

Pulse Check 2020

Partnerships, Mergers, and Consolidation

Preparing for the Future



Steven Kroll, MHA, EMT
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- **Communities can benefit from collaboration between EMS agencies.**
- **Many agencies need a new formula to achieve long-term sustainability and partnerships can be an important part of that equation.**
- **My goal today is to help you be more familiar with the opportunities that can come from joint ventures and mergers.**



- **Today I will provide a framework that can help EMS agencies begin consideration of building new relationships with their neighbors...including mergers.**
- **I will identify challenges and opportunities associated with collaborative ventures, share experience on how an EMS agency can engage in a dialogue with neighboring agencies, and discuss the range of collaborative opportunities from joint venture to merger.**
- **I will leave you with ten tips for agencies considering collaborative opportunities.**



Why Talk About This?

Volunteer agencies face many challenges:

- **Financial**
- **Workforce**
- **Societal and Community Expectations and Responsibility**
- **Leadership Succession**



Assessing Agency Strengths, Weaknesses, and Sustainability

- On-going ability to meet community obligations and expectations
- Short-term – next one to three years
- Long-term – next three to five years and beyond
- Transparency



Types of Collaborative Opportunities

- **Individual project(s) – joint supply purchasing; moving towards common types of equipment; cross-training on each other’s ambulances**
- **On-going project(s) – MCI planning; a joint community outreach program; joint CME classes**



Types of Collaborative Opportunities

- **Social – a joint picnic or party; a joint Board of Directors’ dinner; joint officers meeting**
- **Operational Sharing – qualify crew members to ride on each others ambulances to complete a crew**
- **Operational Consolidation**
- **Mergers are not a dirty word....**





The DBEMS Story



New DBEMS Headquarters Station Opened in 2019



Partnerships, Mergers, and Consolidations – Getting Started

- Getting to know each other
- The tone is set at the top
 - Collaborative “Mindset”
 - Positive attitudes and willingness to try new things



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The Process



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Operational Consolidation



TIPS FOR EMS AGENCY COLLABORATION

- **Don't wait until it is too late. Start from a position of strength. This should be an opportunity to build on what defines you as strong, not a last minute "Hail Mary" before the doors close.**
- **Talk to your neighbors. Chief Officer to Chief Officer. Board Chair to Board Chair. Member to Member. Develop reciprocal agreements and have co-medical directors.**
- **Outside thinking and facilitating is a plus – a local government official, local hospital administrator, local business person, or medical director**



TIPS FOR EMS AGENCY COLLABORATION

- **Do an environmental assessment so you know how outside forces will impact your agency in the coming years. How will your revenue and paid/volunteer workforce change? EMS management education material is available on the internet, from NAEMT and other associations, and from your regional or state EMS leadership.**



TIPS FOR EMS AGENCY COLLABORATION

- You don't need a formal and expensive strategic planning process to ask and answer some key questions:
 - ✓ What are your biggest strengths and vulnerabilities (SWOT analysis)?
 - ✓ Absent change, what will your agency look like a year from now? Three years from now?
 - ✓ What are realistic goals – for this year and the next few years?
 - ✓ List your top 10 accomplishments for 2020 and set 10 goals for 2021.



TIPS FOR EMS AGENCY COLLABORATION

- Take a long-term view - "What will this look like in five years?"
- Your community has a right to know the abilities of their EMS service. Err on the side of transparency.
- Explore your opportunities, make decisions, and plan for implementation. Start with small integration projects and build towards a merger.

Theodore Roosevelt, our 26th President, said "The best thing you can do is the right thing; the next best thing you can do is the wrong thing; the worst thing you can do is nothing."



TIPS FOR EMS AGENCY COLLABORATION

- **Use data to make your case and measure results to show success:**
 - ✓ **Projected and actual savings from combining resources and efficiencies**
 - ✓ **Projections for reducing the number of calls missed and turned over to other agencies**
- **It is worth the investment to have EMS legal experts assist you with the legal work. If it is expensive, perhaps local government and philanthropy can assist – provide the funding to make the collaborative venture happen.**



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**If you are not at the table,
you are probably on the menu**



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Questions?



steven.kroll@delmarems.org

