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## EMS UPDATE

September 2010

### *The "C's" For EMS Agencies*

Don't feel that you are alone! It's not just your EMS agency that is having staffing issues. Keeping EMS agencies staffed with qualified EMS professionals to respond to our community's requests for emergency care and transport is becoming increasingly difficult. There are troubling regional statistics emerging related to the recruitment and retention of EMS personnel, especially when these statistics are combined with current EMS system utilization trends. For instance, consider these findings:

- For most counties, the number of "new" personnel entering EMS no longer equals or exceeds the number of EMS personnel exiting the EMS profession.
- Initial EMS training courses, that are being held, are having difficulty meeting minimum class size requirements. Simply, there is insufficient enrollment.
- The number of paramedics with medical command authorization is at a new 10 year low mark. There are only 253 paramedics out of 800+ certified paramedics that have current medical command authorization.
- The number of documented patient care reports (pcrs) continues to increase every year.
- Inter-facility transfers continue to increase every year. These transports are taking EMS assets out of local community emergency service areas for hours at a time.
- Increased demand for EMS system assets to "standby" at events within a community.

This EMS system paradox (less personnel/resources to handle increased EMS system demands) has EMS agencies scrambling to meet their community's EMS system demands. And in some cases, EMS agencies no longer have sufficient staffing/resources to meet their community's EMS system demands.

What are the net results of this EMS paradox? Immediately noticeable attributes are:

- an increased number of missed EMS calls
- a diminished EMS system response time to critical emergent situations

- an increased demand upon all of a county's EMS system's resources
- and, yes, negative revenue income for the EMS agency that missed the initial call
- It's important to note is that the current EMS system demands will likely continue to increase, which will place additional stress on an already fragile EMS system.

There are no easy fixes or solutions to this EMS system paradox. One suggestion (action) for EMS agencies to consider is, the first "c", collaboration. EMS agencies may want to look at the feasibility to consider collaboration with neighboring EMS agencies. Collaboration should be approached with open eyes and minds. Explore the possibilities and then identify solutions that will improve the community's EMS system. Collaboration may be defined as sharing EMS professionals between EMS agencies. Collaboration could be the alternating scheduled "first out" coverage for EMS agencies for a community-wide coverage area. Collaboration may also be the forming a separate EMS agency that "pools" EMS assets and personnel resources from multiple organizations.

This now leads us to discuss the next "C", consolidation. Consolidation, a.k.a. merger, is much more definitive than the previously stated collaboration example. In collaboration, EMS agencies retain their separate identities. In consolidation, individual EMS agencies are dissolved into a new entity. There is significant pride, tradition, support, etc... vested within organizations and these attributes are often lost in the consolidation process. The identity - name change for an organization is often one of the largest obstacles to pursue in a consolidation. Regardless of the process, focusing on what the "greater good" is should be the principal objective of a consolidation. Note that collaboration efforts should be explored first before leaping to consolidation.

Neither collaboration nor consolidations are processes that EMS agencies willingly pursue. Faced with increased EMS system demands and limited EMS assets, EMS agencies may need to think about exploring the possibilities of the "c's". EMMCO West staff is here to provide technical assistance for EMS agencies, as they try to understand and react to today's and tomorrow's EMS system challenges.

Bill McClincy  
Executive Director  
EMMCO West, Inc.

## EMS Graduation Ceremonies

Each year we rack our brains, trying to come up with innovative ways to deal with the 5 R's, recruitment, retention, reimbursement, respect and recognition.

One developmental project that came out of the planning was EMS graduation ceremonies. Following times of concentrated testing, EMMCO West plans to hold

graduation ceremonies which will help address many of the 5 R's.

Graduates are given recognition for their hard work. They are provided certificates, are given opportunities for photos, and can get their photo ID's taken.

Services are invited to meet and in some cases, address the graduates. This provides services, both paid and volunteer a chance to meet candidates and recruit volunteers or employees. This also opens the door for students to be exposed to services with which they might not be familiar.

EMMCO West staff provide education on the structure of the EMS system, certification, re-certification, con-ed, LMS, the EMS portal and other topics which are important to EMS providers. This aids in retention of personnel as they are given the tools to more effectively manage their certification.

We hope services will take advantage of this opportunity.

Christopher Heile

#### TIDBITS:

PCR Data Year: 2009

Mode to Scene: Emergency Only

Outcome: Transported

Incident Type: Vehicular

Cases: 2546

Cases Long Board used: 2353

Cases Short Board or Similar Device used: 1545

Cases C-collar Applied: 1513

## **Just a friendly reminder to all Department of Health certified EMS Instructors!!**

Are you planning on teaching a class you really enjoy teaching?

Do you have unique way of reaching your students through a classroom activity?

Is there something you do in your classroom that you would like to share with others?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, why not give EMMCO West a call to schedule your Module IV Instructor Enrichment Evaluation. Remember that all Department of Health certified EMS instructors must complete an evaluation prior to his/her next certification period.

Why not schedule the evaluation at a time when you shine?

Call today to schedule your evaluation!!

814 337 5380

[michelle@emmco.org](mailto:michelle@emmco.org)

## EPI PEN WORKS

Once again EMMCO West has had a report of an epi pen being used in the field by a QRS service. This time it is out in Warren County with the Wrightsville VFD QRS. Wrightsville received their epi pen education, medical direction, and DOH approval earlier this year.

This particular situation was with bee stings and the patient did better after the administration of the epi pen from the Wrightsville VFD QRS EMTs.

Thank you Wrightsville VFD QRS for taking the time to gain the education and putting in service the epi pens on your QRS. The community has already benefitted.

## EQUIPMENT LENDING

Training equipment is available to loan from EMMCO West. We ask that you request it at least 2 weeks in advance so that we may have it ready for you to pick up when needed. You can either call the Sue at the office at 814-337-5380 or email her at [sue@emmco.org](mailto:sue@emmco.org). Please be specific as to what equipment is needed and when it will be returned.

## CON ED CORNER

The EMS Portal is a great way for you to gain information about your certification status. Here is just a brief overview of what you can do as far as education and continuing education are concerned.

Under the section called "Continuing Education Record" with the star of life symbol beside it you can:

- Find out how many con ed credits you have
- Find out if we have a current CPR card on file for you
- Change your name/ address or email address

Under the section called "Class and Course Applications- Con Ed/Certifications" you can:

- See what classes are being held (both training and certification)
- Find information on other regional EMS councils across the state
- Find a local con ed sponsor or training institutes

If you haven't registered yet, sign up today! You can access the portal through EMMCO West's home page. If you have forgotten your user name and password, call the office or the help desk at 717-783-9171.

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