

# The Blanket

ISSUE 1 - 2008



## New York State Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association, Inc.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael J. Mastrianni, Jr.  
President

Spring has finally returned. The winter months have been very busy and I want to bring everyone up to date on some of the things we have been working on.

As you probably are aware, at the end of last year we announced a tremendous new member benefit. Squads who are members of the Association, have been enrolled the North Central EMS Cooperative. This is a not-for-profit EMS buying cooperative that offers its members significant savings on medical supplies, ambulances, lawyers, and much more. There is no cost to our members. I want to encourage our members to take advantage of this great benefit. For more information visit their web site at [www.ncemsc.org/](http://www.ncemsc.org/).

I also would like to announce a new member benefit that our webmaster John Hussar and his company, Greygoose Graphics, is offering. For as little as \$480.00, John will help you set up a website for your organization. For more information, please go our web site [www.nysvara.org](http://www.nysvara.org) or contact John at [Jhussar@greygoosegraphics.com](mailto:Jhussar@greygoosegraphics.com).

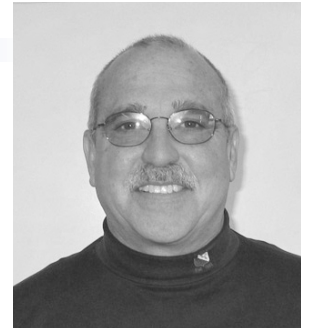
**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!** On Thursday, May 22, 2008, at 11:00am, the EMS Memorial Ceremony will be held at the EMS Memorial on the Plaza in Albany. This year, sadly, there will be two names added to Tree of Life. The ceremony honors all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and is an opportunity for all of us to pay our

respects as well as to say Thank You to everyone who continues to provide care and treatment to our sick and injured friends and neighbors. I cannot more strongly encourage everyone to attend. PLEASE join us.

Henry Ehrhardt, Mike Wilhelm and I had the opportunity to visit Steuben County in the Southern Tier of New York and speak to EMS providers at an EMS Seminar sponsored by Rural Health Resources. It gave us a chance to speak with our colleagues from this part of the state. It was a great day. I want to thank Betty Wattenberg and her group for the invitation.

Early in March, we held our Legislative Day in Albany. Legislative Day provided us the chance to meet with our elected State officials and discuss our Legislative Agenda with them and educate them about the issues that face the volunteer EMS community. I want to thank Andrea Golinsky, Bob Franz and John Mauro for all the work they did to make this day a success.

Henry Ehrhardt and I continue to represent the Association on the New York State Medical Advisory Committee (SEMAC) and the New York State Emergency Medical Services Council (SEMSCO). I am chairing a



*Continued on Page 2*

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**05/07/08** - District 1 Monthly Meeting (Rockland Co.)

**05/08/08** - District 4 Meeting

**05/08/08** - District 18 Meeting

**05/08 - 24/08 EMS Week**

**05/22/08 - EMS Memorial Service - Albany 11 am**

**05/28/08** - NY SEMAC/SEMSCO SubCommittees (Albany)

**05/29/08** - NY SEMAC/SEMSCO (Albany)

**06/04/08** - District 1 Monthly Meeting (Rockland Co.)

**06/12/08** - District 18 Meeting

**09/18 - 21/08 - Pulse Check (Kerhonkson)**

**10/2 -5/08** - Vital Signs (Buffalo)

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The Quarterly Newsletter  
of the NYS Volunteer Ambulance  
& Rescue Association

## CONTENTS

NYS Tax Credit for Active VAC and/or VFD Members Available for 2007 Taxes .....	3
New In Emergency Vehicles .....	3
In Memoriam .....	5
Hospital News .....	6
NYS News .....	8
Bits From Around the State .....	10
Statewide Wireless Network Projected Cost Rising.....	15
NYSVA&RA PULSE CHECK 2008 .....	18



### The Blanket Co-Editors

James B. Downey

Nancy Ehrhardt

E-Mail: [theblanket@nysvara.org](mailto:theblanket@nysvara.org)

### NYSVARA Officers 2007-2008

Michael J. Mastrianni, Jr., President

Roy R. Sweet, Executive Vice President

Henry Ehrhardt, Vice President

Christy Hubbard, Secretary

Robert Franz, Treasurer

Gwen Bray, Financial Secretary

SueAnn Burley, Immediate Past President

### NYSVARA Membership Information

If you are not a member, please join NYSVARA today and help increase the voice of the community/volunteer/non-profit EMS/First Responder Sector in New York State. For information on NYSVARA membership go to our web site at [www.nysvara.org](http://www.nysvara.org).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from Page 1

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) that is looking into revising and updating Part 800. Our group has been working on Part 800.15 and part 800.16 which is the Code of Conduct. Wording revisions should be presented to the Systems Committee at the May meeting. We will be working with the Bureau of EMS to see what other areas of Part 800 should be looked at. If anyone has any specific areas that they feel should be looked at, please let me know. There were several points that came out of the last SEMSCO meeting. The first was that the Bureau has received frequent phone calls requesting extensions of certification. The Bureau does not give extensions. Enrolling in a refresher course does not extend your certification. Taking the NYS written exam will only extend your certification when you sit for the exam BEFORE your card expires. In those cases, the certification is extended only until receipt of results. It is everyone's personal responsibility to see that they renew their certification BEFORE it expires. The Bureau has issued a new Policy Statement 08-01 which deals with Electronic PCR's. The Safety TAG reported that as a result of a survey that was conducted at Vital Signs, there seem to be two pressing issues. There is a need to increase the use of seatbelts on both the front and rear compartments of the ambulance and eliminating the use of lights and sirens when responding to known non-life threatening calls. The State Council and its committees are working to develop a "Culture of Safety" for EMS. Safety of EMS workers must be a top priority. Effective November 24, 2008, new federal (NHTSA-DOT) rules require all workers on the right of way of a federally funded highway to be outfitted with ANSI/ISEA class 2 or 3 brightly colored reflective vests/clothing. The Bureau is working on a guidance statement.

Lastly, the plans for Pulse Check 2008 Conference and Trade Show are moving along well. The Convention Committee is working extremely hard to make this the best Conference ever. Please visit our website at [www.nysvara.org](http://www.nysvara.org) for all the details.

As always, I want to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication to our Association. It is through everyone's efforts that we remain the voice of volunteer EMS in New York State.

Be Safe!



John J. Hussar  
2704 Robins Street  
Endwell, NY 13760  
(607) 743-3509

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## **NYS Tax Credit for Active VAC and/or VFD Members Available for 2007 Taxes**

The *VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' AND AMBULANCE WORKERS' CREDIT* is a new tax credit first available for the 2007 tax year. NYS residents who are active volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers for the entire tax year for which the credit is claimed can take advantage of the credit.

The credit is \$200.00 if filing status is Single, Married Filing Separate Return, Head of Household, or Qualifying Widower. If both spouses are active volunteers and filing status is Married Filing Joint Return the credit is \$400.00. There is no tax credit for dependents who may be active volunteers

For tax year 2007, you cannot claim the volunteer firefighters' and ambulance workers' credit if you receive a real property tax exemption that relates to your volunteer service under Real Property Tax Law (RPTL), Article 4, Title 2. However, if the property has multiple owners, the owner(s) whose volunteer service was not the basis of the exemption may be eligible to claim the credit.

To claim the credit file Form IT-245 with your Form IT-201 Resident Income Tax Return. Additional information is on the internet at: [www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2007/killin/inc/it245\\_2007\\_fill\\_in.pdf](http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2007/killin/inc/it245_2007_fill_in.pdf)

## **Federal Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act Made Law**

On December 20, 2007 the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act (VRIPA) was signed into law by President Bush, having passed both houses of Congress earlier that month. The law prohibits the federal government from taxing benefits provided to volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel by state and local governments. The legislation (now law) exempts all tax benefits provided by state and local governments to volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel from taxation by the federal government. Additionally, the first \$360 per year of any other type of benefit that a volunteer receives is exempt.

## **Mortgages Executed by VAC or VFD Exempt From Recording Tax**

Section 253 of the NYS Tax Law has been amended to provide that the mortgage recording tax will not be imposed on mortgages executed by fire companies and voluntary ambulance services, as both are defined in section 100 of the General Municipal Law. This exemption applies to mortgages recorded on or after August 15, 2007.

To qualify for the mortgage recording tax exemption pursuant to the recently enacted law, the fire company claiming exemption must demonstrate to the recording officer that it is an organization defined in section 100(2) of the General Municipal Law, while the volunteer ambulance service claiming exemption must demonstrate to the recording officer that it is an organization defined in section 100(3) of the General Municipal Law. For some additional information included in TSB-M-07 (4)R issued by the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance go to the web page at: [www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/memos/mortgage/m07\\_4r.pdf](http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/memos/mortgage/m07_4r.pdf)

## **OperationSafeEMS Injury Prevention & Patient Handling Safety Program**

Ferno and McNeil & Company/ESIP, leaders in the fields of patient handling equipment and emergency services insurance respectively, care about the EMS community and the dedicated professionals who work day in and day out to provide quality care to their patients. It's important to them to keep you injury free on the job and keep you in your career, doing what you love. To help you stay safe, Ferno and McNeil & Company/ESIP have partnered to bring you the Operation SafeEMS™, an interactive training program designed to promote safety and reduce the risk of injury for EMS providers and their patients during patient handling. The Operation SafeEMS™ Program CD is available FREE OF CHARGE to Ferno and McNeil & Company/ESIP customers and to agencies, organizations, and educational institutions who would like to incorporate it into their training program. To receive the CD log on to the web site at [www.operationsafeems.com](http://www.operationsafeems.com), fill out the form and you will be mailed your free copy.

## **NY EMT Loses Arm in W. Nyack Crash**

On Monday, April 14 an EMT from Florida NY, lost her right arm subsequent to an ambulance crash on Route 59 near the Palisades Center Mall. The ambulance driver, also an EMT, suffered a head injury.

Bonnie Ames, 21, and her partner, Scott Millard, 19, of Regional EMS Ambulance, were injured when the ambulance hit a truck parked along the side median. Bonnie was also a volunteer with the Florida Fire Department and a past member of the Walkill Ambulance Corps.

The Rockland Paramedic Services/Regional EMS Benevolent fund is supporting them in their recovery efforts. Contributions can be made via: RPS/Regional EMS Benevolent Fund, P.O. Box 614, Nanuet, N.Y. 10954, e-mail: [rps1013@gmail.com](mailto:rps1013@gmail.com)

## **New In Emergency Vehicles**

### **Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel Required In Many 2007 Engines**

US Environmental Protection Administration 2007 emissions standards pose a problem to those agencies that may have been following the dubious practice of fueling their diesel ambulances, rescues and fire apparatus with #2 home heating oil. While in the past Low Sulfur Diesel 500 parts per million (ppm) fuel and home heating oil were virtually identical except for the dye added for tax inspection purposes that is no longer true. Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) at 15 ppm is required for use in all 2007 diesel over the road vehicles including medium duty engine chassis such as the Ford Superduty 6.4 liter twin turbo and GMC/Chevy Duramax 6.6 L V-8 Turbo being used in many ambulance applications.

In addition to being careful to check what is coming through the hose at the pump, agency officials and emergency preparedness officials need to review their contingency plans to ensure the proper fuel is delivered to extended operations scenes. While ambulances may be less affected, other vehicles such as rescues, engines, ladders, command centers, rehab trucks, etc. may have to be refueled on scene. Contracts that provide for home fuel oil to be delivered are not appropriate even in emergency situations as there is a risk of mechanical damage to very expensive apparatus. Older diesel trucks will run on ULSD but may lose some fuel



efficiency. It is projected that by 2010, ULSD will be the only diesel fuel available.

Another note about ULSD fuel oil - the winter blend dose not contain kerosene (anti-gelling agent) because there is no ULS kerosene, so it may be more likely to gel if a 2007 vehicle is left outside for a prolonged amount of time.

### ***Airboat Ambulance Hits the Water, Sand, Snow or Ice***

Midwest Rescue Airboats, Inc. of Eudora, KS is offering purpose built marine ambulance units capable of operations on water, sand, snow or ice at speeds of up to 50 mph depending on surface conditions. Cost for basic units start at about \$80,000 and go up to \$170,000 for versions with all the bells and whistles. These are custom built units for harsh conditions where survivability of the craft and crew is the #1 priority. Also available are appropriately equipped "Fire Master" and "Dive Master" airboats. The company can supply the necessary training for operating the boats. For additional information contact the company at (785) 760-4467 or go to the web site at [www.midwestrescueairboats.com](http://www.midwestrescueairboats.com)

## **EMS & Fire US-Canadian Border Crossing Delay Incidents Reported**

A Canadian fire truck responding with lights and sirens to a November weekend fire at the Anchorage Inn Restaurant in Rouses Point, NY, was stopped at the Route 9B US border crossing for 8 to 15 minutes depending on source while firefighter IDs were checked, the truck's license was run and one of the firefighters' admissibility was brought into question. Clinton County fire officials battling the blaze called for mutual aid help from fire departments in nearby Quebec under an often-used agreement from the 1950s but the first truck that arrived at the small Rouses Point border crossing was delayed as officials checked documentation and databases and discovered one firefighter had a criminal record, raising questions about whether he could enter the USA. Two other trucks that arrived at the crossing next were cleared in less than two minutes each. In the past, fire trucks on emergency calls cleared border checkpoints in 30 seconds or less although identification was sometimes checked upon their return. Clinton County has mutual aid agreements with fire departments in Vermont and Quebec and the county requests help from Quebec fire departments about 30 times a year and sends help to Canada a similar number of times. An official with the Customs and Border Protection's Buffalo office said the agency's primary responsibility is to protect the homeland and called the event an "isolated incident" and said agency officials were meeting with local fire officials to "develop a plan to prevent the possibility of any delays."

A week earlier in Michigan an ambulance carrying a 49 year old cardiac patient who had been defibrillated twice during transport from a Windsor, Ontario, Canada hospital to Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, MI for angioplasty surgery was stopped and delayed at a border station.

The Consulate General of Canada is concerned about medical patients who need to cross the border for treatment. He wrote to the *Plattsburgh Press-Republican* "There have been cases, since the implementation of WHTI (Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative) requirements for air travelers, when family members of the evacuated patients were refused boarding to the US because they did not have a passport." Medical evacuation situations are more common near the Buffalo crossing, where the only trauma center for the region is on the US side of the border.

A separate issue is Canada's tightening of boarder entry. Improved sharing of criminal databases has made it easier for Canadian border agents to identify Americans with a criminal past. A new article indicated a Minnesota firefighter who had been taking fishing trips to Canada his entire life has been barred since 2005 because of two DUI convictions in the 1980s. In fiscal year 2006 over 5,000 people were turned away by Canadian officials.

"Current policies and procedures must be immediately reviewed to ensure that first responders on both sides of the border can continue to save lives," said Bennie Thompson, chairman of the US House Committee on Homeland Security commenting on the incident. Nevertheless, border officials cannot be faulted for trying to prevent a scenario involving a fire truck or ambulance speeding lights and siren across the border carrying explosives, chemicals, terrorists, etc. The US-Canadian border is 5,000 miles long and numerous fire and EMS agencies could run into problems at crossings. Efforts should be made at the state and county level to have updated agreements in place and copies carried on vehicles and posted at border stations of both countries to minimize delays during emergency responses.

## **Patient Dies During NY To VT Ambulance Transport**

An 80 year old female patient from Massena, St. Lawrence County, died at Fletcher Allen Health Care hospital in Burlington, VT on Wednesday morning November 28, 2007 after the Massena based Seaway Valley Ambulance she was being transported in slid in snow and slush, went off the roadway and rolled over. The patient was single, an avid golfer and lived with her 105 year old mother.

The crash occurred on I-89 in Colchester, VT only a few minutes and miles from the final destination of an almost 3 hour trip. A 39 year old EMT from Massena was hospitalized in serious condition at Fletcher Allen and the 41 year old driver was not hurt. The 2004 Ford ambulance had moderate damage.

Vermont State Police released a report on the accident which is on the internet at: [www.dps.state.vt.us/vtsp/press/press\\_112807\\_williston.html](http://www.dps.state.vt.us/vtsp/press/press_112807_williston.html) and indicates while the driver had a seatbelt the patient and EMT were not belted. The report also cited speed as a contributing factor.

## **WTC Volunteer EMS Rescuer Finally Recognized by Feds**

Glenn Winuk, aged 40, an inactive associate member of the Jericho Volunteer Fire Department, in Nassau County at the time of his death, has been reclassified from World Trade Center (WTC) civilian victim to rescuer victim. On 9/11/01, Winuk as he did after the first WTC bombing in 1993, opted not to leave the area with his coworkers when his lower Manhattan office building was evacuated. Instead, he found FDNY officials and identified himself as an EMT and headed toward the towers. This time, however, his body was found in March 2002 in the WTC south tower rubble wearing surgical gloves and a stethoscope, the medical kit he was issued at his side and a Jericho VFD member ID in his wallet.

Winuk a 19 year veteran with the VFD, became a partner in his law firm, moved to Manhattan and was no longer an active firefighter or EMT but kept his EMT certification current. Because of his inactive status with his VFD since 1998, the federal government, citing in part a lack of NYS recognition of his

rescuer status, denied him rescuer status and the benefits that go with it including listing on memorials, historic records and a \$250,000 Public Safety Officers benefit for his parents.

NYS legislation was introduced by NYS Senator Carl Marcellino and NYS Assemblyman Charles Levine to grant Winuk rescuer status and Line of Duty Death recognition. Governor Pataki signed off on the bill on September 8, 2005 and with that approved a request to the federal government was resubmitted. Nevertheless, the government held firm denying rescuer status saying that the benefit was intended only for active-duty public safety officers. The turning point in the case came when a judge on the Court of Federal Claims sided with the family last June, ruling that the government's denial of the benefit had been arbitrary. A notice of appeal was filed in August but the long court battle finally ended on January 1, 20/08 after the Office of the Solicitor General decided to withdraw the appeal.

The move clears the way for Winuk's parents to receive the \$250,000, the family says their primary interest was in achieving proper government recognition for Glenn's public service. His brother indicated he hopes President Bush would now see fit to award his late brother the 9/11 Heroes Medal of Valor, which was given to the relatives of 442 other public safety officers killed in the terror attacks.

## In Memoriam

### Andrew Hall – Past President, NYSVA&RA

A lifelong resident of Monroe, Orange County, Andrew Hall died Monday, March 3, 2008 in New Windsor after a long battle with COPD at the age of 74. He was President (1977 – 1979) and life member of the New York State Volunteer Ambulance and First Aid Association. One longtime member of the Association commented that when Andrew Noe was President (1974-1977) and Andy Hall was Vice President, the two Andys were a fine team who represented our Association very well. Local EMS activities included being life member of the Monroe Volunteer Ambulance Corps where he served as President three times. He was instrumental in purchasing the property for the new ambulance location, was a First Aid Instructor and an Emergency Medical Technician Instructor and dedicated many years to emergency medical service. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean conflict and was a member of the American Legion Post #318 in Port St. Lucie, FL. He retired as Director of Transportation for Pace University and Clarkstown Central School District. A memorial graveside service will be announced at a later date. Memorial contributions may be made to the Monroe Volunteer Ambulance, Inc., PO Box 841, Monroe, NY 10949 or Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties, Inc., 800 Stony Brook Court, Newburgh, NY 12250.

### Matthew Lamb, Putnam County

On Wednesday, November 7, 2007 at about 5:15 AM, 25 year old EMT Matthew Lamb of Empire State Ambulance was severely injured with head and neck trauma while returning from a transport call. Matthew was asleep and unrestrained in the back of the ambulance when it went off Route 9 near Oak Hollow Road in Garrison, Putnam County and struck a tree. News reports indicate the driver fell asleep at the wheel. Lamb was initially taken to Hudson Valley Hospital Center in Cortland Manner and then on life support was transferred to Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla. Although clinically brain dead, he was kept on life support till the following Thursday morning at the request of his family so that his organs could be donated to help others. Lamb was a resident of Lake Carmel and a volunteer with Carmel Volunteer Ambulance

Corps and Carmel Fire Department. The driver, a 27 year old EMT from the Bronx, was also taken to Westchester Medical Center after the crash with what police described as minor injuries and was later released. NYS police were assisted at the scene by the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, Metropolitan Transportation Authority police, Garrison VFD firefighters and Philipstown VAC and Peekskill VAC ambulances.

### Terry Pugh

Terry Pugh, 74, formerly of Valhalla passed away Tuesday, January 15, 2008 after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Born in Yonkers to Emmett and Mary (Rowe) Devlin on December 6, 1933. Terry married Sterling B. Pugh (aka Slim Sterling, square dance caller) in 1954. She was an active member of the community. In addition to her varying roles in both Girl and Boy Scouts she was very active in the County and NYS Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association and served multiple terms as Captain of Valhalla Ambulance Corps. Terry was an avid bowler for many years both locally and in Fort Ann, NY. She served as President of the Presbyterian Bowling League at the former Armonk Bowl. She was Secretary of the Hadlock Pond Homeowners Association in Fort Ann where she retired to following many years of employment in the Emergency Room at Westchester Medical Center. Terry is survived by her children, Robert (Gina) of Lockport, Daniel (Barbara) of Glens Falls, Elizabeth (Greg) Bernard of Yorktown Heights and Richard (Teresa) of Tappan; her grandsons, Joseph, Timothy, Orin, Nicholas Bernard, Richard, and Robert; granddaughters, Melinda Sebastian and Montana Bernard, and her sister-in-law Hazel Pugh. She is predeceased by her brother Dan and her former husband Sterling.

### Donald P. Radenberg

Donald P. Radenberg a member of Flushing Community Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Chair of District 18, NYSVARA, after a relatively short illness passed away on January 25, 2008. He left a wife, Joan and 2 Children Paul and Patricia, Daughter-In-Law Meline and 3 Grandchildren. Don was a very active member of Flushing VAC, beginning in 1959 when the Ambulance Corps was first started. Don and his brothers Bob and Tom were among the founding members of Flushing VAC. Over the years that Don served the Corps as an EMS and held many positions at Flushing. He was President, 1st Vice President, Safety Officer, Board Member and First Aid and Ambulance Committees. District 18 NYSVARA also benefited from his time and commitment. He served as Chairman, Vice Chairman, District 18 Rep to NYC REMSCO, Rep to the Mutual Aid Committee with NYC FDNY/EMS and Chairman of the East Queens Mutual Aid Committee. He will be missed deeply.

## Adirondack Park Agency Approves More Cell Towers on I-87 Northway

The Adirondack Park Agency approved permits on January 11, 2008 for Verizon to erect more cell phone towers near the I-87 Northway. The towers are among almost a dozen the company plans to fill the service gap along a remote 70 mile stretch of the interstate. The new permit is for towers about 1,000 feet away from the highway, on private land in the town of Lake George, Warren County and in Lewis, Essex County. They're near the southern and northern edges of the nearly 50-mile dark zone along the highway. In December 2007 the agency approved a tower permit for North Hudson, Essex County, on private land along Route 9 but within view of Interstate 87 and providing coverage for about three miles north and south. That's roughly

10 miles south of the spot where a 62 year old Hatzalah VAC member from Brooklyn crashed and froze to death in January of last year, when his car went off the interstate in North Hudson, Essex County landing behind a large rock. No cell signal was available to call 911 and the accident was not discovered until 32 hours later when a trooper pulled over a vehicle at the location. With overnight temperatures at -7F, he apparently froze to death while his wife survived with frostbitten feet and a back injury.

## **National EMS Advisory Council Has Two Ex-VAC Members**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced in mid January the appointment of 25 individuals to serve on the newly established National EMS Advisory Council. The purpose of the council is to provide advice and counsel to the Department of Transportation on national EMS initiatives, while offering a forum for the non-federal deliberation of national EMS issues. Two of the 25 have backgrounds with VACs in Queens:

- Daniel Meisels, NY-Presbyterian EMS's Manager of EMS Program Planning and Special Projects has a volunteer background having been a member of Glen Oaks VAC and Jamaica Estates-Holliswood-South Bayside VAC.
- Jose Salazar, Training Officer and Battalion Chief with the Loudon County, VA Fire and Rescue Department also has a volunteer history having served with Jamaica Estates-Holliswood-South Bayside VAC including a year as Captain/President.

## **Medicare Signature Requirements Changed January 1, 2008**

To file a claim for payment for emergency ambulance service with Medicare a signature of the patient has been required. Unfortunately, obtaining this from an unconscious patient, one who has suffered major trauma or is otherwise not in a condition to read and sign a document has been problematic. Effective January 1, 2008 Medicare changed its regulations to require three forms of alternative documentation. These include:

- (1) A contemporaneous statement, signed by an ambulance employee present during the trip to the receiving facility, that, at the time the service was provided, the beneficiary was physically or mentally incapable of signing the claim and that no authorized signers were available or willing to sign the claim on behalf of the beneficiary, and
- (2) Documentation with the date and time the beneficiary was transported, and the name and location of the facility that received the beneficiary, and
- (3) Either of the following:  
A signed contemporaneous statement from a representative of the facility that received the beneficiary, which documents the name of the beneficiary and the date and time the beneficiary was received by that facility; or the requested information from a representative of the facility using a secondary form of verification obtained at a later date, but prior to submitting the claim to Medicare for payment. Secondary forms of verification include a copy of any of the following: the signed patient care/trip report; the hospital registration or admissions sheet; the patient medical record; the hospital log; or other internal hospital records.

## **Hospital News**

### **Berger Commission Update**

Chapter 63 of the Laws of 2005 created the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, also known as the Berger Commission to "reform New York State's aging and fragile healthcare delivery system." The Commission report called for nearly 50 hospitals to be restructured, nine hospitals to close, and nearly 3,000 nursing home beds to be downsized. The Commissioner of Health was directed to take all steps necessary to implement the recommendations, which became law on January 1, 2007 and are now considered mandates.

Three of the nine hospitals slated for closure have closed ahead of schedule: Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, St. Vincent's Midtown, and Bellevue Woman's Hospital in Schenectady. Hospital restructuring success stories include a joint governance agreement between Kingston Hospital and Benedictine Hospital in Ulster County, the start of construction on a new Orange Regional Medical Center facility, and unified governance structures between Kaleida Health System and Erie County Medical Center in Erie County and Crouse Hospital and SUNY Upstate Medical University in Onondaga County. Four facilities that were mandated to explore affiliation agreements have held extensive discussions. Though agreements were determined to not be feasible at this time, the facilities - Arnot Ogden Medical Center and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chemung County, and Mount St. Mary's Hospital and Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center in Niagara County - have identified initiatives they will jointly pursue.

A full report on the status as of November 2007 of all hospitals and long term care facilities affected by the Berger Commission is on the NYS DOH web site at [www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2007/docs/2007-11-30\\_berger\\_commission\\_status\\_report.xls](http://www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2007/docs/2007-11-30_berger_commission_status_report.xls)

### **In-Hospital Cardiac Arrest Response Can Be Slow – Are AEDs The Answer?**

A New England Journal of Medicine report released in January indicated that in nearly 1/3 of sudden cardiac arrest incidents in hospitals the staff took too long to respond, increasing the chance of brain damage or death. 369 hospitals and 6,789 patients were included in the review of shockable rhythm cases which found that 30% of the responses took longer than two minutes.

Delays were more likely in patients whose hearts stopped at night or on the weekend, who were admitted for non-cardiac illnesses, in hospitals with fewer than 250 beds and in units without heart monitors. The study found that when defibrillation was delayed only 22.2 % of patients survived long enough to be discharged from the hospital, as opposed to 39.3 % when the shock was given quickly. All the hospitals in the study had joined a national registry on cardiac arrest, meaning that they were already putting special efforts into trying to meet resuscitation guidelines and they probably performed better than average.

Conditions that contribute to delayed shocks include limited staffing on night and weekend shifts, defibrillators and protocols. Traditional defibrillators used in hospitals require that a doctor or a nurse look at the patient's electrocardiogram, verify that the problem is shockable, adjust the machine and deliver the shock.

A suggestion made to improve outcomes is to place Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) in hospital rooms and train non-medical staff such as porters and food staff in their use. AEDs have come into common use in public places like office buildings, airports, stores, casinos, etc during the last decade and



have been used successfully by laymen, trained employees or even bystanders.

### **Some Hospitals Call 911 For Emergency Care**

“Most physician-owned specialty hospitals are poorly equipped to handle medical emergencies” was the lead sentence in a Washington Post article about a US Department of Health & Human Services report issued earlier this year. Physician-Owned Specialty Hospitals’ Ability To Manage Medical Emergencies underscores a long-standing concern about the rapid rise in the number of such hospitals - about 180 today vs. about 110 in 2001. This is during a period when community and general hospitals are closing.

The report found that 55 percent of 109 physician-owned for-profit hospitals reviewed had emergency departments - and that the majority of those had only one bed. Fewer than a third of the hospitals had physicians on site at all times and 34 percent relied on dialing 911 to get emergency medical assistance for patients in trouble, according to the report. 7 percent of physician-owned hospitals failed to meet Medicare requirements that a registered nurse be on duty at all times and that at least one physician be on call if none are in the hospital, the report found. Twenty-two percent failed to address in their written policies how emergency cases should be evaluated and treated when they arise.

No New York hospital was included in the review. This may be due to strict regulations governing hospital ownership and the requirement to demonstrate an unserved need in the area where someone wants to open a hospital. As of 2005 the state had only three physician-owned for-profit hospitals: two community hospitals and a substance-abuse treatment center. However, in some areas such as eastern Queens County, ambulances routinely respond to psychiatric “hospitals” such as privately owned Holliswood Hospital, state operated Creedmore and non-profit Hillside Hospital, the later of which is actually on the campus of Long Island Jewish Hospital, for common calls such as difficult breathing, injuries, chest pains and so on. The full report is at [www.oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-02-06-00310.pdf](http://www.oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-02-06-00310.pdf)

### **CEDAP Awards Announced For 2007 - 96 Going To NYS Communities**

The US Department of Homeland Security announced on December 20, 2007 the award of \$33.7 million to fund equipment and training for first responders across the nation under the 2007 Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program (CEDAP). New York State received 96 awards for a total of \$2,894,280 from 3,709 applications nationwide and 1,853 were accepted for award. Applications were accepted from April 25 to June 29, 2007 with 18 eligible products that first responder organizations could apply for. The products fell into several broad categories: Personal Protective equipment; thermal imaging, night vision, and video surveillance tools; chemical and biological detection tools; information technology and risk management tools; and communications interoperability equipment. Each state’s administrative agency has the opportunity to review applications submitted by first responder organizations within their state to ensure that equipment requests are consistent with their state homeland security strategy.

Since the program’s inception in 2005, DHS has provided roughly 5,800 direct assistance awards worth more than \$103 million for all hazards in smaller jurisdictions nationwide. Information about CEDAP and a list of New York’s 2007 awardees is in the internet at [www.security.state.ny.us/cedap/2007\\_CEDAP\\_Award.htm](http://www.security.state.ny.us/cedap/2007_CEDAP_Award.htm)

### **New York State Police Vehicles Equipped With Defibrillators**

A state law passed in 2005 allocated more than \$40 million to equip all state public facilities, including courts and universities, with defibrillators by the end of 2007. Part of that sum outfitted New York State Police (NYSP) barracks and other facilities with 300 defibrillators. NYSP then lobbied for and received a separate state appropriation of \$1.7 million to put defibrillators in all 1,400 marked patrol vehicles. In addition, all 6,000 employees who work for the State Police, including troopers and civilian support staff, are being trained both in the use of the defibrillators and in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The initiative makes sense as in many instances a trooper is at an emergency scene before an ambulance and when a person goes down, the quicker they can get defibrillated, the better the outcome. NYSP previously had about 60 defibrillators in use statewide, but they were varied models and fewer people were trained to use them. The older defibrillators will be returned to Albany, where they will be assessed and perhaps donated.

### **Red Cross Chapters Receiving Hummers**

In December, the American Red Cross chapters in Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island each received a Hummer from North Bay Hummer in Great Neck and the GM Foundation to help boost their response capabilities. Nassau received an H2 model while Suffolk received an H3. Last year, the two chapters responded to over 140 local disasters including fires and flooding. In June 2006 the Greater NY Chapter which covers the five boroughs of NYC and Rockland, Putnam, Sullivan and Orange Counties received an H2 model. When not responding to emergency calls, the vehicles visit communities to help residents prepare for natural and man-made disasters

Hummer’s relationship with the Red Cross began in 2004 with a 6 year GM commitment to provide 72 vehicles throughout the nation. Today, there are 19 vehicles in service. Because they are highly mobile vehicles, they have been used in many disasters including Hurricane Katrina and the California Wildfires.

### **Hummer Owners Partner With Red Cross**

In 2001 a group of about 100 Hummer owners were having an off-road event in West Virginia, when the weather near-by took a turn for the worse. The entire area was damaged by floods, and rescue crews struggled to reach certain areas. The Hummer group volunteered to help get needed supplies where they needed to go but were turned down by agency after agency because of liability issues. After this a group of the owners partnered with the Red Cross and founded the Hummer Owners Prepared for Emergencies (HOPE). By becoming certified in CPR, First Aid, and other first-responder training, members of HOPE become full fledged Red Cross Volunteers. Members are also required to receive an off-roading trail endorsement to ensure they know the limits of their Hummer including how to use a winch and ford water. Should the need arise to get emergency supplies to a difficult to reach areas, members are called to volunteer their medical and Hummer off-roading skills. Most volunteering would be in the local community or in-state should the need arise with further training and registration provided if asked to deploy to disasters out of state (i.e. living in Texas and deploying to the region affected by Hurricane Katrina). Check out HOPE’s web site at [www.hummerhope.com](http://www.hummerhope.com) for additional information.

## EMS Law Firm Joins Class Action Against Ford Motor Company

Page, Wolfberg & Wirth, LLC (PWW), Mechanicsburg, PA, announced on December 12, 2007 that it has formally signed on as co-counsel in the pending national class action litigation against Ford Motor Company regarding alleged defects in Ford's 6.0L diesel engines. These engines were installed in many ambulances manufactured from 2004 to 2006 and many ambulance services have reported significant maintenance problems and downtime with these vehicles.

The actual engine manufacturer was Navistar International which is being sued by Ford for the heavy warranty costs incurred on the engine. Ambulance services nationwide have reported problems such as lack of power, fuel injector problems, cracked head gaskets, diesel fuel seeping into the cooling system, abnormal exhaust noise during certain engine loads and faulty wiring harnesses. At one point Ford announced discontinuance of the E series chassis but has since resumed production.

The class action lawsuit, Williams A. Ambulance, Inc., et al. v. Ford Motor Company, is currently pending in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas. PWW has joined with two other law firms pursuing this litigation.

Any ambulance services - whether public, private or non-profit - that own or operate Ford 2004-2006 model year ambulances with 6.0L diesel engines, and who have experienced maintenance problems with these units, may be eligible to join in this litigation. PWW advises that if you would like to discuss this case in more detail, please contact the offices of Page, Wolfberg & Wirth, LLC toll free at 877-EMS-LAW1 (877-367-5291).

## NIMS Compliance Materials for 2008 Expected

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Incident Management Systems Division (IMSD) has begun to analyze the data it has received to make 2007 National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance determinations and outline necessary actions to be accomplished prior to the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. Based on input from stakeholders, IMSD has decided to eliminate the use of "tiering" in future NIMS compliance requirements. Additionally, the requirement to complete ICS-400: Advanced ICS in FY08 will now actually be a FY09 requirement. (Note: ICS-300: Intermediate ICS will remain a FY08 requirement) As with FY 2007 implementation activities, each objective will have corresponding metrics that address expected achievements for FY 2008 and out years. Due to the volume of stakeholder input, a minor delay in the release of the FY 2008 NIMS compliance materials is expected. IMSD anticipates releasing the materials in early 2008. For more information, visit [www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/nims\\_alert.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/nims_alert.shtm)

## Autism Training Provided Nassau County Responders

A six-member panel of autism experts and advocates message was that when first responders, police, security personnel, etc. without training in autism encounter someone with the neurological disorder, the call could end in tragedy. Autism diagnoses have skyrocketed nationwide in recent years, creating a stronger need for training among responders, said Rita Shreffler, executive director of the National Autism Association, based in Nixa, Mo.

*Newsday* reported that Nassau County's Security/Police Information Network (SPIN), which works with the private sector to increase public safety, called "Autism and the First Responders," for about 40 members of private security firms, and ambulance and fire crews at Nassau police headquarters in Mineola. For someone unfamiliar with autistic behavior, some actions might be perceived as threatening or violent when in fact they're a result of the disorder, the panel said. "Autism is a condition that sometimes looks like a crime," said panelist James Mulvaney, a former *Newsday* reporter whose son, Dan, 20, has the disorder. "But a seizure is not an assault." Clues were provided on how to identify signs of the disorder and guidelines on proper responses and attendees were told to look for telltale signs of autism such as flailing about, distant stares, rocking or speech with repetitive phrases. They also were told that autistic children and adults might ignore verbal or visual commands. "You just want to step back and see what you have," said Nassau police officer Michael Capobianco, a panelist whose son, Matthew, 8, has autism.

NYS Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg (D-Long Beach), who also attended, said the information will be distributed to emergency medical personnel, firefighters and police officers by the NYS Department of Health.

## New Guide on Public Health Emergency Response Released

The US Department of Health and Human Services has released a new guide on the public health response to emergencies that is specifically tailored for public officials (e.g., mayors, governors, county executives, emergency managers) and first responders (e.g., police, fire, EMS). Public Health Emergency Response: A Guide for Leaders and Responders is now available at: [www.hhs.gov/disasters/press/newsroom/leadersguide/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/disasters/press/newsroom/leadersguide/index.html).

## Rural and Frontier EMS and Trauma Summit May 21-23 2008

The Critical Illness and Trauma Foundation and a host of co-sponsors are pleased to present the second installment in the Rural and Frontier EMS and Trauma Summit series: the Summit at the Lake Conference to be held May 21 to 23, 2008 at the Coeur D'Alene Resort in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho ([www.cdare-sort.com](http://www.cdare-sort.com)). The goal of this conference is to continue the presentations and discussions that began at the inaugural Summit at the Summit in 2006 at Big Sky, Montana. The conference will provide an opportunity to review recent developments in policy and highlight future opportunities for rural and frontier EMS and trauma systems. Additional information may be found at [www.citmt.org/summit.htm](http://www.citmt.org/summit.htm)

## NYS News

Recently Issued NYS DOH Policy Statement(s)

### 07-04 PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATION

The purpose of this policy is to assist a person, firm, organization or other entity in understanding the notification process for operating an automated external defibrillator pursuant to a collaborative agreement under the provisions of Chapter 552 of the Laws of 1998 authorizing Public Access Defibrillation (PAD). Included are sections detailing: PAD Program Requirements; Signs Notifying Public of AED Location;



Reporting PAD AED Use; Regional EMS Council Responsibility in PAD; and Data Collection Requirements.

BLS First Responder services may participate in the PAD program. Ambulance or ALS First Responder services may not participate in PAD programs for emergency response.

#### 08-01 ELECTRONIC PCR DATA SUBMISSION

Issued 02/07/08: Statement is intended to define the criteria necessary for an EMS agency to convert its paper PCR system to the electronic submission of patient care report data. National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) data field compatibility and established state policies, laws and regulations are covered.

#### NYS DOH Bureau Of EMS Actions

- Confirmed that a Chief or Board of Fire Commissioners/Directors operating a NYS Certified ambulance cannot make department policy that conflicts with NYS DOH policy for destination hospital/specialty destination policy.
- Clarified that the Aspirin Skill Sheet contained in the Adult Ischemic Chest pain Protocol is to be used to document internal agency level training and competency. There will not be a new skill station added to the NYS Practical Skills Examination.
- TAZER Response Guidelines (or lack of guidelines) have been brought to the attention of the NYS DOH Bureau of EMS and will most likely be addressed by the NYS Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (SEMAC). Since this is normally a lengthy process compared to a Regional process, regions have been asked to develop their own advisory addressing Tazers.

#### NYS EMS Council 2007 Awards

On October 20, 2007 at the Vital Signs banquet in Syracuse the 2007, State EMS Council awardees were announced:

- EMS Agency of the Year: Stewart Manor Fire Dept. (Nassau)
- BLS Provider of the Year: Jason Welton (Hudson Valley)
- ALS Provider of the Year: Kim Bracey (Mountain Lakes)
- EMS Educator of Excellence: Bob Elling (Hudson Mohawk - Colonie EMS)
- EMS Communication Specialist of the Year: Catherine Reardon (Nassau - NCPD)
- Harriet C. Weber EMS Leadership Award: Donna Spink (Finger Lakes)
- Registered Professional Nurse of Excellence: Karen McMahon (Westchester - Phelps Memorial)
- Physician of Excellence: Michael Dailey (Hudson Mohawk-REMO Medical Director).

#### NYS Statistical Data From December 2007

- EMS Personnel In NYS – out of a total of 66,058 providers: 12,512 are CFRs; 43,065 are EMTs; 1,222 are EMT-Is; 2,426 are EMT-CCs; and are 6,833 EMT-Ps.
- NYS Public Access Defibrillation Program - 4,592 PAD Agencies Statewide with 149,670 trained providers and 20,534 AED Units in Place.
- Public Access Defibrillation Patient Outcome Date 3rd Quarter 2007 – 9 of 18 Regional EMS Councils (not including NYC) reporting:

On Scene

<u>Hospital Outcome</u>	<u>at Hospital</u>
19 Remained Unresponsive	5 DOA
0 Became Responsive	15 Died in ED
1 Spontaneous Return of Pulse	4 Died within 24 hours
14 Spontaneous Return of Pulse & Respirations	5 Discharged Alive

#### EMS Week May 18-24, 2008 – Planning Guides

##### Available

The slogan for 2008 EMS Week is “EMS: Your Life is Our Mission” and Wednesday, May 21, 2008 has been identified as EMS for Children Day. Planning Guides are available online at [www.acep.org/emsweek](http://www.acep.org/emsweek) or by contacting Denise Fecher at [dfecher@acep.org](mailto:dfecher@acep.org).

#### Huntington Community First Aid Squad - District 7

December 30, 1967 was an auspicious date for the residents of Huntington and Huntington Station. It was on that date that the Huntington Community First Aid Squad commenced providing volunteer emergency medical services to the community. Since then HCFAS has answered over 142,000 calls. It has grown from 1 used Cadillac ambulance to 6 state of the art ALS equipped ambulances, 2 First Responder vehicles and an MCI vehicle. The squad has over 200 volunteers and provides 24 hour EMS to the Huntington and Huntington Manor Fire District. Although the first members only required Basic Red Cross training the squad now boasts of members that have EMT, EMT-CC and Paramedic training.

Huntington Community First Aid Squad celebrated its Fortieth Anniversary with a variety of activities through out the year. During EMS Week the Squad held an open house to educate the public and offer tours of the building. In July a full weekend of festivities was planned. As many former members that could be located were invited to participate in a buffet get-together on Friday evening. It was fun to see old friends and retell war stores of old. A family picnic was held on Saturday at a local camp and food and fun was the order of the day. A breakfast was held on Sunday morning that gave the former members a chance to see HCFAS headquarters building and to bid good by to new friends and old. Each member was given a historical journal to memorialize the 40 years of service and to remind them of all their volunteer efforts on behalf of the community.

#### NYS Comptroller Audit – Find VFD’s Funds Stolen or Lost

State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli said in an October 2007 press release, that due to poor record keeping and very weak controls over financial transactions, more than \$62,000 of a Saratoga County VFD’s Company funds were either lost or stolen between 2001 and 2007.

After conducting an internal audit in January, 2007, fire officials contacted the State Comptroller’s Office and the State Police, resulting in the arrest of the company’s treasurer. The Comptroller’s Office agreed to audit the fire company to identify how much money was lost

“Fire companies provide a vital service to the communities they serve. It is important that they make the most of public resources,” said DiNapoli. “It’s imperative that officials watch every single dollar. I commend fire officials for their work in uncovering the theft and contacting the authorities. I am also

pleased that my office was in a position to assist the company in identifying how much money was lost, and providing guidance on how to prevent this kind of thing from occurring again.”

Auditors found that the company’s treasurer had unlimited access to and control over company funds, and operated with virtually no oversight, enabling him to allegedly steal company moneys and conceal the theft. He reportedly took a great deal of the money by making checks out to “Cash.” Auditors attribute \$43,461 of the missing money to him. His spouse, who was responsible for collecting moneys paid to the company for renting the fire hall, misappropriated at least \$18,713. She did this through ATM withdrawals and by making checks out to “Cash.”

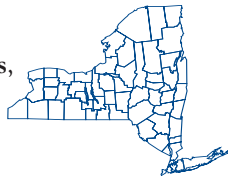
The Comptroller’s recommendations applicable to all VACs and FVDs include:

- The Board of Directors should establish comprehensive written policies and procedures for controls over Company cash receipts and disbursements.
- The Board of Directors should review monthly financial reports and bank reconciliations and verify that cash on deposit agrees with cash reported in the statements.
- The Treasurer should maintain adequate accounting records to account for all cash receipts and disbursements and use these records to prepare accurate monthly and annual reports to the Board.
- The Board of Directors should provide oversight of all the Treasurer’s activities and ensure that periodic reconciliations of all Company bank accounts are performed. The reconciliations should be reviewed by another Company official for accuracy.

## Bits From Around the State

### DISTRICT 4

Glendale Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Queens County, celebrated 35 years of service to its community of 35,000 residents with a dinner in April.



### DISTRICT 5

Chester Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Orange County, has placed a new MCI response trailer in service. The 14 foot dual axel unit carries equipment, including 50 backboards, and supplies neatly stacked in floor to ceiling racks against each side wall, to treat at least 50 patients. Two oxygen manifolds allows up to 16 patients at a time to be hooked up and there is a 5 kw generator is mounted on the front of the trailer. The towing vehicle is a 4X4 crew cab pickup. The resource is available to respond to outside agencies that may require it. The trailer was purchased with funds from a grant from NYS Senator William J. Larkin. Senator Larkin secured the funds last year after the need for this type of unit was discussed with him. A few years the senator secured funding for EMS turnout gear for 22 members, a John Deere 3 axel Gator for off road patient transport and a security system for the HQ to protect squad assets. Chester EMS serves a population of about 12,500 from an impressive 3 bay headquarters.



Highlands (Town Of) Ambulance Corps, Orange County, is to receive a \$25,000 state grant through the efforts of NYS Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) for the pur-

chase of a 4-wheel drive first response vehicle. The grant was announced by the senator on 12/4/07. The Town of Highlands Police Department received \$10,000 toward the purchase of two all terrain vehicles equipped with emergency lighting and a trailer for law enforcement officers patrolling the CSX rail line and along the Hudson River within the town as well as throughout area woodlands including the area around the United State Military Academy at West Point. The police are often the first responders to accidents involving injured hikers or hunters.

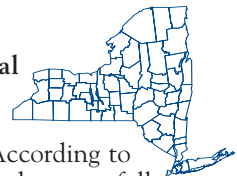
Otisville-Mount Hope Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Orange County, disbanded in mid December citing a severe lack of volunteers due to increasing demands on their time and stricter certification requirements. The squad operated out of the Otisville VFD building and provided BLS ambulance service. In the late 1990s, the corps had a full crew of 20-30 volunteers who would respond to calls 24/7/365 but with its current eight volunteers it was staffing one 12-hour shift per week. Until the Town Board makes other arrangements Regional EMS will respond from Middletown to all calls in the town and village, as it normally did for calls that the volunteers couldn’t cover. Response time could range from five to 25 minutes depending on the weather. For Regional to staff a full time ambulance in the town would cost taxpayers more than \$300,000 or about \$200 per year per \$100,000 of assessed property value, officials estimated.

Pine Bush Ambulance Corps and Walkill (Town of) Ambulance Corps, Orange County, each received donations raised through the efforts of the students at Pine Bush High School. Events were held throughout the holiday season to support local charities and non-profit organizations. This year’s lunchtime collections and special fundraising activities, which included the school principal eating bugs, brought in more than \$12,000 and was shared among 11 organizations.

Woodbury Community Ambulance Corps. Orange County, celebrates its 55th year of service to its community, which included the Woodbury Commons outlet shopping mall.

### DISTRICT 1/5/6 (REGION 3)

Hudson Valley Regional Medical Advisory Committee (REMAC) dealt with a case of an EMT-P performing an escharotomy surgical procedure in a pre-hospital setting. According to internet source Wikipedia, the procedure is used to treat full thickness (third-degree) circumferential burns. Since full thickness burns are characterized by tough, leathery eschar, an escharotomy is used primarily to combat compartment syndrome. Following a full thickness burn, as the underlying tissues are re hydrated, they become constricted due to the eschar’s loss of elasticity, leading to impaired circulation distal to the wound. An escharotomy is performed by making an incision through the eschar to expose the fatty tissue below. Due to the residual pressure, the incision will often widen substantially. After review of the case, the REMAC Evaluation Sub-Committee determined the provider be remediated with a CME and an agency Medical Director 25 case ALS PCR review for protocol compliance. In addition, the case was referred to NYS DOH Bureau of EMS for failure to adhere to the scope of practice for an EMT-P.



Hudson Valley’s annual Legislative Breakfast is back. This year’s breakfast was sponsored by the Orange County EMS Council, Ulster County Ambulance Association and EMS of

Rockland, Sullivan, Putnam and Dutchess Counties and was held on Friday April 4, 2008.

## DISTRICT 6

**Goshen VAC**, Orange County, held its 30th Annual Awards Dinner which was attended by NYS Assemblywoman Annie Rabbit. Ms. Rabbit was impressed with the members' dedication and caring and wrote a letter to the Hudson Valley Press congratulating the squad. She indicated in the letter that she "will always keep these volunteers in mind as I debate and review legislation in Albany."

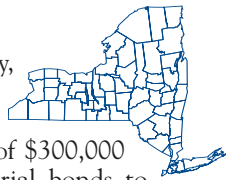


**Hurleyville Fire District**, Sullivan County, voted in December to temporarily disband its BLS level Emergency Relief Squad. Effective 1/1/08 Mobilemedic EMS, a private ALS level service which is located in Hurleyville, took over provision of ambulance service to the hamlet. The squad was started in the late 1960s for residents who couldn't afford to pay up-front for an ambulance ride to the hospital. However, per the Commissioners, tougher medical regulations are making it too difficult to maintain an appropriately trained corps and the squad was down to just three EMTs. One Commissioner was quoted saying "A lot of times, it's just a taxi ride to the hospital, but you can't do that because there's not an EMT." The Commissioners will re-evaluate the relief squad's status on 4/1/08.

**Liberty VAC (Town Of)**, Sullivan County, sponsors Boy Scouts of America Troop 17. At the 2007 Court of Honors 36 merit badges were handed out plus there were 13 rank advancements. Most of the merit badges were earned by troop members attending summer camp at Camp Massawepie in the Adirondacks. Nine boys and six adults attended the camp in August. As the boys worked on their badges and enjoyed the outdoors, the adults took advantage of training opportunities offered and completed Scoutmaster Fundamentals, Leave No Trace and Youth Protection courses.

## DISTRICT 7

**Copiague Fire District**, Suffolk County, voters approved on December 11, 2007 a proposition to purchase an ambulance including apparatus at a maximum estimated cost of \$300,000 plus the issuance of an equal amount of serial bonds to finance the acquisition. The department responds to more than 2,000 calls for assistance per year, the majority of which are EMS calls. Officials noted that the department, which moved to a partially paid EMT rescue program last year, has been experiencing an increase in the number of rescue calls every year. That has been exacerbated by the closing of Brunswick Hospital, which has forced the rescue volunteers to travel further to either Good Samaritan or New Island Hospital, adding hours on their time and mileage on the district's ambulance. The department serves approximately 26,000 residents and operates with an annual budget of \$2.9 million.



**Long Island Rail Road**, Suffolk County, held a drill in Deer Park on October 28, 2007. The scenario simulated a collision involving a diesel train and a box truck container at the Commack Road crossing of the LIRR with smoke conditions and unknown hazardous material release. Participating in the three hour drill were 12 fire departments, two ambulance companies and approximately 20 pieces of emergency apparatus present. Deer Park VFD's junior firefighters served as victims for the mock

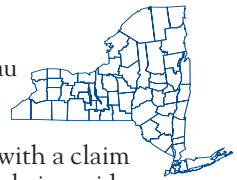
incident. Evaluators looked for implementation of NIMS procedures with the first responding department following a specific order of events including locating the scene of the accident, determining if hazardous material is involved, contacting the railroad's Movement Bureau to request the necessary protection, setting up the command post, triage unit and staging area and coordinating the activities of mutual aid fire departments. An LIRR official commented that "Overall, there was effective communication between the LIRR responding personnel and the incident command post."

**Setauket**, Suffolk County, mid November collision involved a Selden VFD ambulance and a Sound Beach VFD first responder EMS unit. The ambulance was on its way with a patient to Stony Brook University Hospital with lights and siren in operation. At Route 347 (Nesconset Highway) and Nicolls Road the Sound Beach unit stopped in the intersection yielding the right of way to the ambulance but was struck by a car pushing it into the passing ambulance. The car then struck another car. Ambulances from Setauket VFD and Stony Brook responded and transported a total of seven patients - three from the ambulance plus the original patient, the first response unit driver and a passenger and the driver of the car that caused the accident. The driver of the other car was not injured. News reports indicate this was the third ambulance in about a year to have been involved in a collision at the busy intersection.

**Suffolk County's Police Department's** new Eurocopter EC145 Medevac-equipped helicopter has been incorporated into the SCPD fleet. SCPD has had four EMS capable helicopters since 2005, starting with an A-Star unit. All choppers are multi-purpose for medical transport, search and rescue, police and fire operations. The new unit is stationed at Long Island MacArthur Airport in Ronkonkoma with a second copter while the other two operate out of Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach. Suffolk has a reciprocal backup agreement with Nassau County for additional coverage, if needed. During the press conference to unveil the chopper it was called into service to respond to an emergency call on Fire Island for a toddler who had accidentally ingested a foreign substance. SCPD's helicopters respond to approximately 550 EMS calls annually. During EMS missions, stretcher loading is usually performed via the wide opened rear clamshell doors. Although set high, some EMS providers have expressed concern about operating near the exposed tail rotor and NYSVA&RA District 7 officers have indicated contacts will be made with SCPD to request familiarization visits to sites around the county.

## DISTRICT 12

A local VFD EMS agency in Nassau County, is being sued by a former officer and EMT. A lawsuit filed in Nassau Supreme Court in 2006 was amended in October 2007 with a claim that her privacy may have been violated by being videotaped without her knowledge when she was transported as a patient in a department ambulance. *Newsday* reports a number of past incidents/cases between the department and the former member. An attorney for the Fire District advised two security cameras were installed in 2006 after supplies went missing from the ambulances but no sound was recorded and the cameras were aimed at supply cabinets to avoid photographing patients. He said a recording was viewed once in the last year to see if the equipment was working and the cameras were recently taken out when the supply problem stopped. *Newsday* indicates federal offi-



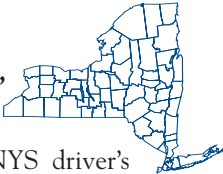


cialists said security cameras are permitted in ambulances as long as the recordings are not released and state health officials said their rules and regulations don't address the issue.

**Syosset Volunteer Fire Department**, Nassau County, replaced its three ambulance fleet with three new vehicles. The department standardized on 2007 Ford/Medtec Type III E-450 dual rear wheel chassis. All three vehicles are laid out the same and also equipped with AutoPulse CPR devices. Syosset's annual call volume is about 400 EMS and 1,400 fire calls.

## DISTRICT 16

**Irondequoit Volunteer Ambulance**, Monroe County, is accepting resumes for full time Paramedic and Per Diem Paramedics and EMT's. Applicants should have a current NYS driver's license, Paramedic/EMT and CPR cards. Special skills desired include office, supervisory and training experience. Also suggested are ACLS, PALS, BTLs. Send resumes and cover letters to: Career Personnel Committee, 2330 Norton Street, Rochester, N.Y. 14609. Questions can be answered by calling (585) 544-5112.



**Rochester**, Monroe County, municipal administration split over which of two companies to award a city contract for EMS ambulance service. A panel recommended Monroe Ambulance for the job and the mayor endorsed the Monroe selection which his administration said won the open bidding process in June 2007. The City Council, however, voted on 11/20/07 for Rural/Metro Medical Services which has held the contract. Comments in local news media indicate Rural-Metro was permitted to "clarify" or make its Request for Proposal more competitive after it was initially submitted. The mayor vetoed the decision on 12/21/07 which was the first veto in 20 years. The Council came back for a special meeting on 12/26/07. On 1/17/08 Monroe Ambulance filed an Article 78 Petition against the City of Rochester, the City Council and Rural/Metro claiming irregularities and illegalities in the process that resulted in the Council's decision to award the contract to Rural/metro instead of Monroe. Among the items irregularities alleged were over \$100,000 in contributions to local politics by Rural/Metro, its lobbyist, attorneys and union while the contract was under consideration. The new contract is scheduled to begin on 4/1/08 for an initial 2-year period, followed by two one-year renewal terms, for a total possible length of four years. The contract determines which ambulance company is dispatched when city residents call 911 and is estimated to generate approximately \$15 million in net revenue annually. Rural/Metro has provided emergency and non-emergency ambulance services to the Rochester area since 1952, first as National Ambulance and then Rural/Metro Medical Services beginning in 1994. The company employs more than 300 unionized ambulance service professionals in the community and responds to approximately 60,000 calls for assistance each year. Rural/Metro's Rochester operation is the only ambulance service in the region to be nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). Monroe is a local woman-owned company that has served the Rochester area for 33 years. The Rochester Fire Department with over 340 EMTs and 100 CFR-Ds provides a BLS level First Responder service in the city.

**Rural/Metro**, Monroe County, received a \$57,600 sales tax exemption from the County of Monroe Industrial Development Authority (COMIDA) in December on the purchase of 12 new

ambulances at a cost of \$720,000. Rural/Metro expects to create 12 jobs in addition to the 190 positions it now has in Monroe County.

A scholarship is being offered by the company for Rochester residents who want to become first responders. Six students get to train as EMTs each year at Monroe Community College and work at the ambulance company. Students who complete the program are guaranteed a job. Rural/Metro says it chooses city residents because they have knowledge of the neighborhoods.

**United Way Of Greater Rochester** is re-instituting a processing fee of 8% with a max of \$20 for each donor designated contribution it receives. Employees at about 1,300 companies give to the United Way's annual campaign which go to about 600 agencies in the seven county region served by the Greater Rochester Chapter. About 300 agencies are eligible for donor designated gifts. United Way cited the costs associated with extra steps required to process designated donations vs. unrestricted donations.

## REGION 1

**Corning**, Steuben County, is completing a study to review the feasibility of providing ambulance service in-house instead of through Rural/Metro Medical Services. The study cost is approximately \$20,000, about half the cost the city pays Rural/Metro for the service annually.

**Gowanda Ambulance Service**, Cattaraugus County, received a check for \$1,000 from the Gowanda Kiwanis Club after a presentation on the squad's need to purchase a 12 lead EKG monitor for at least one of its ambulances. Other service clubs in the area will be approached to raise additional funds towards the approximate \$20,000 cost of the monitor.

**Macedon (Town Of)**, Wayne County, has set up its own town wide ambulance service discontinuing the arrangement it had with Macedon Village for which it had been paying \$198,500 for EMS coverage. Village residents will be taxed for both the village and the town ambulance, Town Board members explained, adding this is not double coverage but additional coverage for residents. Individuals' insurance companies will be billed for ambulance services which they use in order to keep taxes down. The goal is for the town ambulance to eventually pay for itself. The town may have to subsidize the town ambulance service somewhat, but eventually the ambulance should become self-sufficient. There is a lease agreement for the housing of the town ambulance at \$20,000 per year but there was no provision for crew quarters.

**Medina Fire Department EMS**, Orleans County, took over ambulance service for the Medina Memorial Health Care System in mid 2007 replacing Rural/Metro Ambulance Service. The parties are concluding final arrangements which were apparently held up by sorting out the mileage charge for patients transported by ambulance. The fire department came down from \$9.50 per mile to \$8.00 and the hospital came up from \$4.00 to \$8.00. Also, previously any ambulance trips in excess of 25 miles were free and this will be eliminated. Medina Fire Department will cover all of Orleans County and transports to Lakeside Memorial Hospital in Brockport, Monroe County and Lockport Memorial Hospital, Niagara County. Monthly ambulance call volume for the fire department has risen from 30 to 50 to over 160 hitting 176 in September. Interestingly, fire calls have dropped from a 40 to 60 range to the teens from August through at least November.

**Menter Ambulance & EMS**, Oswego County, a paid ambulance and rescue service located at 404 North 4th Street, Fulton has partnered with the Oswego County Traffic Safety Board to start a child passenger Fitting Station. The Fitting Station at the ambulance garage will be open from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, rain or shine, on the first Saturday of every month with trained, certified car seat specialists on hand. For information about the arrangement call the Oswego County Traffic Safety Board coordinator at (315) 343-2344, ext 13.

**Naples Ambulance, Inc.**, Ontario County, which was formerly the Maxwell Hose Fire Company Ambulance, purchased a former gift shop building at the corner of Route 21 and Route 245 for the asking price of \$300,000 and is modifying it to serve as squad headquarters and garage. In addition to larger quarters for the service the new building will also offer space for the Explorer Post to meet. Originally founded in the 1960s, the ambulance (rescue) service started billing eight years ago due to increasing expenses and because local taxpayers were footing the bill for visitors such as skiers at Bristol Mountain and hikers attracted to the region's gullies. Initially, only non-residents were sent a bill but because of legalities residents also had to be billed. On 12/05/07 the ambulance officially separated from the fire department to allow the squad to charge patients' insurance companies. As an added benefit it also reduces training time for new volunteers, as they do not have to cross train as firefighters. The separation from the Maxfield Hose Co. also severs its ties with the village of Naples and the village decided it will turn over \$98,000 earmarked for ambulance service to the corps. The squad will continue to pick up patients in South Bristol, including those at Bristol Mountain ski resort, under a proposed contract with the town. In the future, a Special Ambulance Tax District will be set up identical to the current Naples Fire District, which also includes a small portion of Bristol and Richmond.

**New Berlin Fire District**, Chenango County, is looking to restart ambulance service as a result of Superior Ambulance discontinuing service in the county. New Berlin VFD EMS Unit provided ambulance service from 1955 to 1999 but due to costs and manpower issues changed over to an EMT-CC First Responder service. In January it was announced that the Towns of Columbus and New Berlin plan to join the Village of New Berlin in offering ambulance service for the three municipalities. Cooperstown Medical Transport has been serving the county, but local officials believe they need an ambulance based in the New Berlin area. The municipalities are arranging to purchase an ambulance for \$129,000. The ambulance service is slated to cost about \$35,000 a year to operate, plus \$5,000 for supplies and \$3,000 for incidental expenses. Large employers in the area, including the Preferred Mutual Insurance Co. and Golden Artists Colors, will be contacted to make sure that their employees will be able to serve as EMS volunteers when the need arises.

**Niagara County** ambulance services are dropping subscription programs due to NYS Insurance Department regulations. Tri-Town Ambulance Service in Gasport serves the Towns of Lockport, Hartland and Royalton and had a program in effect for 39 years whereby for an annual membership fee (\$40 was latest amount) residents who needed ambulance service would have any deductibles waived by the squad. The program raised about \$30,000 annually. The squad felt legal fees to get the program in compliance with insurance regulations were cost prohibitive and letters have been sent to residents notifying them the membership program was ended. Tri-Community Ambulance Service in

Sanborn and serving Wheatfield plus Pekin and Sanborn Fire Districts also dropped its program. In 2001 the Insurance Department concluded such plans were a health insurance program and must comply with all regulations. NYS Senator James Seward from Oneonta is Chairman of the Senate Insurance Committee has indicated he thinks the subscription programs make sense and has asked the Insurance Department if it declared the programs invalid or are they actually in violation of state law.

**Oswego City Fire Department**, Oswego County, and the city's Common Council received a consultant's report on the department which included 46 major recommendations and a number of minor ones. Included were to use the department's ambulances more for emergency service rather than for hospital to nursing home transports, hire an additional five or six paramedics and relocate one of the department's two stations away from a river to improve its response capabilities.

**Utica Fire Department**, Oneida County, continues to provide ambulance service under an expired two year municipal Certificate of Need (CON) while the city battles with the NYS DOH over going through the regular CON process. Under the municipal CON process, a locality may begin providing ambulance service for a two year period but must follow through with an application with the appropriate Regional EMS Council and a public hearing if it wants to continue the ambulance service. When the temporary authority expired in May 2007 municipal officials decided to challenge the requirements instead of following the process through the mid-State Regional EMS Council. The DOH prevailed at the initial judicial level but the City of Utica has filed an action with the Appellate Division in Rochester. Kunkel Ambulance Service, which provided coverage for Utica in the past, has indicated it would challenge the need for additional ambulance service in the city. Historically, the Utica Fire Department provided first response BLS and ALS service since 1980. All engines are manned with at least one EMT and all apparatus are equipped with AED. ALS Squad units are staffed at the EMT-I and/or EMT-P level. Transport was provided by a private ambulance service. All members of the fire department, with the exception of the chief, are members of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) local 32 and NYSPPFA.

**Broome County Fire Chiefs' Association Training Day** for New Officers was held on Saturday 2/9/08 at the Chenango Fire Station from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The training was intended for new department Line Officers and Chief Officers to let them know about the resources available to them from the County Office of Emergency Services and the various fire service organizations within the county. There was also discussion of what can be expected of them as emergency service leaders and the resources available to them during major emergency incidents such as the flood events that have been experienced over the last couple of years.

**Canastota Area Association Of Churches**, Madison County, sponsored its 28th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Saturday, Jan. 19, at the Rusty Rail Restaurant with an attendance of about 350 persons. The event serves as a venue for residents and local businesses to show their appreciation to the volunteer ambulance crews and firefighters that look out for them. Members of the Greater Lenox Ambulance Service (GLAS) plus the Canastota, Wampsville, and Lincoln VFDs and the Canastota Old Timer's Firemen are recognized for their

dedicated service to the community. Each department selects an individual for the Community Service Awards. 2008 recipients were Tim Williams from GLAS plus Larry Pickard of the Canastota Fire Department, Clarence Collins of the Wampsville Fire Department and Thomas Calnan of the Lincoln Fire Department. Williams, 45, of East Hickory Street in Canastota, has been volunteering with the ambulance service for about 12 years. All of the funding for this event comes from donations made by organizations, businesses and individuals and the Association makes it clear that it is not raising funds for new fire trucks or for department equipment but rather to host this event and to thank the volunteers.

## REGION 2

**Alice Hyde Medical Center**, Franklin County, has set up a BLS First Responder fly car to augment the day time EMS ambulance service provided by local agencies in and around Malone and northern Franklin County. An EMT will be available Monday through Friday during normal business hours to respond to a scene and join up with an ambulance which may not have an EMT on board. Alice Hyde is hiring a full-time emergency preparedness coordinator/EMS responder for the position with minimum qualifications of certification in emergency management or a related field and three years of experience in emergency services. The District Attorney office filled one of the greatest needs when he turned over \$15,000 in drug-asset-seizure money toward a 2004 Chevrolet Trailblazer, and Ellis Pontiac Buick GMC Inc. of Malone donated the final \$3,000 for the response vehicle. If successful, officials may explore a similar partnership with Adirondack Medical Center in Saranac Lake.

**Community Emergency Corps Of Ballston Spa**, Saratoga County, received \$78,721 from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistance to Firefighters [and EMS] Grant program. The organization will use approximately \$36,000 to modify facilities, \$36,953 for EMS equipment and \$5,958 for EMS training.

**Galway Ambulance Corps**, Saratoga County, received \$30,000 from the Dockstader Charitable Trust to pay down its mortgage. Clayton Dockstader lived in Galway for the last 30 years of his life. He lived frugally and when he died in May 2006 at 96 as a widower twice over, he left behind a sizable fortune that is to be used largely to support causes in Galway. The Dockstader Charitable Trust has given away \$1.55 million, but \$2 million remains, all for the use of schools, nonprofits and churches within the Galway school district.

## REGION 3

**Alamo EMS And Northern Dutchess Paramedics To Merge** - A December 14, 2007 memo to employees of both companies announced that Alamo Ambulance Service, headquartered in Poughkeepsie, and Northern Dutchess Paramedics, headquartered in Rhinebeck, will merge into a new company that will be more efficient, stronger and more stable than the two individual organizations. The new company will be a joint venture between Health Quest, parent company of Alamo, and the owners of Northern Dutchess Paramedics. Northern Dutchess Paramedics will be the majority owner of the new company which will be known as NDP. Health Quest and Northern Dutchess expect the merger to be finalized within the next six to twelve months after all regulatory steps are concluded.

**Alamo Ambulance Service**, Dutchess County, received a \$24,000 grant with the help of state Sen. Steve Saland, R-Poughkeepsie, to buy 13 Ferno EZ Glide Stair Chairs that can transport people down staircases. The chair can carry people who weigh up to 500 pounds.

**Catskill Ambulance Service (Town Of)**, Greene County, received \$14,067 from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistance for Firefighters [and EMS] Grant program. The funds will be used for EMS equipment.

**Dutchess County Fire Police Association** honored NYSVA&RA District 5 officer Robert Ruston as 2007 Fire Policeman of the Year. In addition, Bob was made an honorary Detective Sheriff in the Dutchess County Sheriffs Department by Sheriff Butch Anderson.

**Philmont Rescue Squad**, Columbia County, received all necessary approvals and is now operating at the AEMT-Intermediate level.

**Playland Emergency Medical Service**, Westchester County, is interviewing EMTs for summer employment at Playland Park, Beach & Pool and Camp Playland. There will be job fairs at the Westchester County Center in White Plains. Applicants should bring their New York State EMT card, Social Security card and drivers license. Anyone needing information should call Bill Wiegelman, Captain, Playland EMS at (914) 755-4591.

**Rensselaer County** is employing a range of new tactics to recruit volunteer firefighters and EMTs. A Volunteer Incentive Program to recruit local businesses to provide discounts to active volunteers has been initiated. The county will issue volunteer photo identification cards to firefighters and EMTs so they can identify themselves and their skills to other agencies when they are working outside their normal area. The cards also will be used in the Volunteer Incentive Program. The county is investing \$18,000 in this program. There is an ongoing marketing campaign to recruit volunteers by supplying fire departments and ambulance squads with information about new homeowners to contact to see if they wish to join. Volunteers receive an income tax credit; scholarship lists for volunteers are being compiled and the county is considering what educational opportunities can be offered to volunteers. The county also has a telephone number and a Web site for people to seek out information about volunteering and to sign up: 270-1047 and [www.rensco.com/joinfire-andems.htm](http://www.rensco.com/joinfire-andems.htm).

**Southern Dutchess Coalition**, an informal group of municipalities including the City of Beacon, Villages of Fishkill and Wappingers Falls and the Towns of Fishkill, East Fishkill and Wappingers Falls, are getting together to prepare a grant application to study shared ambulance services. The announcement was made by the Town Supervisor of Fishkill in early March during a state of the town address which included the comment "Local governments continue the task of doing more with less, attempting to hold the line on taxes, exploring ways to eliminate duplication of services. Where we can work together, we should." Last year the Town of North Hempstead, Nassau County, received a \$180,000 grant from the NYS Department of State to study coordinated and shared EMS ambulance services in 8 communities in the Town.

**Ulster County Sheriff's Office** received a \$2,000 grant from the National Rifle Association to purchase Celox, an emergency



blood-clotting agent first introduced for use by the military. The agent is distributed in granule form and is poured into an open wound to stop moderate to severe bleeding even clotting heparinized blood. Before normal wound treatment is started the granules have to be flushed out of the injury site. Product advertising indicates there is no heat, no burning and it has a three year shelf life with no special storage requirements. A new article indicates one side effect can be an adverse reaction with patients who are allergic to shellfish. The Sheriff's office ordered 133 packets of Celox to be carried in all 29 patrol cars in the department's fleet, as well as in specialized vehicles and the Corrections Department's 10 vehicles.

**Union Vale Fire District**, Dutchess County, voters by a margin of 31 to 13 approved a referendum on December 11, 2007 to buy a new ambulance through a lease-purchase agreement at a cost not to exceed \$146,000. An unofficial internet posting indicates a Ford/PL Custom Type 1 F-450 will replace a 1997 Ford/National Type 1 and run out of Station 1 in Verbank. Board of Elections records for 2006 show there were 2,922 registered voters in Union Vale and polls were open at two district stations for a three hour period from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. Union Vale VFD operates two ambulances and contracts with Northern Dutchess Paramedics for weekday ambulance service for the 5,000 residents in its service area. The district has a very informative web site at [www.uvfdny.com](http://www.uvfdny.com).

## **Wal-Mart, CVS or Duane Reade As EMS Patient Destination ???**

With hospital ER overcrowding, closings, diversions, extended drop off times, etc. the EMS community is considering alternative destinations for stable patients with minor illnesses, complaints or injuries. This is coupled with public dissatisfaction with extended wait times in doctors' offices. The solution for minor problems may be what has been referred to in a *NY Times* article as urgent care "lite" staffed by nurse practitioners or physician assistants. NYS law requires that nurse practitioners work closely with a physician who oversees the practice but is not required to be at the facility. NYS law prohibits unauthorized corporations like pharmacies, which are licensed only to provide pharmaceutical services, from delivering medical care so the clinics must operate as an independent practice or professional corporation.

The NYS Department of Health Bureau of EMS has issued two Policy Statements covering patient destinations. 98-15 is clear in stating that "Ambulance services *may* make transports to facilities such as physicians' offices, HMO's, MCO's, or other destinations." 06-01 reiterates that ambulance services are not required by the state Public Health Law, either Article 28 or Article 30, to transport patients to hospitals but does cite Part 800 Regulations concerning the transport of trauma and stroke candidates to Trauma Centers and Stroke Centers. Regional Protocols may be in effect which also cover patient destinations.

Monroe-Livingston REMSCO is piloting a protocol in the city of Rochester which allows transport of certain low priority patients ("Priority 4") to non emergency department destinations such as walk-in clinics and urgent care centers. Presently, Rural Metro is the only service authorized. Paramedic evaluation with absolute on-line medical control with no exception of phone or radio failure is mandated as well as an agreeable patient.

Could Wal-Mart Stores Inc. locations may be a patient destination in the future if the M-L REMSCO pilot pans out? Wal-

Mart announced in 2007 that over the next three years it intended to open more than 400 in-store health clinics and if current market forces continue, up to 2,000 clinics could be in Wal-Mart stores over the next five to seven years. The clinics would be managed by local or regional hospitals and/or other organizations that are independent of Wal-Mart.

## **LIRR Emergency Response & Safety Awareness Training**

The Long Island Rail Road's operations stretch from the west side of Manhattan to Montauk and pass through well over 100 fire, police and EMS response jurisdictions. The rail road has a two part course designed to inform and prepare emergency responders to operate safely on and near railroad property and equipment. Specific safety topics include: Hazard awareness and recognition; Rescue techniques and procedures; Entry and evacuation procedures; Communications and command procedures; Familiarization with equipment; and Equipment stabilization.

There is also information on the internet at [www.mta.nyc.ny.us/lirr/safety](http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/lirr/safety) about the LIRR's electric care evacuation procedures and bi-level coach safety features as well as a short customer evacuation video.

For more information about the LIRR's emergency responder training program contact: LIRR Training Department, Hillside Support Facility, 93-59 183 Street, 4th Floor, Mail Code 3149, Hollis, NY 11423, (718) 558-3242.

## **Statewide Wireless Network Projected Costs Rising**

NY state and local governments may have to spend as much as \$790 million to buy equipment to access the planned statewide radio communications system that would allow emergency and public service crews to talk to each other during natural disasters and terrorist attacks, state Comptroller indicated in early December.

M/A-COM, a unit of Tyco Electronics, is building the Statewide Wireless Network (SWN) and will be paid \$2 billion over 20 years to provide the system for emergency and public service crews. Projections provided by M/A-COM indicate the state's cost for equipment to use the network at \$260 million while local governments' costs are expected to reach \$530 million. Three years ago at an Assembly hearing a company representative estimated the cost would be "more than \$100 million." NYS Office of Technology believes the \$790 million figure is a high estimate as it assumes every purchase will be financed but governments may choose to buy the equipment outright to avoid the high finance charges. Also, only local governments that become full system partners and adopt SWN as their network will have to buy new radios plus some local governments will have the opportunity to continue using their current radio network once it is adapted to become compatible with SWN. For those agencies that have to purchase new radios the cost could range from \$2,300 to \$3,800 per unit for the variety of radios to be offered.

## **FEMA Incident Management Systems Division Releases Updated EMS Job Titles**

As part of the government's efforts to strengthen catastrophic response capabilities in line with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), FEMA's Incident Management

Systems Division has released updated EMS job titles. The criteria for credentialing EMS personnel were posted on November 9, 2006 for a 45-day review period and during that period, there were over 70 comments and questions from National and State associations, related organizations and from individuals with a professional interest in initiatives supporting resource typing and credentialing. Comments were reviewed and consideration was given as to how to incorporate valuable feedback. These positions have been forwarded for appropriate consideration within the Incident Management working group. These positions include:

- EMS Transportation Group Supervisor
- EMS Transportation Unit leader
- EMS Treatment Unit Leader
- EMS Triage Unit Leader
- Medical Group Supervisor

The update job titles are located at: [www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/rm/job\\_titles.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/rm/job_titles.shtm). These job titles are a part of the National Emergency Responder Credentialing System which documents minimum professional qualifications, certifications, training and education requirements that define the standards required for specific emergency response functional positions. For additional information please see NIMS Guide 0002, March 27, 2007 on National Credentialing Definition and Criteria at [www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/rm/guide\\_rm.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/rm/guide_rm.shtm).

## **Lifenet Helicopter Stationed 24/7 In Sullivan County**

As of the last week of January a LifeNet helicopter was stationed 24/7 at Catskill Regional Medical Center in Sullivan County. Now, instead of waiting nearly a half-hour for a helicopter from Orange or Ulster counties to arrive, lifesaving transport for seriously injured or ill people in Sullivan County can get to a patient in five to 10 minutes.

On January 19, 2007 Catskill officials finalized the contract with Life-Net, part of the nationwide Air Methods Corp., to provide the choppers and staff. The hospital bears no cost for the arrangement. Eight medical staffers consisting of nurses and paramedics and four pilots will be based at the hospital with quarters on the fourth floor, always on call for an emergency.

Until now, the nearest medical copters were STAT FLIGHT units at Kobelt Airport in Wallkill and Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NYS Police Life Guard at Stewart Airport in Newburgh and Geisinger Life Flight in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. It took 25 to 30 minutes to bring in a chopper or to get a patient to Catskill via ambulance and then, if necessary, a 26-minute chopper flight to the nearest regional trauma center across the Hudson River in Westchester.

## **TRANSalert Offered By NYS Thruway Authority**

As part of the Thruway Regional Advisory Network System the NYS Thruway Authority now offers a free e-mail service, TRANSalert, to inform drivers of major unscheduled incidents that may affect their travel on the 496 mile Thruway between New York City and Buffalo. Having this level of access to Thruway updates may be beneficial to pre-hospital providers as they plan routes for the transportation of patients.

Users can specify a maximum length of message to accommodate a standard e-mail going to a computer or some mobile devices like PDAs or Blackberry devices or a shorter version not to exceed 160 characters suitable for a cell phone or alpha/numeric pager. Days of the week, specific time periods and Thruway starting and ending points may also be specified. Addition features allow notices to be suspended for periods of time and to get info on conditions on roadway sections that make direct connections with the Connecticut and Massachusetts Turnpikes, the NJ Garden State Parkway, I-287 and some other major expressways that lead to New England, Canada, the Midwest and South. To sign up for the service go to the web page at [www.nysthruway.gov/tas/signup.shtml](http://www.nysthruway.gov/tas/signup.shtml).

## **Evacused Purchase For Albany Area Hospitals**

The Albany Med Outreach Newsletter reports a Department of Health grant will be used to supply 19 hospitals in the region with 300 EVACUSLED emergency evacuation devices. The bright yellow device attaches to a standard hospital bed and when deployed forms a snug cocoon around the patient and mattress allowing it to be rolled off the bed and down hallways and stairs on 25 small wheels on its underside. Five built-in support panels provide protection for the patient's head and spine. Only 30 lbs pulling force is needed for a 195 lb patient. Additional information about the device is on the web at [www.evacusled.com](http://www.evacusled.com).

## **Mercy Flight Central vs. Onondaga Sheriff & NYS Police**

Mercy Flight Central, an independent non-profit medical helicopter operation, filed a lawsuit late June in the US District Court in Rochester to stop the Onondaga Sheriff's and New York State Police's aviation units from breaking federal aviation law and creating unfair competition that could doom the company.

Mercy Flight, operates from bases in Canandaigua, south east of Rochester, and Marcellus, NY, south west of Syracuse. An average Mercy Flight call staffed with a pilot, flight nurse and flight paramedic is billed for about \$5,000 with insurance covering most of the fee. A related company, E.M.S. Air Services of New York Inc, is a federally certified air taxi operator.

Onondaga County Sheriff operates its Air 1 Bell model 407 copter from Warners. The NYS Police operate Lifeguard copters from aviation bases in Albany, Batavia, Newburgh, Saranac Lake and Syracuse. The NYS DOH Bureau of EMS web site lists the both agencies as non-transporting BLS first responders. Law enforcement agencies do not charge for medivac services which are normally staffed with a police officer pilot, officer/observer and, if needed, a paramedic.

Information about air medical services in New York State was included in the Summer 2006 issue of the BLANKET newsletter which is available on the Association's web site at [www.nysvara.org](http://www.nysvara.org).

## **Disaster Mobilization Ambulance Contracts Sought by Feds**

The US General Services Administration, acting at the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in May for the provision

of EMS transport resources in the Gulf and Atlantic coastal regions. The action came as a surprise to state EMS and fire officials who had thought they had convinced FEMA that there were already arrangements in place that could be implemented in times of need. There was some feeling that FEMA had to show it was taking a proactive stance.

The winning contractor, American Medical Response (AMR), is required to provide up to 100 staffed ground ambulances, 25 air ambulances and Para transit vehicles with a total capability of moving 3,000 persons. Resources are to be on their way within six hours and arrive in the impacted area(s) with 24 hours. The RFP calls for a one year term renewable for up to four additional years. RFPs for additional areas will be issued at a later time. The contracts are in addition to or alternative to EMS resources that could be mobilized under existing Emergency Medical Assistance Compacts (EMAC) mutual aid agreements between states.

## Dialysis Quick Disconnect Checklist

The *EMS BEAT* newsletter from the Albany Medical Center carried an article on disconnecting a patient from home dialysis equipment. EMS providers occasionally run across these setups and a family member or care giver for the patient is normally present to do the disconnections but that is not always the case and crews sometimes have to figure out the best way themselves. The following information was provided by a dialysis center in the Albany region and is passed along for information purposes only. If EMS providers need specific instructions or would like training they should contact their Medical Director or a dialysis center in their area.

There are two main types of home dialysis: hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. Hemodialysis circulates blood to a dialysis machine via two tubes. The tubes may be connected to an arm or leg via needles or a catheter into the chest. To quickly disconnect hemodialysis:

- Wear a mask and gloves to protect yourself and the patient.
- Close four clamps (two on each line).
- Disconnect each line between the clamps by turning the fittings counter clockwise.
- Keep the ends of the patient lines sterile. Under certain conditions, ALS providers can use the lines to administer medications. Check with your Medical Control first.

Peritoneal dialysis circulates clear or amber-colored fluid to a dialysis machine through just one line, a tube into the stomach. To quickly disconnect peritoneal dialysis:

- Wear gloves.
- Close two clamps on the line.
- Attach two Del-clamps on either side of the snap disconnect. The patient normally keeps these clamps, which are colored blue, nearby.
- Disconnect the line at the snap disconnect.

## “Working with People with Disabilities” Training DVD Available

“Working With People With Disabilities-A Guide For Responders” is available from The Baltimore County Fire Department. This 26-minute training DVD, produced in cooperation with the Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities, is

designed to help personnel from emergency medical services, fire, police, and others work effectively and compassionately with persons with disabilities. In addition to public safety agencies, the DVD also is being used for training by the American Red Cross Central Maryland Chapter, Baltimore County Department of Social Services, Baltimore County Department of Aging and other organizations

The DVD is available at no charge for training purposes. To obtain a free copy contact Fire Director James M. Korn at [jkorn@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jkorn@baltimorecountymd.gov) or (410) 887-4860 or write James M. Korn, Deputy Director Baltimore County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, 700 East Joppa Road, Towson, MD 21286.

## Wireless Phone System Issues and Problems

- Vonage internet based phone systems may have an extended routing time for 911 calls to get to the proper dispatch center. District 19 reports processing times as long as 35 minutes and a documented case from the Town of Broome of a call going first to New Delhi, India before it finally reached the Sheriff's Office.
- With number transportability and internet billing, phone providers may not be keeping up with physical address changes. Upstate squads have reported instances of emergency personnel being sent to an old address. Public information campaigns should include reminders to ensure address changes are passed along even if there are no printed bills sent.
- Montgomery County 911 system has indicated that out of the millions of dollars collected in phone surcharge monies it has received only about \$65,000. 40 of New York's counties add 30 cents a month to a statewide surcharge of \$1.20 a month.
- Wireless 911 calls in New York go to county Public Service Answering Points (PSAPs). Suffolk County has 12 PSAPs while others such as Westchester County have only one-The Hudson Valley Transportation Management Center in Hawthorne, operated by the NYS Police. The PSAP in Westchester routinely receives wireless 911 calls from Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania border areas and has a one button transfer procedure to transfer the call back to the appropriate state.
- Suffolk County until 2007 had no protocol to handle 911 calls from Connecticut. A serious incident last year got the attention of elected officials. A 911 cell call from Norwalk, Connecticut hit a cell tower 15 miles away in Greenlawn on the north side of Long Island and was transferred 28 miles east to the Suffolk County Police in Yaphank where an officer told the caller to hang up and dial “o” to reach an operator to get to an in-state 911 call center. Now, Suffolk call centers will transfer Connecticut wireless 911 callers to the Connecticut State Police.

## NFPA EMS Clothing Standard Revised

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1999: Standard on Protective Clothing for Emergency Medical Operations, 2008 edition is now available. This edition has been revised to address changes requested by end users and the industry and specifies minimum documentation, design, performance,



testing, and certification requirements for new-single use and new multiple-use emergency medical operations protective clothing used by emergency medical responders prior to arrival at medical care facilities, and used by medical first receivers at medical care facilities during emergency medical operations. The new standard is available for purchase and download at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

## EMS.GOV Goes Live

The Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) at the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) is pleased to announce the launch of EMS.gov. This innovative Web site, developed to meet the varied needs of the EMS community, contains not only the latest news from OEMS – but also functions as a portal to other EMS Web sites and resources. Here you'll find background and updates on groundbreaking Federal initiatives and programs, including Emergency Medical Services for Children, the National EMS Information System, the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS, Enhanced 9-1-1 and Next Generation 9-1-1, the National EMS Advisory Council, and more. To visit the web site go to [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov).



## Just Issued NYS DOH Bureau of EMS Policy Statements(s)

### 08-02 PREHOSPITAL PATIENT CONFIDENTIALTY:

All agencies and/or systems are encouraged to have policies that require and include:

- Initial and as necessary, refresher training of staff regarding the importance of patient confidentiality; and
- Procedures for maintaining patient confidentiality.

It is beyond the scope of this policy statement to identify all of the laws or regulations that require confidentiality. This policy statement only identifies the most common items that pertain to the emergency medical services. Every EMS agency and/or provider must maintain compliance with the patient's needs of confidentiality.

### 08-03 RECORDS RETENTION:

Provides guidelines for retention of records by all types of EMS services. Included are agency, course sponsor and provider training records. Other agencies and/or laws such as the IRS, OSHA, PESH and HIPAA also have regulations that impact records retention and access. EMS agencies should have policies in place describing procedures to comply with regulations including how long each type of document will be retained, stored, protected and retrieved.

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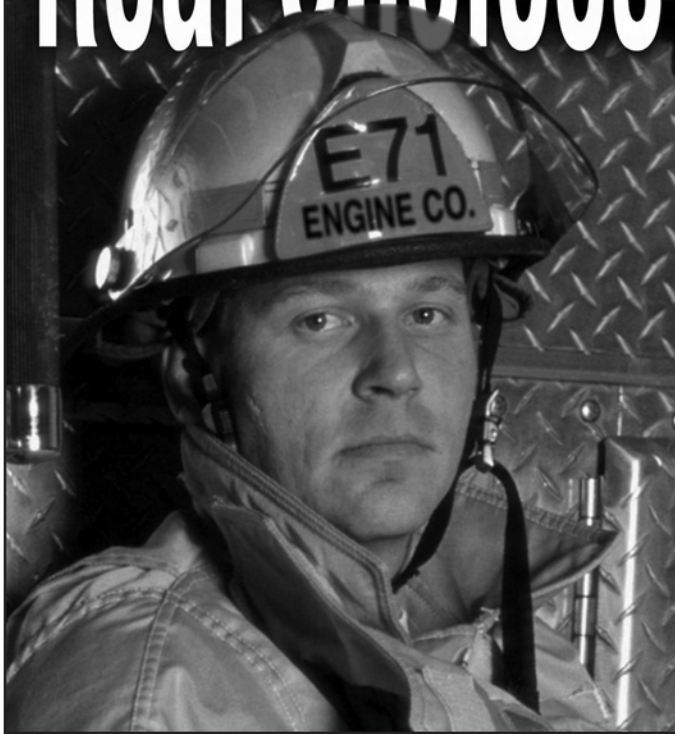
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