large	Soren Threadgill
Ron Bowers	

State Section of Injury Prevention and EMS Staff in Attendance:

Tim Bundy, Section Chief	Doreen Risley, Public Health Specialist
Mike Branum, Acting EMS Unit Manager	Tracy Solomon, Administrative Clerk for Certification
Shelley K. Owens, Public Health Specialist	

EMS Regional Staff in Attendance:

Sue Hecks, Executive Director, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.
Dan Johnson, Executive Director, Interior Region EMS Council, Inc.
Bobbi Leichty, Executive Director, Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc.
Kathy McLeron, Regional EMS Training Coordinator, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.
Dave Milligan, EMS Trainer, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
Mike Motti, EMS Coordinator, South East Regional Health Corporation EMS
Dave Potashnick, EMS Regional Director, North Slope Borough Fire Department
Skip Richards, EMS Coordinator, Chugachmiut Corporation
Jane Schultz, EMS Coordinator, Kenai Peninsula
Terry Stone, EMS Coordinator, Kodiak Area Native Association

Liaison Representative Members in Attendance:

Frank Sacco, MD, Alaska Native Medical Center and American College of Surgeons; BJ Coopes, MD, Children's Hospital at Providence

Approval of Minutes and Agenda:

Motions passed to adopt the minutes from the April 19-20, 2007 meeting and to approve the Agenda for October 4-5, 2007.

REPORTS FROM LIAISONS, STATE STAFF AND COMMITTEES

Executive Committee Report (Karen O'Neill, MD)

Additions to the agenda: Bryan Fisher, Chief of the Preparedness Branch of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Brenda Knapp, Deputy Director of the Division of Public Health will be here to speak. Karen reviewed the correspondence which was sent out at the request of ACEMS and the responses which were received. She reminded the group of their ethical responsibilities as Council members. The Awards selection will not take place at the Fall meeting and ACEMS will meet telephonically to choose the EMS Award recipients.

ACEMS Liaison Member Reports

- Frank Sacco, MD - American College of Surgeons & AK Area Native Health Service

Congress authorized money for trauma system development and improvement; it needs the President's signature to be signed into law. Trauma centers are in crisis around the country and are closing. The American College of Surgeons is looking at certification of trauma center programs. Locally two more hospitals in Sitka became Level IV hospitals and two others are recertifying as Level IV centers. Alaska Regional and Providence hospitals still have no interest in becoming trauma centers. There are now six ATLS courses going on around the state. There is a one-day Rural Trauma Development Course available.

- **BJ Coopes MD – Pediatric Community**

BJ discussed an outbreak of RSV in Barrow which sent 24 patients to Anchorage with 6 intubations. This incident which nearly overwhelmed the bed capacity in Anchorage prompted the Dept. of Health and Social Services to apply for and receive a pediatric disaster grant of about \$700,000 to improve surge capacity for pediatric patients in the state. The disaster preparedness office will be working with the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership (AAPP) to oversee the grant activities. In a separate issue, there are discussions between The Children's Hospital at Providence and Alaska Native Medical Center for developing a new children's hospital in the state. This is a huge undertaking and discussions are in the very early stages.

Director of the Division of Public Health (Brenda Knapp)

Brenda is the new Deputy Director of the Division of Public Health and wanted to introduce herself and to learn about ACEMS. She thanked the ACEMS members for volunteering their service on the Council. There have been some adjustments in the Division and the Director and her staff hope that the changes will all be positive. Dept. of Health and Social Services Commissioner Karleen Jackson has appointed Dr. Jay Butler to the newly-created position of Chief Medical Officer for the Department.

Chief, Preparedness Branch, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (Bryan Fisher)

Bryan is with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The Interoperable Communication Grant Program has received 7.25 million dollars for Alaska. The state can award some of this money to non-governmental organizations but is only allowed to fund thirty-one communities in Alaska that are defined as eligible. DHSEM has partnered with the Dept. of Commerce to use its grant management process to distribute the funds, and at this time they don't have a way to send money to states or local jurisdictions. The grant has an 80:20 match requirement and the state will meet the match. The money is only available until 9/30/2010. Interoperable communication training dollars can only be used for local organizations and can be applied for training in the spring. Alaska has to pass through 5.8 million dollars of the money to local organizations. The grant requires the state to build a strategic technology reserve and \$561,000 will be spent for this process. Bryan can be reached at (907)428-7096 or at www.ak-prepared.com.

IPEMS Section Report (Tim Bundy)

Proposals have been received from two NEMSIS Gold-compliant vendors for the EMS pre-hospital data collection project. Tim and Shelley will be serving on the proposal evaluation committee starting next week. Funding is lined up and just needs to get through the system so that it is available for the project. Money is also available for Code Blue for another couple of years in capital requests. On the communications issue, Tim has asked for an increment in capital funding for several years so that we can start replacing some of the legacy systems. These funds would be in addition to the Homeland Security money. Some of the repeaters need to be repaired or are out of service. The Section has signed a contract with the Oregon Poison Control Center and has increased its allocation in general funds by \$50,000 a year with a five-year contract. The Section is also working on securing federal grant available across the state to health care providers.

EMS Program Report (Mike Branum)

Staff changes - Tracy Solomon is the newest permanent full-time employee. Zoann Murphy has had some medical problems this year, and has been off full time for about 20 weeks now. She is working part-time and Judy Neary has been hired to help Zoann. The EMS Unit transitioned to a new software system for EMS certification in May. Adjustments to the system are still being made. Mike is working on draft regulations and will have an update, hopefully by Symposium.

Regional Directors and Coordinators Report (Sue Hecks)

The EMS Management course is online at this time. Symposium fees have increased by ten dollars to help pay for travel for the EMS Award recipients. Any funds left over will be saved for the next Symposium. An EMS Award notification policy was discussed. The Regions will contact the recipients and work with Southern Region to arrange travel. EMS Day at the Legislature will be January 31, 2008. We would like to have the EMS Survey mailed out with EMT recertification applications.

REGIONAL EMS REPORTS

Interior EMS Region Report (Dan Johnson)

The Interior Symposium is April 2-5, 2008. April 2nd and 3rd are Pre-symposium dates. For more information contact Interior Region at (907) 456-3978. There is a lack of support for HB 36 (Nurse training of EMTs and MICPs) and the Board of Nursing and the Nursing Association are opposed to the bill. Dan will seek to renew communications with the nurses to come up with a solution.

Southeast Region Report (Bobbi Leichty)

There are staff changes with Angela Johnson hired as the Training Coordinator and Gregory Wong as the Assistant Training Coordinator. The on-line EMS Management Course is offered in six modules through the University of Alaska Southeast and Mike Motti has eight students to teach. Doreen was able to find the money to make these courses happen. Mike's First Responder Program has been self-sustaining, with a new class on Prince of Wales. Mike and Angela are working on putting an ETT course online so that less instructor time is needed through the high school. There was no Code Blue funding last year and limited funding this year. We requested \$380,000 and received \$169,000 from the USDA. There have been a number of aviation accidents in Southeast: Misty Fjord (5), downtown Sitka (4), and a Beaver went down in Ketchikan (9 passengers, 6 fatalities). Juneau received a grant for the whole region to buy six Western Shelters, which are modular tents which can be snapped together to make one tent if needed and set up in a hospital parking lot. Southeast Symposium will be in Wrangell this year on April 9-12, 2008. Pre-symposium is on the 9th and 10th. If you have any questions call Southeast Region at (907) 747-8005.

Southern Region Report (Sue Hecks)

In staff changes, Training Coordinator Kathy Griffin and Assistant Training Coordinator Brian Webb have left, as well our Administrative Assistant. Amy is our new Training Center Coordinator and is working full time with 191 instructors. Kathy McLeron has been hired as our Regional Training Coordinator. Debbie McCravey has had surgery which will keep her out for the next four weeks. In preparing for the Symposium Emily McKenzie is updating the website, and job postings will be available with links to all organizations. The Code Blue Project funding for Phases 4 and 6 and 7 should be spent soon. Phase eight funding was for \$251,000.

North Slope Borough Report (Dave Potashnick)

The North Slope is having trouble with enough instructors coming to Barrow. Ninety courses were provided, serving 700 people (10 % of the population). Code Blue Phase five is done. The oxygen generator is working great. Dave discussed the RSV breakout in March and part of April which had no fatalities. Dr. Lerner came up to Barrow on her own to help.

There were no reports for Maniilaq Association, Norton Sound, or Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation.

Recessed: 5:00 pm

ALASKA COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
MINUTES - Friday, October 5, 2007

Call to Order: 9:00 am

REPORTS FROM LIAISONS, STATE STAFF AND COMMITTEES CONTINUED

Public Information and Education Committee Report (Dave Hull)

PI&E decided that the Committee is needed and should continue. The EMS survey was a great idea and we need to explore more options to get the survey out, since the recertification applications have already been sent out. Terry Stone is recognized for her efforts in putting the survey results together. Recruitment and retention of local responders is dependent upon how the individual feels about local support from their community. The economy plays a major role in for responders and some local communities cannot afford to pay full time responders.

State EMS Symposium Planning (Doreen Risley)

The dates are November 7-10. Mike Taigman is the keynote speaker and will be doing a presentation called "EMS Next Steps". It is about how EMS needs to change and follow the direction of healthcare, such as the whole patient and not just the symptom. Pre-symposium includes an all-day domestic violence course, 2-day Advanced Pediatric Life Support course, and an Air Medical Escort training course. There are several half-day sessions on Thursday. The Clinical track will run for 90 minute sessions Thursday through Saturday. Medical Directors and the Alaska Air Ambulance Association will both meet on Saturday afternoon. The Reception is Thursday evening at the Hilton Hotel.

EMS for Children (Doreen Risley)

This is year 2 of a 3-year grant; the program is working on performance measures. The Advisory Group has completed work on a pediatric facility recognition program. This is a performance measure important to the national program and the process has been approved by the Division of Public Health. The program is voluntary and defines what is required to be an Emergency Department recognized for the stabilization and care of pediatric patients. A site visit by a team of experts is required to review the hospitals for the pediatric program. Transfer agreements are important and the next step is to look at transfer protocols and how Alaska wants to implement them. The Advisory Group would like to focus on child abuse. Dr. Coopes brought this issue to the group and discussed the magnitude of the problem and that abuse is underreported. The group feels that this would be a great issue to work on as it has so many different angles from which it can be approached.

Code Blue Project (Doreen Risley)

This is Phase seven and the Code Blue Project looks like it will continue into Phase eight. Phase six did not receive a lot of support from the USDA so a decision was made to seek funding from the Denali Commission. The Denali Commission is funding an additional \$636,000, but also stated this would be the last grant award. The Steering Committee estimates that requests will be about \$2.2 million. The money from Denali Commission will fund items for which additional monies were needed. USDA did not completely fund Phase seven although Interior, Southeast, Southern Region and Norton Sound Health Corp. did receive some USDA funds. The Steering Committee suggests that we may need to look to other funding sources since national competition for the USDA funds is increasing. Since the Project started, close to 14 million dollars has been spent, including State, USDA, Denali Commission, Rasmussen and local funding.

Alaska Trauma Registry Report (Tariq Ali)

ATV and snow machine fatalities have doubled and the number is about 35-54 deaths, based on population. The use of off-road vehicles is the most dangerous sport as well as a means of transportation. If you have any questions please contact him at 465-8741 or at saiyed.ali@alaska.gov.

Injury Prevention Report (Mary Krom)

The Oregon Poison Center received 9,299 calls in 2006, with 7,168 confirmed exposures, and 1,851 calls for information. Of these calls, 75% were from private individuals. There were 1,016 intentional poisonings in the age range of 6-19 years of age with 68% suspected suicides. Safe Kids International is going worldwide in 2008 with Kids Don't Float. There have been 14 lives saved and 16 sites gained in 2007. We are working on issues of falls and medication education for the elderly. All fire stations in Anchorage are doing car seat checks now and Kenai has inspection stations. In 20% of motor vehicle accidents, children are improperly or unrestrained. In the smoke detector program, we have been in 13 communities and distributed 5500 alarms.

Health Planning & Systems Development Update (Pat Carr)

Pat discussed workforce projects including a study of physician shortage in Alaska, recruitment, resources, vacancy and turnover. She regrets that the Rural Hospital Flexibility Program has a funding shortage. The Governor's Health Care Strategy Planning Council will be making a presentation of its recommendations at the Alaska Health Summit December 3-5. Emergency room data will be collected this year in addition to hospital discharge data. Dr. O'Neill has replaced Barb Simonsen as the ACEMS representative on the Primary Care Council, and Dave Hull will sit in for Karen when she is unavailable.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) (Dave Hull, ACEMS; Del Smith, ALMR; & Major Matt Leveque, AST)

The Northern Edge 2007 exercise revealed gaps in communications capability. The system may need more expansion to correct the conflict in use of conventional channels. There was discussion of a Public Safety Interoperability Grant of \$7 million. Some years ago Motorola did an assessment of gateways and who needs to talk to the Alaska State Troopers. Grants will be available to work on developing a gateway plan. The Dept. of Defense is proceeding with work on Motobridge gateways. A question came up whether marine band radio will not be required to transition to narrowband frequency because of its international usage. Marine VHF is commonly but not legally used. Matt: a gateway will only work if the legacy EMS system is up and running. Del: determine your needs then look for a technological solution. A gateway system, which is unlikely to work in western Alaska, is estimated to cost \$50,000. There was discussion of the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan and the need for a regional needs assessment. Del described the two transportable units ("skids") which are staged in Fairbanks and Anchorage and can be used to augment site capacity or located where there is no capacity. Each skid has 50 radios and one of the skids has satellite capacity. The National Guard doesn't want custody of them so both are owned by the Dept. of Defense. They can be deployed for 72 hours in an emergency, after which permission needs to be obtained from Washington, DC. The transportables were developed because of the recognition that ALMR is not a statewide program.

There was a 2002 Memorandum of Agreement to prepare an ALMR Cooperative Agreement with 4 partners: State of Alaska, Dept. of Defense (DOD), Alaska Municipal League (AML), and non-DOD Federal agencies. ALMR is currently DOD-funded, but once the Agreement is signed, Alaska can contribute money. AML has been hesitant to sign the 40-page document.

MOTION: Recommend to the Governor that Alaska take possession of one of the ALMR skids [Ron/Roy] *PASSED.*

MOTION: Request AML to sign the ALMR Cooperative Agreement [Ron/Roy] *PASSED*

Membership Status

The terms of Ron Bowers, John Dickens and Dave Hull expire 11/5/07. Members are encouraged to submit a letter to Boards and Commissions requesting reappointment and send Shelley a copy of the letter.

MOTION: To recommend reappointment of Ron, John and Dave [Soren/Roy] *PASSED*

Appointments to Task Forces & Committees

MOTION: To add Kathy McLeron and Angela Johnson to the Training Committee [Steve/Soren] *PASSED*

MOTION: To add Jane Schultz to PIE in place of Sue Hecks [Dave/John] *PASSED*

MOTION: To add Harriet Cutshall to PIE [Ron/Dave] *PASSED*

Dates for next meeting

The spring meeting will be held in Juneau. ACEMS will meet March 6th and 7th and the Regional Directors & Coordinators will meet on Wednesday, March 5th. PIE will meet on Wednesday.

Adjourned: 3:32 p.m.