

1. An additional disclaimer on this month's notes: the author was unable to attend. Notes have been compiled using scintillating archived video footage www.health.state.ny.us/events/webcasts/archive/ coupled with first person accounts of the proceedings from confidential informants. The close proximity to December's meetings was somewhat of an agenda limiting factor.
2. With new Council officers for 2008, Chairperson Deb Funk is assembling committees and prioritizing tasks for the year. A preliminary organizational meeting identified Safety and continued QI initiatives as joint concerns of SEMSCO and SEMAC. Committees have been asked to identify their primary projects and any new undertakings for 2008.
3. The 2008 EMS Memorial service honoring providers who made the ultimate sacrifice will be held starting at 11 am on May 21st at the Empire State Plaza EMS Memorial Tree of Life. This is an important gathering and one that every service and EMS provider should consider attending. Mark your calendar – details will be out soon.
4. December test scores were held up due to the horrific snowstorm the night of the exam and 2 major holidays that followed. Cards should all be in hand by now. The new testing vendor (PES) administered their first exam on January 17th without a hitch. Discussion continues on adding additional on-site scoring locations in the Western part of the state.
5. Training and Education has appointed a new TAG to develop standards and guidelines for on-line EMS education.
6. The Evaluation Committee's brand spankin' new QI manual is available for download on the Bureau web along with a nifty Power Point presentation. Surf to www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/quality_improvement/index.htm. The Committee is working with the Bureau to issue an RFI (Request for Information) on a statewide EPCR (Electronic PCR) system. Don't hold your breath; this is no small undertaking.
7. The PIER Committee is finalizing a Statewide EMS pin to be unveiled in the near future. They plan to work on a revised recruitment poster next.
8. The STAC (State Trauma Advisory Committee) is considering adding a Level III Trauma Center designation to the currently existing Levels I and II. These centers would be certified to stabilize and transfer a trauma patient to more definitive care. Distance is the key factor with consideration currently being given to demarcating a 50 to 60 mile radius around existing trauma centers within which no Level III centers could be certified. This would serve very rural areas of the state where access to trauma care is extremely limited at present.
9. The Bureau announced upcoming meetings with the Office of Public Health to discuss badly needed changes in existing Blood Borne Pathogen legislation and regulations. Director Wronski asked that EMS providers who've experienced difficulties with the existing BBP rules and regs share their troubles with the Bureau for use in documenting a need for change. On a side note, any readers who've attended lectures by noted EMS Infection Control guru Katherine West have heard her describe New York's statutes and regulations as the most restrictive and archaic in the nation. Ouch!
10. Okay, now for the first brouhaha in 2008: Statewide ALS protocols. An initial round of Statewide minimum guidelines was proposed by the working TAG. These

included protocols for v-fib, tachycardia, bradycardia, and asystole. Well, jeepers, creepers: you'd think the TAG had tried to cancel July 4th, Thanksgiving, and take away a couple folk's birthdays. The phrases "rinky dink" and "illegal" were among those thrown around in the verrrry lengthy discussion at SEMAC and again at SEMSCO. Ultimately, the controversial first stab at a statewide protocol set was approved at SEMAC and came to a screeching halt when they were tabled at SEMSCO. Stay tuned.

11. The Evaluation Committee facilitated a town meeting with representatives of ACEP (American College of Emergency Physicians) to discuss their National Report Card issued annually on Emergency Medicine. Discussion included our ability to actually obtain the data requested each year by ACEP and the possibility of developing our own report card as a tool to help better manage New York's EMS system. More to come...
12. As promised, a revised protocol approval process was proposed by Med Standards and approved by SEMAC. It does not allow for paperless submission as expected, but does require electronic distribution to State committee members. It also assigns three Med Standards committee members as reviewers to reduce nit picking time spent at meetings. Instead of the present 60 paper copies required with each protocol submission, only 2 paper copies accompanied by one electronic copy are required in the revised approval process. Mother Nature will probably pen a thank you note for the million trees saved by these revisions.
13. Mark your calendar for a trip to Buffalo October 2-5 this year for Vital Signs 2008.
14. The Specialty Care TAG is awaiting a response from the Health Commissioner on their request he appoint a task force to examine interfacility transfers. Now that their Scope of Practice document has been approved by SEMAC, they will develop a standard educational curriculum for interfacility transport providers in conjunction with the Training and Education Committee. They also plan to refocus on standardizing statewide definitions for levels of care as they relate insurance reimbursement.
15. Point of clarification: EMS providers cannot presently transport a patient with blood products infusing unless accompanied by a licensed medical provider. Work on changes to these regulations continues.
16. The Finance Committee will work with the Bureau to mail out Budget Templates in early March for return in time for a special May 27th evening Finance Committee meeting.
17. The Systems Committee plans to evaluate the Municipal CON process. Recent disputes have raised concerns that the present process may be destabilizing local EMS systems. They are also working closely with the Bureau on revisions to Part 800 (see: www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/part800.htm). Top priorities of the Bureau are 800.15 (Required Conduct) and 800.16 (Suspension and Revocation of Certification), neither of which seem presently adequate in allowing the Bureau to appropriately maintain EMS standards of care.
18. The newly appointed Safety TAG announced plans to publish a white paper on developing an EMS Culture of Safety. They also are nearly finished developing a list of state reportable incidents for EMS services. These will include crashes involving injuries, deaths, and (possibly) towing of ambulance vehicles from the scene, injuries

(including exposures), and unexpected equipment failures. Part and parcel to this process will be a set of forms and a DOH database to track and trend reports. Further analysis of the safety survey conducted at Vital Signs 2007 led the committee to request SEMSCO approval to publish survey results (SEMSCO approved). The TAG will seek IRB (Institutional Research Board) authorization from the University of Rochester before moving forward.

19. The trial of a new meeting schedule SEMSCO Committees met with a few snafus. Adjustments will be attempted in March. Details are forthcoming.
20. Last but not least, inquiring minds have finally pried loose some stats on web casting. It costs NYS approximately \$1,800 to web cast each SEMAC and SEMSCO meeting. Who watches, you wonder? Well, in December 2007 there were 22 people watching SEMAC and 29 watching SEMSCO live (during the meetings). An additional 132 watched the archived SEMAC web cast and 154 the archived SEMSCO meeting during the 30 day period the files are posted on the DOH website. This may jump exponentially if SEMSCO parties ever catch on. Similar to Super bowl parties, it's been rumored that several pubs are considering SEMSCO parties complete with full screen replays meeting web casts.
21. Remaining SEMAC and SEMSCO meetings in 2008 are scheduled for March 4 and 5, May 28 and 29, September 10 and 11, and December 2 and 3, to be held at the Best Western Sovereign, 1228 Western Avenue in Albany, NY 12203. Yes Virginia, three of the meetings do fall on Wednesday and Thursday instead of the traditional Tuesday-Wednesday format.

These notes respectfully prepared by Mike McEvoy, PhD, RN, CCRN, REMT-P who was the 2005 Chair of the State EMS Council where he represented the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs. Mike finished his six year tenure on the Council in December 2007 and hopes to begin serving as an alternate to the yet to be confirmed NYSAFC representative Mike Murphy, RN, EMT-P (no comment on how long that might take). McEvoy 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. 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 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). There, you'll find a list server dedicated exclusively to circulating these notes. Past copies of NYS EMS News are parked there as well.