



LIFELINE

BLS CARE: EMTs MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“It’s a huge achievement to know I helped save a life”, says Steven Henry, Jr., who is the EMS Captain for Newberry Twp. Fire Department, Etters, PA. He notes that it’s nice to hear the following comment too, “whatever you guys did, really worked”. This was a quote from a constituent that was treated by EMT personnel from the Newberry Twp. Fire Department. The treatment that was administered was CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure). CPAP was used by Newberry EMT personnel as part of a pilot BLS CPAP project. Henry states that CPAP is just the latest BLS skill that is making a difference within their rural area. In addition to CPAP, since being approved to carry and use the Epi-Pen on board their (2) BLS ambulances 3 years ago, 22 patients have benefited from Epi-Pen administrations. Newberry’s ambulances carry AEDs and have documented cardiac arrest saves as a result of the AEDs. Henry notes, “critically ill patients too are benefiting from EMT personnel assisting them with their own medications, i.e. Nitroglycerin/Inhalers”. In today’s EMS system, BLS care provided by First Responders and EMT is making a difference. And when partnered with ALS and aeromedical services, patients are receiving hospital quality care on the streets of their communities.

Excellence in BLS care is not just occurring in Newberry Twp., but is occurring within BLS services in the EMMCO West region. About a year ago, Tidioute Ambulance, located in rural southwestern Warren County, got approved to carry Epi pens onboard their BLS ambulance. Within a week of getting approved, a couple from Pittsburgh was working on their cabin when one of them got stung and suffered an anaphylactic reaction. EMT personnel from Tidioute Ambulance assessed the victim and found them to be in a compromised medical emergency state. They administered the Epi pen and dramatically improved the patient’s condition. Only a few weeks later, another anaphylactic reaction patient benefited from another Epi Pen administration performed by Tidioute EMT personnel.

Steve Henry notes, “It’s all about expanding our knowledge as EMTs. EMTs are taught to be technicians but there are skills at which we can become clinicians too. EMTs have the training to treat critically ill people. EMS agencies need to provide the tools needed to make a difference, even if it is only one patient.” Henry notes that some of the Newberry personnel were afraid of the new skills at first. But, as they saw the end results, they said “I can do this”!

Licensed PA DOH BLS ambulance services in the EMMCO West region can begin using the new CPAP BLS skill, which Newberry Twp Fire Department has been using for the past year. Results from the pilot CPAP project completed in the EHSF (Emergency Health Services Federation) EMS region showed that BLS CPAP made a difference in prehospital patient care. The PA Department of Health has approved the use of CPAP by BLS services. As with AED and Epi Pen, the BLS service and EMT staff must meet the program requirements to implement the CPAP program. These include:

(Cont. pg.2)

Ambulance Service Requirements:

Each ambulance service must meet the following requirements prior to the implementation of CPAP for BLS:

1. Identification of a medical director willing to serve in an oversight capacity in regards to the CPAP.
2. Ability to comply with Statewide BLS Protocols.
3. Maintain CPAP masks/devices adequate to treat one patient with CPAP.
4. Carry a CPAP device that has a manometer (or other means to provide specific CPAP pressure) and meets any other specifications required by the Department of Health.
5. Be approved to carry a pulse oximeter.
6. The service medical director must oversee the CPAP training, use of CPAP, and quality improvement audits.

EMS Practitioner Requirements:

Each EMS Practitioner must meet the following requirements prior to using CPAP for BLS:

1. The CPAP for BLS skill may only be used when an EMT is working with an ambulance service that complies with Department of Health requirements for carrying CPAP.
2. Only an EMT that has completed the CPAP for BLS Training Module may use the CPAP for BLS skill.
3. An EMT must be authorized to perform the CPAP for BLS skill by the ambulance service medical director.



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(CONT. FROM PG 1)

A single use CPAP unit can be used to implement a BLS level program (Figure 1). Through a specially funded project through the PA Department of Health, EMMCO West is providing all ALS services with the single use CPAP units to assure compliance with a 7/1/2009 implementation date of CPAP for ALS services throughout the Commonwealth. The EMSOF process allows services to request funding of a more expensive, multiple use CPAP devices. BLS services wishing to implement CPAP, Epi Pen, or AED are asked to contact EMMCO West for specific implementation information.



Figure 1. Single use CPAP unit for ALS and BLS

BLS practitioners make a difference each and every day. BLS ambulance services are asked to evaluate the implementation of CPAP, AED, and Epi-Pens within their services. This is a great opportunity to improve the level of BLS care within our region's rural communities and reinforces the critical role that EMTs have in the prehospital care system.

Here we have a chance to change and improve the image of the EMS system. We are not just ambulance drivers, (which is the common thought process or image that has been displayed for years) we are technicians trained to save a life and to improve the quality of life and treatment and finally the service that we deliver in this our profession.

Services presently approved for carrying epi are: City of Franklin FD QRS, City of Greenville FD QRS, Grand Valley VFD Ambulance Service, Jamestown VFD Ambulance Service, Lawrence Park VFD Ambulance Service, Reno VFD Ambulance Service, Russell VFD Ambulance Service, and Tidioute VFD Ambulance Service.

SMILE AND SIGN HERE

EMMCO West, Inc. is implementing the processing of photo identification and signatures, as part of the PA Department of Health EMS certification processing. On the new plastic EMS certification identification cards, EMS practitioners can have their photo and signatures electronically captured and imprinted onto their certification cards.

Beginning **September 15, 2008**, regional EMS practitioners can have their photos and signatures processed at the EMMCO West office in Meadville. EMS practitioners can stop in the EMMCO West office (Meadville,

PA), M – F between 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM; no appointments are necessary. In addition to the EMMCO West office location, photo id and signature processing will be a part of other regional programming in the coming months. Go to www.emmco.org and check under Education/EW courses to see a listing of locations at which photo id's will be taken.

You'll need to bring the following verification items with you,

1. (1) Form of Photo Id (i.e. Drivers License, Passport, or School Id.)
2. Current PA DOH EMS Certification (First Responder, EMT, Paramedic,

PHRN)

3. Current CPR certification

Note, EMS practitioners with a certification expiration date of 6 months or less will be able to have their photos and signatures uploaded onto the PA Department of Health EMS Registry system. Upon completion of recertification as an EMS Practitioner a new plastic certification card will be issued with their photo and signature imprinted on it.

So, make sure to bring your best smile with you and get your new PA Department of Health EMS certification card!

EMSOP FUNDING 2008-2009

The EMSOP funds available for the regional priority list this contract year is approximately \$73,160.00.

The Regional Transportation Committee has met and reviewed the EMSOP priorities for contract year 2008-2009. The EMMCO West executive committee and the EMMCO West Board has also met and approved of the priorities as presented.

By now each service should have submitted their funding requests to EMMCO West. The EMMCO West

Regional Transportation Committee will be meeting to review submitted requests. As a part of this review, each service's cooperation in submitting the following documentation is considered:

- Patient Care Reports
- PSAP Reports
- Suction Unit Reports

Services that report on time, all of the documentation listed above, at least 75% of the time will receive 1st prior-

ity. Those services reporting, but < 75% of the time, will receive a 2nd priority. Services that do not participate will not be eligible for funding.

If more requests are received than funds are available, the date EMMCO West received the request for funding will also be used to further prioritize requests.

Services that believe they are not current with these reports are asked to contact EMMCO West.

COSTARS AND AMERINET

If your organization is a non-profit 501(C)(3) you may be eligible to join

COSTARS

<https://www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars/>

or

Amerinet

<http://www.amerinet-gpo.com/>.

These programs could save your organization significant amounts of money. For example you could receive 22% discounts on your cellular telephone accounts through Ameri-

net. Your service may be eligible to receive a Voyager card through COSTARS, which will deduct the taxes from your fuel. These are just a few of the examples of savings your organization could take advantage of if you are eligible for these programs.

CPR AT EMMCO WEST

EMMCO West, Inc. recognizes how difficult it can be for field personnel to maintain the necessary requirements to be eligible for recertification. In an effort to assist field personnel with meeting their cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) requirements, EMMCO West, Inc. is offering four chances, on two separate dates, to attend an American Heart Association Healthcare Provider CPR refresher course. Following the suc-

cessful completion of one of these courses, each student will receive a current CPR card. All field personnel are required to maintain a current healthcare provider CPR card to be qualified for recertification. The courses will be held on October 24th, 2008 and November 11th, 2008. The courses will be held at 1 p.m. till 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. till 8 p.m. on both dates at the EMMCO West Education Room, Meadville, PA. The cost of the course is \$10.00 and is

due prior to attendance in the class. Interested students can contact Michelle Eaton via phone at (814)337-5380 ext. 102 or e-mail at michelle@emmco.org, or register online www.emmco.org "Education."

It is the responsibility of field personnel to provide EMMCO West, Inc. a copy of the certification card.

HOLD THE DATE—SYMPOSIUM 2009

EMMCO West Educational Symposium 2009 will be March 5-9, 2009. Please mark your calendars and join EMMCO West for your continuing education at the Radisson Hotel Sharon. See you there!!

FALL 2008 REGIONAL EMS TRAINING PROGRAMS

Fall 2008 offers a variety of training opportunities in the EMMCO West region. Courses being offered include a Priority Dispatch EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatch), EMS Instructor, and three separate CISM courses that include Peer, Advanced, and Strategic Response.

Priority Dispatch (EMD): [November 4 – 7] The Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD) has been recognized as an essential component of effective EMS systems. Proper and timely training as well as a sound medical protocol are what help EMDs deliver quality care to the calling public with emergency medical needs.

Over the past decade, Medical Priority's EMD Certification Course has become the standard for EMD training. The course meets or exceeds all national criteria set by A.S.T.M., U.S Department of Transportation, National Association of EMS Physicians, and others.

EMS Instructor: [October 9 – 19, 2008] A 40 hour PA Department of Health EMS Instructor course is being held during October 2008. This course prepares prehospital personnel in teaching concepts and principals needed to instruct accredited prehospital courses such as Emergency Responder, EMT, Paramedic, and continuing education programs. Following the classroom portion, there is a field internship that is completed at an accredited training institute before EMS Instructor certification is issued.

Individual Peer (CISM): [September 27 & 28, 2008] This class teaches students how to assist with crisis interventions, often called "emotional first aid". Students will learn basic crisis communications skills. Students will learn about the common psychological and behavioral crisis reactions to stress. This course is a prerequisite to the Advanced & Strategic Response programs.

Advanced Response (CISM): [October 25 & 26, 2008] This program emphasizes a broadening of the knowledge concerning critical incident stress interventions, as well as, post traumatic stress syndrome. This course is taught by Richard Boland and adheres to the ICISF curriculum.

Strategic Response (CISM): [November 15 & 16, 2008] In this course essential information needed when planning a crisis intervention for individuals or groups is reviewed. How to assess a crisis situation and how to design a plan of action to assist the people dealing with the crisis situation are key concepts that are addressed.

Go to www.emmco.org click on "Events" & EW Sponsored Courses to register online and pay with a credit card. Prerequisites for any of these courses are identified on the website.

“BEST PRACTICES” BY CHRIS HEILE, EMT-P, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, EMMCO WEST

I had the opportunity to take a “Best Practices in EMS” class at Pennsylvania’s EMS conference in August. The program was led by J.R. Henry and Chris Dell, both speakers at the EMMCO West EMS Leaders of Tomorrow series. In one small group discussion we were sharing ways to increase customer service and customer satisfaction. One service manager indicated that it was a policy that his crews, when possible, ask the patient “Is there anything else we (I) can do for you we (I) have the time.”

What I found most profound about that was how simple yet effective this was. During the class we had brainstormed and discussed many grandiose ideas on how to solve the problems we face in EMS. This however was a simple act of kindness which could really impact the public’s perception of the entire EMS system. This could be remembering the value of taking care of a person’s basic comforts, such as asking if he or she needs a blanket and how that correlates to a patient’s overall comfort issue.

I would challenge all of us to not be satisfied with the status quo. We have a lot of work to do in increasing public awareness and proving our worth. Some of these things that need done are time intensive projects of which we might not see the results for decades to come. However, we all can take extra steps to help convey a professional and compassionate image to those we serve.

PERC CONFERENCE

PA Emergency Responders Conference October 4th & 5th at the Bayfront Convention Center, brought to you by EmeryCare, Inc. with sponsorship by Hamot Medical Center and Saint Vincent Health Center. Contact EmeryCare directly at 814-870-1010 or email jkifer@emerycare.com for information and pre-registration or visit the EMMCO West website www.emmco.org to download the brochure.

OVERVIEW OF PROTOCOL CHANGES

In November of 2008 the Department of Health Bureau of EMS will be releasing revisions to the ALS and BLS protocols. All EMS personnel are responsible for knowing the content of the treatment protocols. Here is an overview of some of the changes:

BLS Protocols:

- Revised Cat II trauma criteria
- New Air Medical Transport of Non-trauma Patient protocol
- Optional BLS CPAP (similar to the BLS EPI program)

- New Bleeding Control protocol
- Moved Medical Command Contact protocol from ALS to BLS protocols

ALS Protocols

- Lidocaine administration prior to IO infusion
- Increased Diphenhydramine dose to 50 mg.
- CPAP required by 7/1/09
- Added Captopril as optional medication for CHF

EMMCO West is working on an index of changes and will be providing more information to services and on the website regarding the implementation of the new protocols. The protocols are available from the Department of Health Bureau of EMS website.

<http://www.health.state.pa.us/ems>

PCR DATA AND POSSIBLE FRACTURE/DISLOCATION CARE

Here are some interesting statistics from our region's PCR data. EMMCO West staff ran reports on possible fracture/dislocations and compared them to the number of times that splinting was selected as a treatment for the last six months. The cases are for calls where the response mode was "emergency".

Injury	Cases	Cases Splinted	Percentage
Fracture/Dislocation Arm	19	7	37%
Fracture/Dislocation Thigh	15	4	27%
Fracture/Dislocation Leg/Foot	31	8	26%

A recent JEMS article called "The Lost Art of Splinting" (JEMS, July 2008) mentions a study in Ohio where it was found that out of 1073 patients diagnosed with an extremity fracture, only 17% received ice and only 25% were splinted.

It is likely that there were more cases of possible fracture/dislocations than were documented in the PCR (which is a whole other problem). It is likely that the percentage would not change very much if the PCRs were filled out completely.

In "Best Practices" article, the little things that can be done to improve our customer serve and our public image was discussed. If we aren't splinting patients who have suspected fractures, why are they even calling us? If you fall off a ladder at home and break something, neighbors and family pick you up and slide you into a car's back seat and cause about the same amount of pain and discomfort that you may receive by getting picked up and put onto a stretcher without splinting.

A search on the internet for "splinting" and "reduce injury" revealed the following results. There are many websites out there promoting splinting. For example, A website for horseback riding said that splinting reduces pain associated with moving a patient and reduces the likelihood of additional injury. The website even describes a makeshift traction splint. Another backpacking website states, and paraphrasing, that you must splint a patient with a suspected fracture before moving them. Do patients stand a better chance of getting splinted at a dude ranch than they are by EMS crews?

EMS personnel work hard and do a good job. But in some areas, we are becoming complacent as a system. The challenge to our EMS services and managers is to begin monitoring the use of splinting and to set an example.

GREEN'S THE COLOR IN NOVEMBER

Effective November 24, 2008, federal law goes into effect and directly affects emergency service personnel that respond to vehicle crashes. The statute states the following:

(23 CFR Part 634, Department of Transportation)

“All workers within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway who are exposed to either to traffic (vehicles using the highway for purpose of travel) or to construction equipment within the work area shall wear high-visibility safety apparel...”workers mean people on foot whose duties place them within the right-of-way of a Federal highway... responders to incidents within the highway.”

EMMCO West, Inc. has provided each licensed EMS vehicle in the region with (2) highly visible “lime green” safety vests (Figure 2). These vests meet the current standards for break-away protection. EMS, fire, and police who respond to highway systems supported with federal funding are required by November 24, 2008 to implement a safety vest program for their agency’s public safety responders.



Figure 2 Lime Green Safety Vests For EMS

THREE CISM COURSES

EMMCO West, Inc. is very excited to announce that three International Critical Incident Stress Foundation courses will be held at the EMMCO West, Inc. office in the upcoming months. Crisis Intervention is a form of emergency mental health intervention, basically emotional first aid. Each of the upcoming courses teaches students how to perform Crisis Intervention using evidence based practices.

The first course, Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support provides students with the specialized techniques used when dealing with an individual in a one on one setting who are in need of Crisis Intervention. This course is being held on September 27th and 28th. (Students must provide proof of certification in either Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support or Group Crisis Intervention to attend the next two courses.)

The second course, Advanced Group Crisis Intervention builds on the core knowledge acquired during the Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support course. This course teaches students through research findings about the concepts of enhanced group processes. This course is being held on October 25th and 26th.

The third course Strategic Response to Crisis teaches students how a Crisis Intervention is put together. This course teaches students about effective planning and what resources are required to adequately run a Crisis Intervention. This course will run on November 15th and 16th.

Students must preregister for each of these courses within ten days of the courses to be eligible for attendance. Students must attend both dates of each course to receive certification. The cost for each course is \$120.00, established

members of the EMMCO West CISM or UPMC Horizon CISM team cost is \$20.00, which includes the cost of the materials, instructor fees, and lunch for both days. Each course is recognized for continuing education credits and online registration is available.

The EMMCO West, Inc. Critical Incident Stress Management Team has been providing Crisis Intervention at no charge to services in seven counties since 1987. The EMMCO West, Inc. Critical Incident Stress Management Team is currently seeking new members.

For more information regarding either the upcoming courses or an application to join the EMMCO West, Inc. Critical Incident Stress Management team, please contact Michelle Eaton at (814) 337-5380 ext. 102 or via e-mail at michelle@emmco.org.

CON ED CORNER

Recently EMMCO West has received many requests from continuing education sponsors to add students to con ed rosters, after the class has been submitted to the regional council for processing. This occurs mostly from individuals not having their certification numbers when they attend classes. EMS Practitioners should come to class prepared to give the appropriate information to the con ed sponsor in order to receive credit for the class. This includes the certification num-

ber and date of birth. Continuing education sponsors are required by regulation to return the appropriate class paperwork to the regional EMS office within 10 days, following the last date of the class. If a person does not have this information at the time of the continuing education class, the sponsors have been instructed to have each student complete the con ed by endorsement process. This will prevent the sponsor from receiving disciplinary action for not completing the final course paperwork and

returning it to EMMCO West within the 10 day time frame.

Continuing education sponsors are also required by regulation to provide students with a document stating completion of the course. For individuals who are planning to participate in the reinstatement process, these documents are needed in order to prove completion of the required continuing education for reinstatement. More information about the reinstatement process can be found on our website at www.emmco.org under education.



KEEPING IN THE KNOW

EMMCO West has implemented an online newsletter – email service called Constant Contact. This email service is NOT a SPAM item. This online service replaces a newsletter called “EMS Updates.” The online newsletter – email service enables EMMCO West to send out timely news articles, procedure/policy up-

dates, training activities, and the online newsletter version of EMS Updates. If you have not yet registered for this online service, go to www.emmco.org. At the bottom of the home page is a sign up box. Type in your email address and you can be registered for the Constant Contact information. Constant Contact does

not share your email address with other email vendors and you do not receive SPAM emails or news articles.

Go to www.emmco.org to register your email address. Do it today to get in the know concerning EMS information.



This project is funded in part under a contract with the PA Department of Health.

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THE BOTTOM LINE IS
PATIENT CARE.



EMMCO West, Inc.

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