



# New York State Volunteer Ambulance And Rescue Association

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## District 4, New York City Region

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# THE PULSE

## November 2010

### Chairperson's Message



Summer break is over but that really only involved formal meetings as changes, issues and challenges never stop. The biggest change for me was the arrival of a new family member in October.

There are some things we look forward to each year. PULSE CHECK 2010 was a success as the educational seminars again received excellent reviews. The 2011 conference will be held 9/22/11 to 9/25/11 and Mick McEvoy and Rich Beebe have already put out their call for presentations. CME seminars are being held around the city and EMS basic and refresher courses are in abundance this year. Check the [www.nysvara.org](http://www.nysvara.org) web site often for the latest news and postings and information on PULSE CHECK 2011. The 2011 District 4 and 18 NYC Region Volunteer EMS Recognition Dinner is scheduled for 5/10/11 – check the web site at [www.emsdinner.com](http://www.emsdinner.com) for more information.

And then there are the other issues that do not seem to get resolved. Utilization of volunteer EMS units to help in the NYC 911 System will again be brought to the NYC Council. Twice in the last year the monthly average 911 ambulance response time was just 2 seconds shy of 9 minutes. Routine contacts with FDNY EMS have been problematic at times to the point of jeopardizing patient care. Mutual Aid among volunteer squads needs to be strengthened. Communications systems need to be improved at the basic crew-to-crew level and we await the implementation of the new radio system being installed by the city at squad bases.

Included with this issue is a membership application. If you are not already a member of the Association please apply as more squad and individual members equates to a stronger voice for the volunteer sector. Get Involved. Stay safe.

*Ryan*

### VICE CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE



Being as this is my first "article" in the PULSE newsletter I would like to introduce myself. My name is Thomas J. Cacaci Jr., I have been a volunteer EMT for the past 13 years or so. Now being the Vice Chairperson of NYSVA&RA District 4, I look forward to working with our Chairperson Ryan Gunning to help move forward in our ventures to be better utilized by the FDNY and 911 system, as well as solidifying a District-wide Mutual Aid System. I also would like to have open rapport with everyone, so feel free to contact me at anytime by email at [district4vicechair@yahoo.com](mailto:district4vicechair@yahoo.com).

Thomas J. Cacaci, Jr.

## REGIONAL EMS COUNCIL OF NYC

NYC Comptroller records show NYC REMSCO had or has the following contracts from the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene in various stages in 2010:

- CPR-First Aid Training - \$224,176 for program costs 7/1/07 to 6/30/10
- External Defibrillator Registration - \$30,000 for consultant fees 1/1/08 to 6/30/10
- CPR-First Aid Training - \$305,520 for program costs ????? to 6/30/11

Transfer of Ambulance Operating Certificate #0804 from St. Vincent's to Ahava Home Care was approved.

### AMBULANCE COMMITTEE

There are subcommittees (TAGs) established on:

1. 911 Utilization of Volunteers – FDNY has not yet replied to comments on draft 911 contract for volunteers.
2. BLS First Responder Groups – regional recognition of new groups is still on indefinite hold while committee attempts to come up with regional guidelines.
3. Mutual Aid Agreements – approval of new agreements still on indefinite hold while committee attempts to come up with regional guidelines. There was a strong negative reaction to initial suggestions.
4. Security Stickers – No new applications have been received.
5. Certificate of Need – Article 30 has a requirement for a Public Notice but not a Public Hearing. Despite the costs associated with uncontested CON actions, the Sub-committee feels the region should continue to hold Public Hearings so that all parties have an opportunity to present views.

### TRAINING & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Responder Specialized Emergency Training Associates, Inc. (RSETA) was approved to provide EMT and EMT-P refresher training in the five boroughs of NYC. RSETA filed as a NYS Domestic Business Corporation in July and CICs with the new training center include Madeline Fong and William Powell who most recently were involved with EMS training at NY Hospital-Queens. Initial classes would be given at Flushing VAC. NYS DOH still has to give final approval.

Emergency Aid Training resubmitted their application to provide EMT and CFR courses in the Bronx. An additional clinical agreement with Empress Ambulance in Westchester has been added. If approved, courses would be given at Hostos Community College.

There was a short discussion at the REMSCO meeting in September of EMT pass rates because of a sharp drop in the May 2010 state exam. On the 8/19/10 exam the average score was 83.7. On the 8/2008 exam it was 81.8 and in 3/2007 it was 83.4. It appears adjustments were made and pass rates are back to normal.

### QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Patient Care Restriction policy is still being developed.

## FDNY NEWS

Fire Commissioner Salvatore Cassano announced on 9/16/10 that Dr. David Prezant, a 25-year veteran of the Department, has been named Special Advisor to the Commissioner on Health Policy in addition to his title of FDNY Chief Medical Officer. Cassano also announced that Dr. John Freese, a 17-year veteran, has been selected to become the new Chief Medical Director for FDNY's Office of Medical Affairs (OMA). The title had been the slightly different Chief Medical Officer while Prezant held the position at OMA. Freese was formerly a Division Medical Director responsible for EMS Training, On-Line Medical Control and Prehospital Research.

Rapid response units (Rapid Response 117, 152, etc) were deployed in the aftermath of the heavy rain and wind storm (tornados) that hit the city on 9/16/10. These units are the 2nd half of Special Operations Companies (SOC) and the 29 Chemical Protective Companies (CPC ladders). When needed, these small trucks can be placed in service and respond to CFR runs and other non fire responses. On 9/16 they were assigned to clear fallen trees from roadways and power lines.

Graduation ceremonies were held on 9/20/10 for 34 Paramedics and 87 EMTs who graduated from the EMS Academy.

FDNY EMS ambulance was involved in a fatal MVA on 9/15/10 at Woodside Avenue and 76 Street in Queens. News reports indicate the ambulance was transporting a stroke patient to Elmhurst Hospital and with its light and siren on slowly crept into the intersection against a red light and collided with a van. The van then struck and over tuned onto a 75 year old pedestrian. The EMTs and their patient suffered minor injuries. The other driver was not hurt.

New PPE boots are being evaluated by field personnel. The EMS unions will be meeting with the department once testing has been completed.

- Striker II Danner – Sept. 5th to Oct. 2, 2010
- Haix Airpower X1 (high boot) - Oct. 3rd to Oct. 31, 2010
- Total Fire Pro Warrington 6010 – Oct. 31st to Nov. 27, 2010
- Haix Airpower R7 (low boot) – Nov. 28th to Dec. 25, 2010

Dispatch of EMS and police calls through the new \$195 million Verizon Vesta software program is still being held up due to performance problems. The Daily News reported on 9/1/10 that during tests when the system gets saturated with calls for EMS or police it can't handle the load and starts dropping calls. Overall, 400 of some 1,700 system performance requirements are not being met. Among its major functions, the new software is supposed to automatically give 911 operators the number and location of each emergency call while also recording it. FDNY dispatchers have been using the system since last October but have far fewer calls to handle.

In partnership with *NYC Service* and New York Sports Clubs (NYSC) FDNY earlier this year launched *FDNY CPR to Go*, a new program offering free CPR classes at NYSC locations in all five boroughs. Classes at NYSC are scheduled at various times on Wednesdays, Thursdays and weekends. Membership at NYSC is not required to take part in the *FDNY CPR To Go* program. Participants learn basic CPR skills from a member of the FDNY EMS Mobile CPR Training Unit following along using the *CPR Anytime Personal Learning Kit*, which features an instructional DVD and an inflatable mannequin. Participants keep the kit they train with and are asked to pledge to use the kit to show five of their family members and friends how to perform CPR. In 2009, the Training Unit directly trained over 7,500 volunteers at EMS stations, schools, places of worship and community centers. Since the start of the Unit in April of 2005, an estimated 35,000 people have been directly trained to perform CPR, and an estimated 55,000 people have been trained by those who have completed the free class.

*Government Security News* reports the FDNY purchased Radiation Torso Vests personal-protection armor from Radiation Shield Technologies (RST) of Miami, FL, as part of its chemical protective clothing upgrade program. The 360-degree vests are made of Demron, a fabric that provides multi-hazard protection from all nuclear, biological, chemical, bomb, ballistic threats, as well as infrared radiation and heat. The vests provides shielding to vital organs from X-ray and low-energy gamma emissions as well as high- and low-energy alpha and beta radiations. The protection on the torso is reinforced to protect twice as much this particular areas from gamma radiations and the vest is equipped with a removable thyroid protector. The vest can be worn under the FDNY hazmat suit for better protection.

The FDNY has also chosen to use RST's high-energy nuclear suppression blankets. This crew protection blanket was created specifically by RST for the FDNY. It is flame and acid resistant and offers protection for contained high-energy sources such as an undetonated dirty bomb. The blanket can also be used to protect first responders who would evacuate contaminated radioactive patients.

For the 2009-2010 FDNY strategic plan, the department decided to combine the highly specialized FDNY Hazardous Material Company #1 with the 12 Hazardous Material Technician Companies spread around the city into a comprehensive "HazMat Group" in order to respond to and mitigate hazardous material incidents at all levels. FDNY's Hazmat Company #1 is one of the teams newly geared with Demron's Radiation Torso Vest.

Modified Response Pilot Program began 10/4/10 in Queens and will run for three months. The purpose is to cut down on accidents involving fire apparatus responses to certain non-fire and non-life threatening emergencies.

Group 1 consists of water leaks, downed trees and overnight pull box activations without a secondary source. A single unit will respond without lights and siren and obey all traffic regulations.

Group 2 consists of odors other than smoke such as gas or fumes, sprinkler and automatic alarms, electrical emergencies, manhole emergencies and other fire alarm systems. Instead of 3 engines and two trucks in emergency mode only the first due engine and ladder will use lights and sirens while the other units will respond without lights and sirens and obey all traffic regulations.

At any time the response can be upgraded to a full emergency if additional information is received.

Recruitment section has been setting up information tables around the city to develop a pool of applicants for EMT and EMT-P openings. Current base salary levels, not including overtime, shift differential, meal money and benefits, are:

	Starting	after 1 year	after 2 years	after 3 years	after 5 years
EMT	\$31,931	\$33,740	\$34,341	\$39,764	\$45,834
EMT-P	\$43,690	\$48,127	\$50,091	\$55,255	\$59,079

For more information on requirements to be hired and benefits call 718 999-FDNY or go to [www.nyc.gov/fdny](http://www.nyc.gov/fdny)

While EMS is one of a few city agencies still expanding, they are fast coming up on their allotted head count. No fire classes due to the city's dispute with a Federal Court judge's decision, few NYPD classes and a generally poor job market has slowed past severe staffing losses to a trickle.

8 hour tours by NYC 911 system ambulances – includes both FDNY EMS and voluntary hospitals:

<b>2008</b>	<b>ALS Tours</b>	<b>BLS Tours</b>	<b>Total Tours</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>ALS Tours</b>	<b>BLS Tours</b>	<b>Total Tours</b>
November	335.7	597.7	933.4	November	340.6	602.5	943.1
December	339.9	599.5	939.4	December	341.0	605.4	946.4
<b>2009</b>				<b>2010</b>			
January	340.5	604.0	944.4	January	343.5	606.7	950.1
February	337.1	592.6	929.7	February	344.3	616.4	960.8
March	336.3	592.6	928.9	March	345.9	605.5	951.4
April	336.9	592.9	929.8	April	346.5	601.3	947.8
May	335.6	592.1	927.6	May	343.6	600.3	943.9
June	334.1	586.5	920.6	June	342.6	614.4	957.1
July	334.1	582.9	917.1	July	334.3	614.2	948.5
August	335.8	594.3	930.0	August	332.3	609.2	941.5
September	342.3	598.6	940.9	September	332.6	608.2	940.8
October	341.7	606.4	948.1	October	336.1	610.7	947.8
Yearly average daily tour totals: 2005 = 934.2				2006 = 919.7	2007 = 923.7	2008 = 932.9	2009 = 933.8

Citywide 911 System EMS response times:

<b>Segment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>1-8</b>	<b># Runs 1-8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>1-8</b>	<b># Runs 1-8</b>	<b>Change 1-8</b>
					<b>2008</b>				
November	5:09	6:36	7:58	107,583	4:59	6:36	8:06	110,952	Higher Y to Y
December	5:09	6:47	8:21	115,387	5:18	6:49	8:29	115,467	Higher Y to Y
					<b>2009</b>				
January	5:11	6:41	8:03	114,059	5:05	6:36	8:12	114,304	Higher Y to Y
February	5:06	6:32	7:49	101,439	5:19	6:53	8:18	101,872	Higher Y to Y
March	5:01	6:36	8:03	114,462	5:06	6:41	8:17	115,746	Higher Y to Y
April	5:01	6:33	8:14	114,042	5:01	6:32	8:11	114,350	Lower Y to Y
May	5:20	6:54	9:31	129,849	5:03	6:44	8:49	125,672	Lower Y to Y
June	5:14	6:56	9:09	122,771	5:14	6:51	8:54	125,140	Lower Y to Y
July	5:03	6:43	8:46	121,809	5:11	6:54	8:58	129,668	Higher Y to Y
August	5:05	6:36	8:26	121,532	5:07	6:45	8:28	121,289	Higher Y to Y
September	5:05	6:39	8:18	114,749	5:14	6:55	8:58	121,399	Higher Y to Y
October	5:04	6:38	8:10	116,840	5:14	6:48	8:33	120,279	Higher Y to Y

### FDNY LIASION COMMITTEE

Captain Stacy Scanlon has been appointed as the new liaison to the volunteer ambulance and voluntary hospital sectors. Captain Scanlon was previously a lieutenant with the Voluntary & Statistical Unit and in that position served as alternate to the primary liaison. Selection for lieutenant with the Voluntary & Statistical Unit is still to be named.

Citywide mutual aid was activated on Thursday evening 9/16/10 just before 7:00 PM due to the aftermath of a severe storm. High winds and heavy rain knocked down trees and power lines and caused flooding in Staten Island, Brooklyn and Queens. The request for additional ambulances was cancelled about 9:14 PM.

On Saturday 10/16/10 the MTA, FDNY and NYS Office of Homeland Security conducted a drill at Grand Central Station. Volunteer sector EMS agencies were not notified or asked to participate.

Volunteer sector EMS agencies were invited to participate in a drill on Sunday 10/17/10 although the location and nature were not disclosed. The local Community Board was notified that it was a NYC Office of exercise at the Citicorp Building in Long Island City involving a mass casualty incident/family assistance situation. News reports indicated the scenario involved a car bomb on a busy street during rush hour followed by a second explosion near the Queens Midtown Tunnel. According to the script, there were 40 fatalities and 90 injured. NY1.com quoted NYC OEM Commissioner Joseph Bruno saying "Now, I'll tell you that there are things here that plenty of their people, experts behind me, are not happy with but that's why we're doing it. They will look to see what we've done and they'll make more changes to make us better when and if this really occurs".

Volunteer sector agencies were invited to participate in coverage of the NYC Marathon on Sunday 11/7/10.

## BLUE LIGHTS FLASHING ATOP NYC BUSES – SOME IN MTA CLUELESS ABOUT V&T LAW

The NY Daily News reported on 10/18/10 that the new express lane "Select" buses operating in Manhattan and the Bronx had front facing flashing blue lights to alert riders that they were approaching. When told by a reporter that the lights may violate state law an MTA source said the decision to install the lights was made by prior NYC Transit administration. Another MTA spokesman dismissed any safety concerns saying he doubted whether anyone would mistake a bus for a volunteer firefighter's vehicle. A NYS DMV spokesman declined to say if the buses violated the law but did concede the law restricts the use of blue lights to first responders. A retired NYPD Highway Unit captain said he wasn't even aware of the blue light law.

Evidently, our state, local and public agency officials are unaware of what color lights are permitted on different motor vehicles. A few years ago the MTA had blue lightbars atop their armored trucks used to pick up/drop off cash at token booths. They have since switched to amber lightbars.

According to the latest NYS law, blue lights are only permitted on volunteer firefighter's personal vehicles plus the rear of police and fire vehicles. Federal government vehicles are exempt from state law and US government vehicles can have 360 degree blue lights.

Since the MTA is being made aware that blue lights on busses is illegal will they switch to green lights and wait to be told that green lights are restricted to volunteer EMS responders?

## NYC COUNCIL GRANTS FOR 7/1/10 – 6/30/11 FISCAL YEAR EXPENSE BUDGET

29 VACs & VFDs received 34 grants totaling \$171,857

Agency	Amount	Council sponsor
Bay Community VAC	3,500	Halloran
Bed-Stuy VAC	10,000	Vann
Broad Channel VFD-VAC	5,000	Ulrich
College Point VAC	3,500	Halloran
Edgewater Park VFD	3,500	Vacca
Flatlands VAC	10,000	Fidler
Flushing VAC	3,500	Halloran
Forest Hills VAC	5,000	Koslowitz
Gerritsen Beach VFD-VAC	12,500	Fidler
Glen Oaks VAC	5,953	Weprin
Glendale VAC	2,500	Crowley
Jamaica Estates-H'Wd-S Bayside VAC	3,000	Gennaro
Jamaica Estates-H'Wd-S Bayside VAC	5,952	Weprin
Lindenwood VAC	5,000	Ulrich
Little Neck-Douglaston VAC	3,500	Halloran
Middle Village VAC	4,000	Crowley
North Shore Rescue Squad	3,000	Rose
North Shore Rescue Squad	4,000	Oddo
Oceanic VFD	5,000	Oddo
Point Breeze VFD	5,000	Ulrich
Queens Vill-Hollis-Bellerose VAC	5,952	Weprin
Richmond Engine Company #1	5,000	Oddo
Ridgewood VAC	2,000	Crowley
Ridgewood VAC	10,000	Reyna
Rockaway Point VFD	5,000	Ulrich
Roxbury Volunteer Emergency Svcs	5,000	Ulrich
Throggs Neck VAC	8,000	Vacca
Volunteer Heart Ambulance	3,000	Ignizio
Volunteer Heart Ambulance	3,000	Oddo
West Hamilton Beach VFD-VAC	5,000	Ulrich
Whitestone VAC	3,500	Halloran
Woodhaven-Richmond Hill VAC	4,000	Crowley
Woodhaven-Richmond Hill VAC	4,000	Crowley
Woodhaven-Richmond Hill VAC	5,000	Ulrich
Metropolitan Fire Association	4,000	Ignizio (Youth group grant for classroom & training)

5 Community Safety Patrols received 9 grants totaling \$128,500

114 Precinct Civilian Obs Patrol	30,000	Vallone
114 Precinct Civilian Obs Patrol	3,500	Van Bramer
Boro Park Shmira Patrol	35,000	Greenfield
Boro Park Shmira Patrol	7,500	Lander
Flatbush Shomrim Patrol	12,000	Nelson
Flatbush Shomrim Patrol	12,000	Nelson

Flatbush Shomrim Patrol	18,500	Fidler
Glendale Civilian Observation Patrol	1,000	Crowley
Williamsburg Shmira Patrol	9,000	Levin

3 Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) received 4 grants totaling \$10,500

Port Richmond	5,000	Ignizio
Port Richmond	1,000	Rose
Southwest Brooklyn	1,000	Gentile
Upper East Side	3,500	Lappin

The Red Cross received 8 grants totaling \$59,000 for activities including emergency preparedness, disaster response, etc.

The entire 291 page Schedule C listing all 2010 Fiscal Year grants, including very brief descriptions of what the grants are for, is on the internet at <http://council.nyc.gov/html/releases/pdfs/FY2011SkedC.pdf> . There is an accompanying search tool at <http://council.nyc.gov/html/budget/council-disclosure-fy11.shtml>

## **KNIGHTS OF LIFE MOTORCYCLE CLUB**

Carlos Varon sent in the message below about forming a NYC chapter of the Knights of Life Motorcycle Club.

As a motorcycle rider with NYC-HOG (Harley Owners Group) and the PGR (Patriot Guard Riders) I often come across many groups who are Law Enforcement (eg: Blue Knights Chapters) and Fire (eg: Fire Riders Chapters) but only 1 chapter of EMS related riders (Knights of Life).

I am inquiring if there are EMS folks who ride motorcycles and would be interested in starting a NYC based chapter of Knights of Life. Information about the club is at: <http://www.knightsoflife.org/> and <http://www.kolmcny.com/>

If you are interested, please respond to my email to [roadking1989@gmail.com](mailto:roadking1989@gmail.com) Subject Line: Knights of Life. If there is sufficient interest, I will then take it to the next level and get back to those who inquired.

Be well and Ride Safe. Thanks

Carlos Varon, Director of Emergency Services

American Red Cross in Nassau County, 195 Willis Avenue, Mineola, NY 11501

516-747-3500 Ext: 224(p) - 516-216-0011(c) - 516-294-1304(f) - [varonc@usa.redcross.org](mailto:varonc@usa.redcross.org)

## **ORGAN RECOVERY PROGRAM WORKING OUT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Bellevue Hospital will be proceeding effective 11/1/10 with a \$1.5 pilot program to increase the number of available transplant organs by sending out an ambulance designated and marked as an "Organ Preservation Vehicle" (OPV) staffed by a multi-agency project team of two EMTs, a doctor and a family services coordinator to out of hospital cardiac arrest scenes. Operating times would be 4:00 PM to midnight, 7 evenings a week. After a person is pronounced dead the organ preservation team would re-initiate compressions and ventilations while transporting the potential donor to Bellevue's Emergency Department. The program will run for at least 4 months and cover Manhattan neighborhoods within 25 minutes of Bellevue and would involve kidney donation. The average life of a kidney from a deceased donor is 7 to 10 years vs 17 to 20 from a living donor.

The NY Times in an article described the program as "The city would have an 'organ preservation vehicle' monitor emergency radio frequencies and chase after ambulances, ready to swoop in as soon as a person was declared dead." The Times indicates draft protocols were changed to address uneasiness about the approach. The organ-recovery vehicles would be parked out of sight of the ambulances, and the emergency medical crews would not be made aware of their presence to avoid influencing their efforts to save the person. Also, a person's consent for organ donation would no longer be presumed, even if, for example, it said so on the person's driver's license - a family member would have to be at the scene to assent to the donation.

Information on the proposal was given at a NYC Regional EMS Council Meeting some time back but other than the initial announcement, little information had been forthcoming in the media or at REMSCO meetings because of negative reaction to the proposal such as ethical concerns about making sure no life-saving treatment was withheld by initial responders, the presence of a highly trained organ harvesting crew nearby but doing nothing till a body was released to them plus religious issues. A big hurdle had been raised by NYPD because they are required to report to the medical examiner deaths that result from apparent homicide, accident or suicide, or that occur in a correctional facility or in any suspicious or unusual manner, including people who are young and seemingly healthy. The medical examiner or a representative is then required, according to the city code, to go to the scene to "take charge" of the dead body and investigate the cause of death. However, for organs to be preserved, the harvest team would have to start preservation measures within 20 to 30 minutes. Bellevue indicates that exclusions would be based on the examination of a physician at the scene, paramedics and police officers, and that the medical examiner could be consulted by phone. A blood sample would also be taken. A spokesperson from the mayor's office is quoted saying "The city is very interested in promoting organ donation and continues to discuss the possibility of a rapid organ-recovery ambulance to expedite the process and save lives" and "Because rapid organ recovery requires important decisions to be made in new ways under

tight deadlines, we have to think through the procedures for releasing a body to the hospital to prevent the policy from having unintended consequences”.

## HOSPITAL NEWS

### NY IS FAR BEHIND SCHEDULE ON HOSPITAL BED CLOSINGS

*Crain's NY Business* reports: “New York City closed five hospitals and lost 1,368 beds under the Berger commission mandates: at Cabrini Medical Center (474 beds), St. Vincent's Midtown Hospital (250), Victory Memorial Hospital (243), Parkway Hospital (251) and Manhattan Eye Ear and Throat Hospital (150).

But other hospitals squirmed out of closing because the legislation that created the Berger commission gave the state health commissioner broad discretion to modify mandates in cases citing access and safety concerns. Some of the mandates weren't enforced because recalcitrant hospital boards of trustees dug in their heels.

The mandated merger between New York Methodist Hospital and New York Community Hospital of Brooklyn has not yet happened, for instance, thanks to resistance from the boards of trustees. By June 30, 2011, the two hospitals are supposed to merge into a single entity with two separate campuses, with Methodist downsizing by 60 beds and Community Hospital losing 40 beds. A DOH spokesman said the two hospitals' operating licenses have been extended while a merger is still under discussion: “We're hopeful that one may still go forward.”

BELLEVUE HOSPITAL reports patients coming in by ambulance rose to 2,800 in September vs. a monthly volume of about 2,000 before ST. VINCENT'S closed. Overall patient visits to the ER has risen to 10,000 monthly vs. 8,000 a few months ago.

BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER is getting 75 ambulance patients a day vs. an average of 52 a day when ST. VINCENT'S was open. Total ER visits were about 300 patients a day in September vs. 230 a day in January. The ER has a 70 bed capacity.

LINCOLN HOSPITAL in the Bronx will use a \$5.5-million state grant to build a new 60-bed inpatient psychiatric facility to help relieve the pressure on the city system in light of recent hospital closings.

### NS-LIJ HEALTH SYSTEM

A free standing urgent care center has been established on Queens Boulevard in Rego Park to take pressure off the Emergency Department at nearby NS-LIJ Forest Hills Hospital. Since the closure of St. John's and Mary Immaculate Hospitals, Forest Hills Hospital ER went from seeing 90 patients a day to sometimes over 200. The 6,675 square foot urgent care center was funded by a \$5.3 million state grant and includes eight exam rooms, treatment areas for blood work, specialized testing and diagnostic services including electrocardiograms, X-rays, ultrasound and lab testing. Dr. Jeffrey Horwitz, former ER director at Forest Hills Hospital is the director of the urgent care center.

The plan to set up an out-patient clinic at the former site of ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL in lower Manhattan has been dropped due to health care policy conflicts with Catholic Medical Centers which still owns the property. NS-LIJ will now partner with Village Care on West 20<sup>th</sup> Street. The new 24-hour center - funded in part with a \$9.4 million state grant - will treat mild to moderate illnesses and injuries, and could open as soon as early fall. It is not known if NS-LIJ still plans to station its ambulances at the clinic to transport patients needing higher level care to nearby hospitals.

PENINSULA HOSPITAL CENTER's new Emergency Department Director is Robert S. Helman, MD. He is Board Certified in Emergency Medicine and has a number of years of experience in that specialty.

WESTCHESTER SQUARE MEDICAL CENTER in the Bronx has been pulled from the Pataki era Berger Commission list of hospitals to be closed. The hospital was the only one left on the list that had not closed. However, the number of in-patient beds will be reduced from 200 to 140. The hospital filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 but is said to be profitable before accounting for reorganization expenses.

## NEWS ABOUT NYC EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS

AHAVA AMBULANCE SERVICE, LLC is acquiring Ambulance Operating Certificate #0804 formerly held by ST. VINCENT'S CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTERS OF NY. The operating area covers Brooklyn and Manhattan south of 59<sup>th</sup> Street. Ahava's initial filing with the NYS Department of State was on 3/25/09. Its owner is Faye Zakheim who also has interests in Gamzel NY, Inc., Revival Home Health Care and the Meadowbrook Care Center in Freeport. Ahava's Chief Operating Officer and CEO will be Todd Miller who is presently COO of Gamzel NY/Revival Home Health Care and was previously employed by TransCare Ambulance as Chief Financial Officer and President/COO. Documentation submitted

to NYC REMSCO indicates a first year operating budget of \$100,000 covering 2 ambulances. Ahava's address is listed as 5350 Kings Highway in Brooklyn which is also that of Revival Home Health Care. Fay Zakheim is married to Steven Zakheim, EMT-P, a name familiar to most EMS providers in the state as the one time owner of MetroCare and TransCare, He is listed on NYC REMSCO letterhead as a member of the Board of Directors and associated with Gamzel NY. Online references show him as the CEO of Gamzel and the President of Metropolitan Home Health Products, Inc. located at 5353 Kings Highway. In answer to a question at NYC REMSCO's Ambulance Committee meeting, Ahava's attorney responded that Steve Zakheim would not be involved in Ahava. Involvement of Steve Zakheim in ownership of an ambulance service in NYS could be problematic because of a number of legal issues that have occurred over the years.

BED-STUY VAC had the Steve Harvey Morning Show on WBSL 107.5 FM broadcast live from the squad's headquarters on Greene Avenue on Tuesday morning 9/28/10.

#### BRAVO VAC

On 6/26/10, 85th Street and 7th Avenue was officially renamed "Hank Vogt Way" in honor of the man whose many contributions to Bay Ridge culminated in the foundation of BRAVO volunteer ambulance service in 1974. At their June meeting, the Bay Ridge Brooklyn Chapter of New York State Women Inc. presented its annual grants including a \$400 donation to BRAVO.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) members from around the city were asked by the NYC Office of Emergency Management to assist with coverage of the National Wheelchair Softball Tournament American Softball Association held 8/19 and 8/20 at the Citifield parking lots in Queens. 20 wheelchair softball teams from around the United States consisting of men and women with disabilities competed in a double elimination tournament for the National Championships using adapted American Softball Association (ASA) rules with a 16" clincher softball. CERT members assisted with basic first aid, including heat monitoring of participants, and assisted with field operations and were also asked to take a leadership role in managing other tournament volunteers based on their ICS training.

#### CORONA COMMUNITY AMBULANCE CORPS

Paid day crews ceased according to a notice posted 10/24/10. It was described as "a trial paid daytime volunteer staff program to provide guaranteed BLS coverage on all its ambulances during daytime hours throughout the week when it is often difficult to consistently get volunteers. The agency created, as a trial, a program to hire current members to staff ambulances. The initiative had paved the way for employment opportunities for members and while it had some success early on, the trial program has since ended its run in October. The program attributed to an increase in recognition for the agency as well as an increase in application to volunteer. As of yet, no date has been determined on when the program, in its current or new form, will be reinstated". One source had put the salary as \$15.00 per hour.

Approval was received from the NYS Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement on 6/10/10 for the squad to carry ALS level drugs. This was the final authorization necessary to begin ALS level EMS care. The squad began providing ALS level care on 7/17/10 and has been operating both BLS and ALS level ambulances.

The squad indicated on its web site that it is the process of applying for an expansion of primary operating territory to provide coverage to the neighborhoods of Corona (zip code 11368), East Elmhurst (zip code 11369), Jackson Heights (zip codes 11370, 11371, & 11372) and Elmhurst (zip code 11373). The application process has been placed on hold until new guidelines are released by the NYC Region EMS Council.

A sharp increase in revenues being projected. Information posted by the squad at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org) shows \$540,000 is expected from third party billing, \$140,000 from special events and either \$40,000 from contributions. This contrasts with total income of \$203,341 from contributions, gifts and grants as shown on the squad's IRS Form 990EZ for 2008.

FIRST RESPONSE AMBULANCE is hiring experienced EMTs and dispatchers with EMT certifications. Minimum of 5 years experience. Starting pay is \$14.00 per hour. FAX resume to Sam Mezrahi at (718) 239-4800. First Response is located at 455 Bayview Avenue, off Sheridan Boulevard, Inwood, NY 10096.

GLENDALE VAC and RIDGEWOOD VAC held a joint fundraising event on Thursday 10/21/10 with Chili's restaurant on Cooper Avenue in Glendale. The restaurant donated 10% of the sales from each customer presenting a flyer announcing the Give Back Night promotion.

#### HATZALAH

A Daily News article about a legal action filed by a former Chief Executive Officer of Cherva Hatzalah indicated he was receiving a salary of \$200,000 a year. Cherva is the parent organization holding NYS DOH Ambulance Operating Certificate #7191 and acts as the central administration for about 14 semi independent divisions, or franchises, around the city. Financial information about the central organization is not public as it does not file an IRS Form 990. Some of the divisions do file a Form 990 while others apparently claim an exemption as religious organizations.

Several Divisions including Borough Park and Queens have started to designate crews to respond on certain shifts or hours. The purpose is to keep response times down by having personnel ready to roll when a call comes in. Hatzalah, like other volunteer agencies, has a large membership but actually relies on a smaller core of willing personnel to cover most responses. The operating model has been that when a call comes in it is put out over the radio and nearby responders either go direct to a scene or pick up an ambulance and respond. However, not every member is able or willing to drop family or work responsibilities or to respond in the middle of the night. Setting up crews helps share the load among more members.

Chevra Hatzalah has been awarded a \$445,000 capital grant from the NYS Assembly to upgrade and overhaul the organization's central communications system at a facility on the border of Flatbush and Borough Park in Brooklyn. Equipment upgrades would include new radio systems as well as a voice-over Internet protocol (VOIP) system to serve as a backup in case conventional systems fail, and establishment of a backup facility at a location to be determined. While this was reported to be the first known direct government funding in the group's 35-year history, Hatzalah has accepted PPE and other equipment. In 2007 Chevra Hatzalah completed a multiyear \$1 million project funded by the UJA-Federation of New York to fully upgrade its radio communications system, revamp the computer-aided dispatch system, set up an enhanced 911 type service, convert to T-1 lines, provide training for dispatchers and create a specialized disaster preparedness training program.

Flatbush Division played their annual softball game vs. NYPD's Brooklyn Borough at MCU Park in Coney Island on Tuesday evening 7/6/10. Hatzalah won the game by a score of 6 to 2. Corporate sponsors contributed most of the \$36,000 raised with \$18,000 going to the NYPD's Lieutenant's Fund and \$18,000 distributed to assorted Brooklyn charities. Over 4,000 people attended the game. The Flatbush Division team also plays various police precincts and teams from local hospitals.

Queens Division paramedic responder was detained by US Secret Service after entering a presidential visit frozen zone in Manhattan on 7/28/10. An online report indicates he was responding with lights and siren to a call and encountered a perimeter controlled by NYPD who allowed him entrance. He was subsequently stopped by the Secret Service and detained almost two hours for questioning by them and FBI agents while his vehicle was searched by bomb squad detectives. After intervention by NYPD Community Liaisons and Midtown Hatzalah Coordinators he was allowed to leave with his vehicle.

Riverdale Division received a \$30,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to upgrade radio communications. New antennas will be installed on Manhattan's West Side, Riverdale in the Bronx and Fresh Meadows in Queens.

#### JAMAICA ESTATES-HOLLISWOOD-SOUTH BAYSIDE VAC



A show-n-tell presentation for about 25 youngsters at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's Vacation Bible School was conducted on Wednesday 7/14/09. A short talk was given on handling simple medical emergencies including bleeding and splinting. This was followed by a demonstration of some patient handling equipment including a stretcher and stair chair. The kids were also given a chance to do some "shout outs" over the ambulance's PA system. This was the 5<sup>th</sup> year the demo has been given and compliments a demo on another day given by a fire department crew.

The Youth Squad Explorer Post participated in the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk on Queens Boulevard on Sunday 10/17/10 raising funds for the cause. EMS coverage for the event was provided and included two ambulances and a first response vehicle. 28 squad members participated in the event either as walkers/fundraisers or providing EMS coverage.

LONG ISLAND COLLEGE HOSPITAL's new Director of EMS is Donald Cardone, EMT-P, CIC.

NEW YORK HOSPITAL QUEENS had a number of changes to management of its EMS ambulance and training operations. The new personnel are:

- Darlene Mercieca, JD, MBA, MPA, EMS Supervisor and Administrative Director (718) 670-1430
- Peter Kwiath, EMT-P, Assistant Supervisor (718) 670-1010
- Jason Smalls, EMT-P, Assistant Supervisor (718) 670-1010
- Rachel Waldron, MD, EMS Medical Director (718) 670-1426
- Chris Calcagni, EMT-P, EMS Training

NYH-Q operates 9 ambulances with a staff of 85 EMTs and EMT-Ps and handles about 19,000 NYC 911 calls annually.

#### NYPD

An Aviation Unit Bell 412 Air-Sea-Rescue helicopter crash landed into Jamaica Bay off Floyd Bennett Field on 9/22/10. News reports indicate the unit was returning to its base to refuel and suffered a mechanical failure going down from about 60 feet. Its assignment had been a security patrol in connection with President Obama's landing at JFK to speak at the UN. A pilot, copilot, crew chief and two scuba divers and a trainee were transported to Lutheran Medical Center with minor injuries. A subsequent inspection of NYPD other helicopters resulted in the grounding of the second \$12 million Bell 412 equipped for Air-Sea-Rescue. The department has four Agusta A119 Koala patrol helicopters plus a super secret unmarked Bell 412EP set up for counter-terrorism activities and

equipped with the latest mapping, surveillance and communication technology. The 412EP has now been reconfigured for Air-Sea-Rescue to compensate for the loss of the 412s. When Flight 1549 went down in the Hudson River in January 2009, both Air-Sea-Rescue helicopters and one of the patrol units were out of service and the unmarked Bell 412EP was assigned to assist. The [www.nypdconfidential.com](http://www.nypdconfidential.com) web site indicates "Maintenance problems and poor management have plagued the Aviation Unit over the past few years".

The department deployed in mid August the first 30 of 102 Ford Fusion hybrid fuel vehicles. The gas/electric vehicles have EPA estimates of 41 miles per gallon. The city plans to buy about 200 Ford Fusion and Escape model hybrid vehicles in 2010 to be outfitted for law enforcement use. Last year the department began testing a fleet of about 76 hybrid Nissan Altimas and currently has more than 200 hybrid cars and GMC Yukon hybrid sport utility vehicles in its fleet.

T3 Transporters have been assigned to a number of high profile subway platforms beginning in October. These are all-electric, three-wheel, upright vehicles that carry one person and reach speeds of up to 25 miles per hour have already been used in such places as Yankee Stadium, Central Park and Orchard Beach. NYPD also has Vectrix scooters (a small scooter, similar to a Vespa, which can go up to 55 mph and is used in congested urban areas. In 2003 NYPD tested 10 Segways, the personal stand-up vehicles, but never used them regularly and withdrew the original group over concerns with tipping when battery power ran low. In 2007 new Segways were used in Coney Island, Central and Prospect Parks and the Bronx Zoo. NYPD is opting for the more stable T3 Transporters vs, Segways. It has 12 T3s right now and expects to have 30 more of the \$8,900 vehicles by the end of the year.

Training has been implemented to address a Mumbai, India type of dispersed terrorist incident with multiple explosions and shooters. After a tabletop exercise reviewing a potential response scenario it was realized the Emergency Service Unit, even with its 400 highly trained officers, could be stretched thin in an attack that was prolonged and sprawling across several locations at once. As a result, officers of the Organized Crime Control Bureau were given tactical training in the use of heavy weapons, including automatic and semiautomatic machine guns and there is a policy of giving new recruits training to familiarize them with such weapons, during their time in the Police Academy. At the Rodman's Neck training facility in the Bronx a "tactical village" resembling an urban locale has been constructed for intensive training. On 10/14/10 the village was used for an exercise with various officials and the press looking on. The NYPD has its own ALS level Tactical First Response Team to address medical emergencies during incidents.

PORT AUTHORITY OF NY-NJ POLICE DEPARTMENT is having issues with air and water response capabilities.

The helicopter unit was disbanded effective 7/15/10. According to news reports, an internal report recommended that the helicopters be eliminated for \$3.7 million a year savings. The analysis found that 228 of the 258 flights between August 2008 through April 2009 were patrols over PA bridge, tunnel, transit, airport and port facilities that found no unusual incidents. The remaining 30 documented flights included missing persons searches, business trips, photo shoots, memorial flyovers and VIP tours. The report indicated NYPD, NY State Police or NJ Police helicopters can be called if needed for police activity. Routine perimeter fence patrol at the airports is done by contract guard services. The unit had two Sikorsky S-76 helicopters, three pilots, three mechanics, two maintenance supervisors and an operations agent. \$8.7 million is expected from the sale of the copters.

The PA is having continuous problems with two 37-foot model M2-37 aluminum 380 hp 35 knot/40 mph jet catamarans purchased three years ago with \$876,000 in Homeland Security funds and airport fees. One each of the boats built to US Navy anti-terrorism specs is stationed at Kennedy and LaGuardia airports and are supposed to patrol 9 miles of shoreline surrounding the facilities and assist in rescues. The Kennedy boat ran aground in May and the LaGuardia boat never went over 12 knots and is now in storage at Kennedy. The PA does have a number of smaller response boats at the airports that are operational but would evidently have a problem meeting FAA regulations requiring airports to have a water rescue plan and access to boats that can carry as many passengers as fit in the largest plane that lands or takes off there such as the recently introduced Airbus 380 which carries from 525 to 853 passengers depending on configuration. FDNY and NYPD do have response boats but they are not stationed at the airports. When asked about repairs by news media the PA indicated they would be done shortly.

RIDGEWOOD VAC celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service to the community with a fundraising dinner dance on Wednesday evening 11/10/10 at Russo's On-the-Bay in Howard Beach. For more information about the squad go to the web site at [www.ridgewoodvac.org](http://www.ridgewoodvac.org).



**THE NEW YORK STATE VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE & RESCUE ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 254  
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Phone: (877) NYS-VARA  
FAX: (518) 477-4430

E-mail: info@nysvara.org  
Web site: www.nysvara.org



**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Squad Membership

Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Squad Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Squad Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Squad Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Squad E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Squad Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership

Individual Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Individual Member \_\_\_\_\_

<b>My Service is:</b>	<b>BLS ALS (Circle all that apply)</b>	<b>Initial Membership Sign-up</b>	
<b>which is</b>	<b>NYS Certified Registered</b>	Sign up for:	Dues
<b>and is</b>	<b>Fire-Affiliated Independent</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$10.00
	<b>Commercial</b>		
<b>and is</b>	<b>Volunteer Ambulance First Responder</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Department Membership **	\$60.00
	<b>Rescue Squad</b>		
<b>and I am a:</b>	<b>Driver Attendant Dispatcher</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining (Corporate/Commercial)	\$125.00
	<b>Clerical CPR-D CFR CFR-D</b>		
	<b>EMT EMT-I EMT-CC EMT-P</b>		

Send this application along with a Check or Money Order payable to:  
**N Y S VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE & RESCUE ASSOCIATION,**

\*\* In areas of the State with active local affiliates, district dues also apply. We encourage you to become active in your local district organization. District dues, where applicable, will be automatically added at renewal. FIRST YEAR SQUAD dues are prorated as follows: full annual dues for Oct 1 to Sept 30; 3/4 of annual dues for Jan 1 to Sept 30; 1/2 of annual dues for April 1 to Sept. 30; and 1/4 of annual dues for July 1 to Sept 30.

**MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:  
N Y S Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association, Inc, P.O. Box 254, East Schodack, NY 12063**



PULSE CHECK 2011, the 56th Annual Educational Conference & Trade Show of the NYS Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association, will be held Thursday evening September 22, 2011 to Sunday morning September 25, 2011 at the Holiday Inn Albany on Wolf Road.

Event features seminars and trade show on Friday and Saturday, statewide Adult and Youth EMS team skills drill on Friday evening plus the annual memorial service and awards dinner on Saturday evening. There is a pre-conference full day Core Content presentation on Thursday for those involved in a CME based refresher program.

Information will be posted shortly on the Association's web site at [www.nysvara.org](http://www.nysvara.org) covering conference registration, room reservations, list of seminars, Drill application, trophy donations and Journal ads. There will also be information on the web site about nominations for the Association's annual awards and scholarships.

The hotel will have an attractive room rate plan and, for those who wish, a meal plan as well. Meal packages are additional but there are numerous alternative eating establishments along Wolf Road. There will be a two day conference registration with Saturday evening banquet included plus one day conference alone (Friday or Saturday) and banquet alone rates to be announced.

The association is pleased to announce that Mike McEvoy, PhD, RN, CCRN, REMT-P and Rich Beebe, MEd, RN, NREMT-P will again be serving as the conference Education Coordinators. NYSVA&RA President Mike Mastrianni, Jr. is serving as the Pulse Check 2011 Convention Committee Chair. If more information is needed call (877) NYS-VARA or e-mail [pulsecheck@NYSVARA.org](mailto:pulsecheck@NYSVARA.org)



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## District 4, NYC Region ***THE PULSE***

*Newsletter*  
November 2010

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