

## NYS EMS Council meeting March 2007

1. The Groundhog lied when he predicted an early 2007 spring. Snow forced cancellation of the Valentine's Day SEMSCO meetings, no doubt helping resuscitate a few marriages. The first meetings for SEMAC and SEMSCO in 2007 happened March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.
2. In efforts to improve functionality and assure a majority vote be held by SEMSCO members, subcommittees have undergone reconstitution and (in some cases) downsizing. SEMSCO Chair Henry Ehrhardt hopes not to be impeached or assassinated for this gutsy move which some felt was overdue. Clearly statutory decisions need to be made by vetted members appointed by the Health Commissioner. Previously, non-SEMSCO members outnumbered SEMSCO members on some committees, noticeably defeating the enabling statutes.
3. Speaking of improvements, Governor Spitzer's Executive Order # 3 requires Internet broadcasting of all government and regulatory meetings subject to the Open Meetings Law in New York State, effective July 1, 2007. Jeepers! Depending on how this plays out, you may be able to pull down a podcast of SEMAC and SEMSCO instead of reading these convoluted notes... Presently, there are more questions than answers about implementation. Regional Councils, for example, are probably included in the requirement; like they have the cash to make it happen. The order is posted at: [www.ny.gov/governor/executive\\_orders/exeorders/3.html](http://www.ny.gov/governor/executive_orders/exeorders/3.html). Maybe the Easter Bunny will leave each Regional Council an Internet camera and some cable to hook it up.
4. Similar to Britney Spears recent conversion to Britney SHEARS, no one really wanted to use the words "spinal immobilization" at the March SEMSCO meetings. Unofficial word has it, however, that the Bureau is preparing to roll out training materials and protocol revisions pending agreement on an optimal format.
5. The new and improved QI Manual should tumble out soon in CD, web, and print formats. QI Committee members accompanied by Bureau staff will deliver a series of train the trainer sessions across the state with the possibility of a session at Vital Signs this fall.
6. A final report is pending, but revised information from the QI Committee indicates approximately 50% of ALS ambulances and fly cars are 12 lead capable. 40% of hospitals can receive field transmitted 12 leads. Hmmm. Better than originally suspected.
7. The Finance Committee is putting finishing touches on an email survey to course sponsors about course funding. Once ready, they plan to email it to program agencies and compile using a New York City REMSCO web based survey site. Also, budget templates for 2008-2009 are out to Regional Councils and Program Agencies. The SEMSCO meeting schedule this year doesn't quite lend enough time to turn these documents around so the committee plans to conduct reviews and budget development by phone conferences during the summer.
8. SEMAC is moving ever closer to a Statewide ALS Protocol set. Incredible, you say? Perhaps, but if you notice the heavy trafficking in protocol swapping between regions, it's beginning to make sense even to the most inflexible of REMACS. A workgroup has assembled to review the current ALS protocol review process (which includes comparison to a pseudo set of statewide ALS protocols). An overhaul would

include developing minimum statewide ALS protocols to standardize format and streamline the review process. Only regional variances would get a peek a boo if this monumental task actually comes to fruition.

9. Speaking of protocols, a 500 page set of Life Net NY Air Medical Protocols was approved. The document was developed by 6 air medical directors in 5 states. Nearly 50 trees were spared by distributing the protocols on CD. Gadzooks!
10. If you tested anytime last fall and got a neatly embossed letter in lieu of a spanking new EMT card, help is on the way. Apparently when the Health Commissioner left along with the prior government administration, DOH was NOT allowed to take her name off the cards and also NOT allowed to issue cards with her name on them. To add insult to injury, when that matter was resolved, the card stock of safety paper ran out. Now that the legislature has confirmed the new Health Commissioner and the card stock is replenished, the Bureau expects to begin issuing the Real McCoy any day. If you're the lucky holder of a letter, hold onto it – it'll be worth something someday.
11. Bet you were wondering who's the new Health Commish? Richard F. Daines, MD is the man. Born in Utah, Dr. Daines graduated from Cornell University Medical College in 1978 and completed his residency at New York Hospital. Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Critical Care, he worked at St. Barnabas Hospital in the South Bronx and was promoted into their administration. Since 2000, he has worked at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan and became their CEO in 2002.
12. A recent DOH mailing to clarify CPR changes included an aspirin protocol and EMT-Basic skill sheet. Please note that the aspirin skill sheet is only for training purposes and has NOT been added to the EMT practical skills exam. Additionally, the range of 2 to 4 chewable 81 mg aspirin tablets should default to the dose recommended regionally. If your region has no recommendation, have your service or agency medical director pick a dose. If the new protocol and skill sheet gave you a headache, 4 tablets (equal to 324 mg) should help.
13. The New York City Medical Examiner annually reports some 900 deaths from opioid overdoses. FDNY data showed 1,112 BLS calls last year where Narcan<sup>®</sup> was needed. ALS arrival for these calls averaged 9.6 minutes. FDNY announced they have proposed a demonstration project for EMT-Basic administration of intranasal Narcan<sup>®</sup>. SEMAC will have a chance to review the plan if approved by NYS REMSCO. FDNY estimates 1,000 to 1,500 uses annually by EMT-Basics. From the city that brought nebulized albuterol to the EMT-Basic level, whoda thunk it? And what's next?
14. Speaking of scope of practice, the National Scope of Practice document hit the streets in February or, uhmm, actually got tucked away in the bowels of a NHTSA website. If you're dying to see the finished product, it's parked at:  
<http://nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Communication%20&%20Consumer%20Information/Articles/Associated%20Files/EMSScope.pdf>.
15. Part 800 of the NYS Codes Rules and Regs is about to undergo a thorough review. The Bureau plans an extensive needs assessment and will work with the Systems Committee on necessary changes. Hold onto your hats – the last effort to update Part 800 ended up kyboshed.

16. Chapter 708 of the Laws of 2006 amended Vehicle and Traffic Law eliminating fees for volunteer ambulance services to search motor vehicle records, effective September 13, 2006. If you need to set up an account, check out [www.nydmv.state.ny.us/dialin.htm](http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/dialin.htm).
17. Speaking of new laws, Chapter 683 of the NYS Laws of 2006 requires an AED and trained user on site starting September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in all public and private places of assembly having capacity for occupancy by more than 1,000 people whenever the building is in use. Shocking! The Bureau is facilitating what is sure to be an onslaught of PAD notices. Might be time to open your very own bait, tackle, and AED shop...
18. Data culled from 2004 PCRs have been distributed to each Regional Program Agency. Starting with 2005, data will be linked to SPARCS (see [www.health.state.ny.us/statistics/sparcs/](http://www.health.state.ny.us/statistics/sparcs/)), a statewide hospital reporting system to allow capture of patient outcome info. This is HUGE. EMS has been continually frustrated trying to learn what happens to our patients at the hospital. No longer! Remind your providers that linking PCR data to SPARCS requires a social security number; don't blow the chance to get some meaningful feedback on the value of prehospital care.
19. On the subject of PCRs, DOH reminds providers that only 53 agencies are approved for electronic submission. Those interested in participating should review Policy Statement # 04-05 at [www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/policy.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/policy.htm).
20. EMS appears to have taken a hit of about \$300,000 in the 2007-2008 budget. Director Ed Wronski does not expect this will cause any appreciable changes. He notes that his repeated requests for cost of living increases from the legislature to the Regional Program Agencies have again fallen on deaf ears [author's words, not Mr. Wronski's]. The Health Care Reform Act (HCRA) provides the dedicated fund for EMS operations in New York State has been renewed for one year; it had been due to expire this year.
21. STAC (the State Trauma Advisory Council), a sister Committee to SEMAC, proposed changes in nomenclature from 'regional' and 'local' trauma centers to Level I, II, and III trauma centers plus a Trauma Station (which would equate to Level IV in the American College of Surgeons criteria). STAC is developing staffing guidelines for each level. It's expected the process will take at least 2 years to implement.
22. In case you've been hiding in a cave, the Berger Commission recommendations became law on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 and are in an 18 month phased implementation. Recommended hospital and nursing home closures and mergers affect every region in NYS. Be aware of how these actions will affect your area and get involved at your local and regional level before implementation of the Commission report is completed on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Check out the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Commission report at [www.health.state.ny.us/press/reports/century/index.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/press/reports/century/index.htm).
23. Multiple committees have focused on safety issues. The SEMAC has tasked a workgroup with devising a confidential EMS error and near-miss reporting system (kinda like [www.mepars.com](http://www.mepars.com)) to help improve the EMS system by sharing lessons learned. Systems and Education & Training both have TAGS looking at safety issues. FDNY and Rural Metro have generously shared provider injury data that collectively reveals exertional injuries (ie: lifting and moving) are the most frequent

and roadway crashes tend to be the most serious. Efforts continue in both committees to look at awareness level educational programs and other initiatives that might improve safety for providers. FDNY and Rural Metro have educational programs they are willing to share.

24. Speaking of safety, the 2007 EMS Memorial service honoring providers who made the ultimate sacrifice will be held starting at 11 am on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Empire State Plaza EMS Memorial Tree of Life. Services are asked to look back in archives for any Line of Duty Deaths that have not been recognized so they can be given an appropriate place on honor on the New York State Memorial. Criteria and application forms are available on the Bureau web site at [www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/emsmemorial.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/emsmemorial.htm).
25. The Bureau asked Education and Training for an opinion on the frequency protocol updates should be released. Rather than the haphazard dribble used in the past, E&T prefers a semiannual release of protocol updates and changes.
26. For some time, course applications that just couldn't seem to make it from Sponsor's desks into the Bureau. With implementation of financial penalties, paperwork is more consistently submitted. Now it seems end of course paperwork is failing to arrive at the Bureau. When this occurs, student cards will not be issued.
27. E&T has two topics on their 2007 agenda: investigation of on-line training opportunities and aging out instructor issues. What to do with instructors (CICs and CLIs) who are no longer able to meet the riding requirement to maintain their teaching certification will be the million dollar question.
28. Vital Signs 2006 was one of the five largest conferences ever with over 2,100 attending the show in Syracuse. Mark your calendar; the show will return to the 'Cuse October 18-21, 2007. Surf to [www.vitalsignsconference.com](http://www.vitalsignsconference.com) for the complete low down.
29. The PIER Committee is seeking nominations for Annual NYS EMS Council Awards presented at the Vital Signs banquet October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Consider honoring one of your peers by nominating them for an award. Categories and criteria are posted at [www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/emsawards.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/emsawards.htm) along with application forms. Applications go to your Regional Council for approval and are due in to the State Council by August 1<sup>st</sup>.
30. Do you fear the chicken? DOH does, and they're interested in your comments on a proposed plan for allocating ventilators should a pandemic (like the bird flu) hit New York. Check out the draft plan at [www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2007/2007-03-16\\_ventilator\\_allocation.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2007/2007-03-16_ventilator_allocation.htm). A comment link appears there as well.
31. Here's a unique idea: Monroe-Livingston REMSCO is piloting a protocol in Rochester transporting certain low priority patients 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 on-line medical control is mandated as well as an agreeable patient. The project is expected to ease ED overcrowding and improve turn around time for ambulances. Stay tuned...
32. New York State has extended the deadline for filing Workers Compensation claims related to the World Trade Center rescue, recovery, and cleanup operations until August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007. More information is posted at [www.wcb.state.ny.us/content/main/SubjectNos/sn046\\_159.htm](http://www.wcb.state.ny.us/content/main/SubjectNos/sn046_159.htm).

33. Well known ambulance crash injury researcher Dr. Nadine Levick has collaborated with international colleagues to launch a Global EMS Forum to share Emergency Medical knowledge internationally. Check out [www.GlobalEMSForum.org](http://www.GlobalEMSForum.org).
34. Here's a final little ditty for ya: the New York State Thruway announces an email regional advisory network called the TRANSsystem. You can sign up at [www.nysthruway.gov/tas/index.html](http://www.nysthruway.gov/tas/index.html) for a variety of different email alerts (sent to your email or any IP addressable device including cell phones and pagers) pertaining to traffic and road conditions, construction, lane closures, etc. DOT, who already runs a similar system for government officials and public safety agencies, should be launching a similar version in the near future.
35. The 2007 SEMAC and SEMSCO meetings are scheduled for May 1 and 2, September 25 and 26, and December 11 and 12, 2007. All will be held at the Best Western Sovereign, 1228 Western Avenue in Albany, NY 12203.

These notes respectfully prepared by Mike McEvoy, PhD, RN, CCRN, EMT-P who was the 2005 Chair of the State EMS Council where he represents the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs. Mike remains on the Council as a wise old past-chair, kinda like an old Fire Chief. Mike is EMS Coordinator for Saratoga County, a paramedic for Clifton Park-Halfmoon Ambulance Corps, a firefighter and chief medical officer for West Crescent Fire Department. At Albany Medical Center, Mike works as a clinical specialist in the Cardiac Surgical ICUs, Chairs the Resuscitation Committee, and teaches critical care medicine at Albany Medical College. Contact Mike at [McEvoyMike@aol.com](mailto:McEvoyMike@aol.com). If you want a personal copy of these “unofficial” SEMSCO minutes delivered directly to your email account, surf to the Saratoga County EMS Council at [www.saratogaems.org](http://www.saratogaems.org) and click on the “NYS EMS News” tab (at the top of the page – or you can simply click here to be taken directly to the source: [www.saratogaems.org/NYS\\_EMS\\_Council.htm](http://www.saratogaems.org/NYS_EMS_Council.htm)). There, you'll find a list server dedicated exclusively to circulating these notes. Past copies of NYS EMS News are parked there as well.