



# 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 2011

### Chairperson's Message



*The District was finally able to conclude elections for 2011-2012 officers in September.*

*Appreciation is extended to outgoing officers Thomas J. Cacaci and Linda F. Minervini for their service. I also want to welcome Martin Grillo's return and new officer Kathleen O'Hara.*

*Some issues seem to carry over year after year while new ones crop up. We will continue working on a District wide mutual aid plan and agreement. We will be reaching out to squads to help any that need advice or assistance meeting the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) narrowbanding requirement that goes into effect 1/1/13. The NYC Regional EMS Council's mobilization plan needs review concerning response delays caused by FDNY's insistence on picking up portable radios from central locations. The regional ID card program needs to be made current and issuance of cards kept up to date. The city is proposing to charge nonprofit organizations a fee for garbage pickup beginning in July 2012. Currently, organizations that own their property receive free collections from the NYC Department of Sanitation while organizations that rent or lease have to pay for private collection that can amount to several hundred dollars a year. A revenue estimate of \$17.2 million a year was given but details of the plan including fee amounts have yet to be released. The NYC Council is already receiving opposition mainly from church groups opposed to the plan. Last year the city started collecting a fee from nonprofits for a meeting room permit which cost some VACs and VFDs over \$500 a year. Both these fees need to be fought.*

*The minutes of the 6/28/11 NYC Regional EMS Council meeting indicated there was a discussion about the "unauthorized release of information. Information regarding the newly developed EMS radio system has been disseminated in a format that reveals specific information regarding the location of radio related equipment". The information at issue was about the NYC REMSCO talk group on the NYC DOITT 400 MHz trunked radio system and was from the Federal Communication Commission's online public database plus other online public forums. No authorization or permission from the FCC, REMSCO, FDNY, DOITT or anyone else was needed to pass on the information to the first responders whose lives may depend on the system. In addition, since the information was already public there was no "release" of it.*

*Lastly, congratulations to Glen Oaks VAC for the Unit Citation Award presented at PULSE CHECK 2011. Squad members were recognized for their actions helping to successfully resuscitate a cardiac arrest patient – their own squad member Ted Rabinowitz. Ted is living proof that when all elements of the chain of survival are in place the result can be a success.*

*Ryan*

## **VICE CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE**



*While the District was working out some issues, I had started on some initiatives. Now that all issues have been resolved, we can move forward working on getting the squads in compliance with the January 1st 2013 narrowbanding mandated by the FCC. I have already met with some squads that are in compliance plus some that still need help. If your squad needs assistance feel free to contact me.*

*I, as well as the other officers of the District, am a resource that you may utilize to help with any squad or individual issue. If there are any squads that need help with any specific issues or would like us to attend your meetings, feel free to let me know.*

*We are working on putting together a set schedule of the meetings for the year as well as providing timely notifications on the 1st of the month and the Monday prior to the meetings. We will also be notifying members, in a timely fashion, of the status of their dues.*

*We need to continue working on the Mutual aid plan and show FDNY and NYC REMSCO that can work together. As a reminder FEMA is helping with losses they may have had during the storm.*

*We will have a very busy year with these and other issues. We need your help by sending your delegates to meetings so that you have an active voice in the Association and we can move forward with this new season. The Association is only as good as its active members.*

*Be Safe*

*Martin L. Grillo.*

## **REGIONAL EMS COUNCIL OF NYC**

Lewis Marshall, MD, JD has replaced Marvin Raidman as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Regional EMS Council of NYC, Inc.

EMS Week was again celebrated with an EMS Recognition and Awards Ceremony held on Monday evening 5/16/09 at 475 Riverside Drive. EMT Jeff Samerson, FDNY EMS sang the national anthem, the honor guard was provided by NYH-Queens and the NYC FDNY EMS Pipes and Drums Band performed several selections. This year's honorees were:

- EMS Agency – Midwood Ambulance
- ALS Provider – Matthew G. Rightmyer, EMT-P, FDNY
- EMS Educator – William J. Powell, EMT-P, PC, RF, CIC
- Communications Specialist – Martin Grillo, EMT-P, Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC
- Youth Provider – Ernest D'Ambrose, EMT, Glen Oaks Volunteer Ambulance
- RPN of Excellence – John Repage, RN, EMT, North Shore Rescue Squad
- Physician of Excellence – Allen W. Cherson, DO, FACEP, Brookdale University Medical Center
- Guardian of Life Award – Frank Pollicino, EMT & Joseph Pollicino, EMT, Little Neck-Douglaston CAS

## **AMBULANCE COMMITTEE**

ROCK VAC provided evidence that they will have funds to operate and purchase necessary insurance. They also provided a letter stating the persons who surrendered the ROCK's certificate to NYS DOH were not empowered to do so. At a previous meeting, the Committee agreed that if ROCK VAC showed evidence of financial stability, it would support its re-instatement. The Committee unanimously approved that a letter be written to NYS DOH recommending the re-instatement of ROCK VAC. The full REMSCO voted for approval of the letter.

Subcommittee updates:

1. 911 Utilization of Volunteers – FDNY has not yet replied to comments on a draft 911 contract for volunteers. These comments were sent by NYC REMSCO to FDNY on 11/11/09.
2. BLS First Responder Groups – Regional recognition of new groups is still on indefinite hold while the committee attempts to come up with regional guidelines. Issues being discussed include the role of such organizations locally and across the state, liability to NYC REMSCO and a determination of how many groups there are in the city. Oversight of BLSFR groups will remain with NYC REMSCO rather than being returned to NYC REMAC.
3. Mutual Aid Agreements – Subcommittee members were Martin Grillo, Yedidiah Langsam, Scott Orlanski and Frances Pascale and are now Vincent Barranco, Yedidiah Langsam, Joseph Marcellino, Scott Orlanski and Stacy Scanlon. The subcommittee is attempting to come up with regional guidelines based on preliminary guidance issued by SEMSCO which is developing a statewide template. There had been a strong negative reaction to initial subcommittee suggestions for regional agreements as some perceived restrictions on agreements do not exist in law or regulations. Agreements already in place and/or submitted will be considered in force.
4. Security Stickers – No new applications have been received.

## TRAINING & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee is dissatisfied with the State EMS Council's decision to eliminate pre-screening of candidates for CLI training and has decided not to hold CLI training in the NYC Region until the state reverses its decision. Other regions do accept outside candidates if seats are available.

Study guides for ALS protocols to be developed.

Recommended that the REMAC Protocol Committee reconsider the use of hemostatic bandages on BLS ambulances.

These items are now available over the counter (OTC) and should be made available for use.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Patient Care Restriction policy is still being developed. Committee is up to version #4. It was requested that a letter be sent to NYS DOH asking if REMAC has authority to restrict an EMT from working in a region.

## REMAC

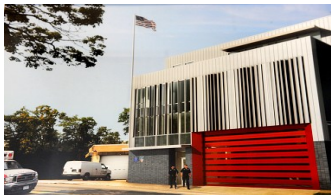
Committee will be reviewing and comparing the NYC and NYS protocols in order to decide whether the region should maintain its own BLS protocols or eliminate them in favor of the NYS BLS protocols.

## FDNY NEWS

The title of the EMS Command was officially changed to Bureau of EMS in April. The Chief of EMS reports to the Chief of Department.

The accuracy of one of two public service posters for EMS Week 2011 was questioned. It started with "In 1991 FDNY-EMS responded when...". The department did not take over municipal EMS from the NYC Health & Hospitals Corporation till 1996. The posters were displayed on about 350 telephone kiosks donated by Van Wagner advertising.

EMS Station 27 in Division 2 officially opened on August 2<sup>nd</sup> to serve the North Bronx including Woodlawn, Kingsbridge and Riverdale. It is located at 243 East 233 Street. The station was built on the site where Ladder Company 39 was once located, until 2006 when it was moved a mile away to the quarters of Engine 63/Battalion 15. The old wood frame firehouse was demolished and in late 2009 construction of the new \$11 million EMS station began. The station has a three vehicle apparatus floor and features an automatic fire door between the apparatus area and the rest of the facility and a vascular security system (palm reader) to enter the building and access key areas such as narcotics storage.



Graduation ceremonies were held on 4/27/11 at the Fire Academy on Randall's Island for 86 new Emergency Medical Technicians. EMS promotions on 5/16/11 included 1 deputy chief, 4 captains and 19 lieutenants. Ceremonies took place at MetroTech. On 7/12/11 another 85 EMTs graduated. On 9/16/11 there were 5 promotions to EMS Captain and 5 graduates from the paramedic upgrade program and 32 graduates from the paramedic trainee program.

New EMS PPE boots are being issued as a result of a union grievance. There will be several fittings and distribution dates beginning sometime in June at every Division. The first choice is the Striker II by Danner but members may also choose the 7" Haix Airpower or the 4" Haix Airpower boots.



New style vehicle ID stickers are being applied to FDNY ambulances. The sticker can be found on the driver side "B" pillar. FDNY ambulances do not have NYC REMSCO stickers but voluntary hospital ambulances in the 911 system are expected to have both FDNY and REMSCO stickers. Volunteer ambulances have REMSCO stickers. It is not known if the bar code is compatible with the bar code scanner system that NYC REMSCO has been developing since 2004 but is not yet at a fully operational level. However, it appears that FDNY will be tracking vehicles while the NYC REMSCO system is set up to track individuals based on their regional ID cards.

## FDNY LIASION COMMITTEE

District 4 & 18 – FDNY Liaison Committee quarterly meeting scheduled for Monday evening 6/6/11 was cancelled by mutual consent due to lack of agenda items.

The September quarterly meeting was held Monday evening 9/19/11.

- Reviewed 2011-2012 district officer positions. Issues discussed included:
- Training on 5 level triage incorporating Orange level is still planned. DVD to be provided. New triage tags have been ordered.

- Hurricane Irene mobilization for hospital and nursing home evacuations was discussed. Squads had brought up delays caused by reporting to FDNY borough sites to pick up radios. This was also brought up as issue with December 2010 blizzard. Squads reported long periods with little or no activity. Seemed to be lack of coordination with local, FEMA/AMR and NYS DOH mobilization resources. FDNY advised that they had a Chief at OEM coordinating ambulance responses.
- Courtesy distribution of Operations Orders to volunteer sector stopped in June 2010. For third time request was made to resume distribution as Orders contain info on hospital status changes and other items pertinent to ambulance operations in the city. Subsequent to the meeting copies of some orders were distributed.

## **JFK OPERATION SAFE XXIII AIRPORT DRILL 6/4/11**

The Port Authority of NY & NJ conducted a "full scale" exercise at the JFK Airport PAPD Training Academy fire simulator that tested the following emergency functions:



- Airport Emergency Plan
- Mutual Air Responders
- Incident Command System including Unified Command
- Rapid Triage
- True Time set up for delivery and water supply to PAPD ARFF vehicles by FDNY
- Multi-Agency response and staging at Building 269

The scenario involved the collision of two planes with the potential for up to 200 patients. EMS Command Post operations were overseen by

Division 4 Chief Marylou Aurrichio, Deputy Chief Joseph Sanders and Captain Joseph Gasparini. At the time exercise was concluded the patient count was 87 black, 13 red, 15 yellow and 26 green tag patients. A number of patients got as far as being placed on ambulance stretchers and but none were actually transported anywhere. FDNY EMS resources included at least 12 ALS and BLS ambulances, MERV 4, MRTU (the respiratory unit) and LSU-4. Volunteer ambulances from Forest Hills VAC and Ridgewood VAC participated. Ridgewood's crew was assigned to triage/re-triage patients brought to MERV 4. Forest Hill's crew simulated one red tag transport and also facilitated some simulated yellow tag transports. Other agencies involved in the drill included the FBI, NYPD ESU, TSA, Red Cross and Army National Guard. Patients, many of whom were moulaged, were recruited from Explorer Posts at Nassau County PD and NYPD as well as Red Cross volunteers.

This disaster exercise was to satisfy part of the Federal Aviation Administration's Part 139 requirements for JFK's certification as a commercial airport. The FAA requires annual training, and every third year a full-blown disaster drill. Feedback was that interactions with the FDNY were very positive and that the drill itself, just like a real MCI, highlighted issues that the EMS Chiefs were able to take back with them.

Late notification of the drill to participating agencies was the responsibility of the Port Authority. FDNY Office Medical Affairs got notice on 5/31/11 and staff was given 2 days to prepare 250 patient condition tags and the Bureau of EMS had to pull line units from service. There was even consideration of FDNY EMS not participating. Volunteer and voluntary hospital agencies were not notified till 2:30 PM on Thursday 6/2/11 when FDNY implemented the NYC REMSCO automated voice and e-mail systems to get the word out.

## **HATZALAH GOING COED?**

A group of orthodox women is pushing for Chevra Hatzalah Volunteer Ambulance Corps to open its ranks to female emergency responders where, traditionally, only men serve on ambulances or as first responders.

This insular male dominated organization is being asked to open up its membership to orthodox female EMTs and paramedics who would specialize in obstetrical, labor and delivery and gynecological emergencies. According to a lawyer spokeswoman, there are already 20 women from Brooklyn's Boro Park and Williamsburg areas signed up for an EMT class and ready to participate in the specialized response called Ezras Nashim or "women's sanctuary". A prototype operation is already responding in New Square in Rockland County which has a very large Orthodox Jewish population. A NY Post article indicates NYS Assemblyman Dov Hikind expressed support for the idea calling it "almost a no brainer"... "It's an idea that's worth looking at". However, Chevra Hatzalah President Heshy Jacob was quoted saying it would be "life-threatening" to the agency and by another news organization saying "There are many things at which women are superior, but when it comes to speed and physical strength, which are both of the essence in a medical emergency, it is a proven fact that men have an advantage." CEO Rabbi David Cohen is quoted saying "This was discussed years ago by the rabbinic board. They said not to do it, and that's pretty much where we stand" and "It's not on the agenda. There's no reason to put it on the agenda".

Chevra Hatzalah VAC is the organization that holds NYS DOH Ambulance Operating Certificate 9171 which covers the five boroughs of New York City and acts as a central organization for about 10 semi autonomous divisions around the city. These divisions can be compared to franchises that pay dues to the central organization for services such as dispatch and dealing with government organizations including the NYS DOH and the Regional EMS Council of NYC. The divisions do their own fund raising, purchase their ambulances and appoint their own coordinators to oversee day-to-day operations. Interaction with other EMS providers in the city is limited as Hatzalah conducts its own EMT and

paramedic courses which are not promoted outside the organization. Some hospitals such as St. John's Episcopal have even provided continued medical education (CME) seminars only promoted to Hatzalah members.

Whether this is a controversy that will result in an organizational change or just die out with time is anyone's guess. No legal action has been filed but is always a possibility. Chevra Hatzalah has received no direct city or federal grant money but did accept a NYS government grant of \$445,000 in 2010 through the office Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein for updating its communication system and government grant documents usually contain boilerplate language about nondiscrimination.

## NYC COUNCIL GRANTS FOR 7/1/11 – 6/30/12 FISCAL YEAR EXPENSE BUDGET

Agency	Amount	Sponsor			
Bay Community VAC	3,500	Halloran	Middle Village VAC	5,000	Crowley
Bed-Stuy VAC	10,000	Vann	North Shore Rescue Squad	3,000	Oddo
BRAVO VAC	3,500	Gentile	North Shore Rescue Squad	4,000	Rose
Broad Channel VFD & Ambulance	5,000	Ulrich	Oceanic Hook & Ladder	5,000	Oddo
Central Park Medical Unit	3,500		Point Breeze VFD	10,000	Ulrich
		Mark-Viverito	Queens Village-Hollis-Bellerose VAC	6,000	Weprin
College Point VAC	3,500	Halloran	Richmond Engine Company	5,000	Oddo
Edgewater Park VFD	3,500	Vacca	Ridgewood VAC	2,000	Crowley
Flatlands VAC	10,000	Fidler	Ridgewood VAC	7,500	Reyna
Flushing VAC	3,500	Halloran	Rockaway Point VFD & Ambulance	5,000	Ulrich
Flushing VAC	5,000	Koo	Roxbury VFD & Ambulance	5,000	Ulrich
Forest Hills VAC	5,000	Koslowitz	Throggs Neck VAC	8,000	Vacca
Gerritsen Beach VFD & Ambulance	12,500	Fidler	Volunteer Heart Ambulance	3,000	Ignizio
Glen Oaks VAC	6,000	Weprin	Volunteer Heart Ambulance	4,000	Oddo
Glendale VAC	5,000	Crowley	West Hamilton Beach VFD & VAC	5,000	Ulrich
Jamaica Estates-H'Wood-S Bayside VAC	6,000	Weprin	Whitestone VAC	3,500	Halloran
Lindenwood VAC	5,000	Ulrich	Woodhaven-Richmond Hill VAC	5,000	Ulrich

29 VACs & VFDs received 33 grants totaling \$176,500. Last fiscal year 28 squads received 34 grants totaling \$171,857. By comparison, the overall discretionary budget dipped 2.3%-from \$395 million to \$386 million.

Other emergency service organizations receiving grants include:

Allerton-Pelham Parkway Mobile Comm Patrol	3,500	Rivera	Glendale Civilian Observation Patrol	12,000	Crowley
Allerton-Pelham Parkway Mobile Comm Patrol	7,500	Vacca	Metropolitan Fire Association	4,000	Ignizio
CERT-Central Harlem	4,000	Dickens	New York Fire Patrol	3,500	Oddo
CERT-Tribeca	3,500	Chin	Shmira Civilian Volunteer Patrol of Boro Park	20,000	
Chaverim of Boro Park-Williamsburg	25,000		Greenfield	15,000	
		Greenfield	Shmira Civilian Volunteer Patrol of Boro Park	15,000	
Chaverim of Boro Park-Williamsburg	4,000	Lander	Greenfield		
Chaverim of Queens	6,000	Gennaro	Shmira Civilian Volunteer Patrol of Boro Park	7,500	Lander
Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC	3,000	Ulrich	Shmira Williamsburg Safety Patrol	16,875	Levin
Flatbush Shomrin Safety Patrol	12,000	Nelson	Shmira Williamsburg Safety Patrol	17,500	Levin
Flatbush Shomrin Safety Patrol	18,500	Fidler	114 <sup>th</sup> Precinct Civilian Observation Patrol	20,000	Vallone
Flatbush Shomrin Safety Patrol	5,000		114 <sup>th</sup> Precinct Civilian Observation Patrol	3,500	Van
		Greenfield	Bramer		
Flatbush Shomrin Safety Patrol	7,500	Williams	American Red Cross in Greater New York	73,000	12 grants
Flatbush Shomrin Safety Patrol	12,000	Nelson			

The entire 626 page Schedule C listing all 2011-2012 Fiscal Year grants, including very brief descriptions of what the grants are for, is on the internet at <http://council.nyc.gov/html/budget/PDFs/2012/finalscheduleC.pdf>

## NYC DOITT PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO NETWORK INCORPORATES NYC REMSCO CHANNEL

To improve mission critical voice communications, the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) established the Citywide Radio Network (CRN), which is capable of both analog and digital communications. The CRN design employs state-of-the-art simulcast technologies to significantly enhance radio coverage within the five boroughs, as well as unprecedented coverage into the waterways surrounding the City. The network also provides expanded coverage and capabilities to the Fire Department and the Emergency Medical Service (non-dispatch), as well as the Departments of Correction, Transportation, Sanitation, Parks and Recreation, the Health and Hospitals Corporation, the New York City Sheriff's Office, and OEM. The network is immediately planned to carry 15,000 subscribers from these agencies, a majority of which have already completed migration onto the network. Additional Information on the system is available on the US Federal Communications Commission and Radio Reference public web sites.

In late 2010 the Regional EMS Council of NYC (NYC REMSCO) was allocated a "talkgroup" on the DOITT UHF system. It shows up as talkgroup 5440 with an alpha tag of MARS and a description of MARS/REMSCO/Volunteer Ambulances. Using grant funds, NYC REMSCO contracted with Alteck Electronics, based in Brooklyn, for the purchase, installation and subsequent maintenance of Motorola model XTL 2500 desk radios or XTL Consolettes at about 70 EMS agencies around the city, including volunteer, voluntary hospital and commercial services. The value of each setup is put at about \$1,400.00. As of June 2011, most installations have been completed. Manuals for the radios have been sent to agencies. A backup power supply for the radio is being provided for those agency sites that do not have an emergency generator. All warranty work has to be arranged through NYC REMSCO which will also have each radio inspected annually

by a professional public safety radio maintenance facility. It is not known what NYC REMSCO plans to do for continued maintenance and repairs down the road when the warranty and grant funds run out. NYC REMSCO expects individual agencies to take responsibility for replacing equipment lost or stolen equipment and to allow site inspections by the FDNY Bureau of Technology Development and Systems (BTDS).

In the event of a major incident requiring mobilization of mutual aid resources, notification would first go out over e-mail and Dialogics automatic dialer phone systems alerting EMS agencies and requesting they call the Fire Department Operation Center (FDOC) for more information and to advise of resource availability and ETA to mobilization site. The DoITT radio system would then be used for real time command and coordination activities allowing everyone on the talkgroup to communicate and/or monitor exchanges. Information such as changes to mobilization and staging areas, resource needs, problems, etc. could be communicated more quickly between agency coordinators. All radio broadcasts will be monitored and recorded by NYC REMSCO and FDNY BTDS. There are no plans for use of mobile or portables radios in vehicles but scanners could be utilized to monitor talk group transmissions and help keep crews "in the loop". Actual ambulance level communications during mutual aid activations will still utilize the assigned UHF radio cache distributed to responding mutual aid units at mobilization points.

Three overview presentations for interested agency representatives were given by the Council's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator through a Powerpoint presentation incorporating information in a draft protocol developed by a subcommittee of the Ambulance Committee. The protocol was approved at subsequent meetings of the Ambulance Committee and Regional Council. Joseph Raneri, the Council's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, should be contacted if there are any issues, problems or questions about the radio system or protocol. His e-mail address is [iraneri@nycremsco.org](mailto:iraneri@nycremsco.org) District 4 squads can also contact Chairman Ryan Gunning at [district4chair@gmail.com](mailto:district4chair@gmail.com)

## HOSPITAL NEWS

NASSAU UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER (NUMC) in East Meadow opened a new \$36 million Emergency Department. With 32 private, glass-enclosed treatment rooms are laid out in an oval around a central nursing station, allowing staff to quickly move from patient to patient. In the event of a mass casualty event, such as a plane crash or environmental disaster, each room can easily be rearranged to accommodate two patients at once. The new ED also includes three triage rooms, a Level I critical care trauma room, imaging areas, two resuscitation rooms, 12 bathrooms, three isolation rooms, a cast room, crisis intervention unit area, new 320-slice CT Scanner and an OB/GYN room. The entrances to the ED have changed as well. Ambulances will enter through a new drive on the north side of NUMC, where there will also be an entry for acute patients and parking spaces for seven ambulances. The hospital entrance on the south side of NUMC (facing Hempstead Turnpike) is now dedicated as a walk-in entrance to the ED. Changes will continue throughout 2011. With the opening of the new ED on the main floor of the hospital, the former ground floor ED will be repurposed to create completely separate areas for psychiatric emergencies and treatment of prisoners. A new Adult/Pediatric Fast-Track Care Center planned for late 2011 in the old ED area is designed to handle patients requiring urgent, but not necessarily "emergency" treatment, and will help ensure the fastest, best care available to patients in the main ED. The helipad remains in the lower level area but has been fenced off to keep emergency vehicles from obstructing the area. In 2008 NUMC opened a renovated, \$6.7 million burn center, 12,000 square foot burn center expected to treating more than 1,200 patients a year. A number of these patients come from eastern Queens and western Suffolk.

### NORTH SHORE-LIJ HEALTH SYSTEM

Name change abandoned – NS-LIJ has abandoned an effort to come up with a new name. *Crain's Health Pulse* newsletter reports that with the acquisition of Lenox Hill Hospital in 2010 a corporate rebranding company was hired to develop a one or two word name appropriate to a system that stretched beyond Long Island. However, copyright restrictions, the recent accreditation for the new Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine plus strong attachments to the old name by a number of trustees caused the effort to be ended.

Lenox Hill Hospital Center's proposed Center for Comprehensive Care at the site of the former St. Vincent's Hospital in lower Manhattan has been approved by the NYS DOH. Two (2) medical surgical beds are to be transferred from the main Lenox Hill facility to the new facility which apparently qualified it to be licensed as a division of Lenox Hill Hospital. The six story O'Toole building will undergo a \$110 million three year renovation which would include an ambulatory surgery center on the upper floors. NS-LIJ Health System officials are in talks with FDNY EMS about creating protocols covering which patients could be brought to the facility and which would bypass it and go elsewhere. NS-LIJ or Lenox Hill ambulances would be stationed at the facility to immediately transfer walk-ins or other patients that need to go to other hospitals for specialty care beyond the facility's capabilities.

PENINSULA HOSPITAL (H37) is pending acquisition by Revival Home Health Care which seems to have resolved concerns about the facility's status as an ongoing operating hospital serving the Far Rockaway community. Because of mounting financial problems Peninsula and MediSys Health Systems severed their ties on 8/22/11 and there was what turned out to be a temporary diversion of ambulance patients starting 8/22/11 that was lifted on 9/6/11 with the exception of psychiatric and obstetric patients. As part of the takeover deal Peninsula and its nursing home affiliate filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on 9/19/11 to clear resolve their outstanding debts. The Revival organization is headed by a number of

names familiar to the EMS sector. Faye Zackheim, PhD is President and also volunteers as an “emergency mental health technician” for Hatzalah VAC. Alen Mandel, EMT-P, CIC is Vice President for Corporate Compliance & Customer Relations and his bio identifies him as Hatzalah’s first paramedic level provider and former executive with a large east coast ambulance company [Metropolitan which became MetroCare which was acquired by TransCare]. Todd Miller is Chief Operating officer and was formerly an executive with TransCare Ambulance. Zakheim and Miller are also officers of Ahava Ambulance doing business as Medstat Ambulance which in 2010 acquired the ambulance operating certificate of St. Vincent’s in Manhattan. Miller had been appointed Chief Restructuring Officer for Peninsula at over \$25,000 a month but is now Peninsula’s new President at \$30,000 a month. Michael Kaminski, who has executive experience with Flushing, Interfaith and Kingston hospitals is the new Restructuring Officer. NYS DOH is presently treating the acquisition as an investment rather than a change in ownership and not subject to a Competency and Fitness determination. A recent article in Crain’s New York Business, *Bankrupt Queens facility’s rescue plan involves controversial player*, provides anecdotal information about Steven Zakheim’s involvement and may have the DOH revisiting that decision.

## **NEWS ABOUT NYC EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **AMERICAN MEDICAL RESPONSE’s (AMR)**

Emergency Medical Services Corporation (EMSC), the parent company of AMR, agreed to sell itself to Clayton, Dubilier & Rice LLC for \$3.2 billion. EMSC is the largest US operator of ambulance services and provider of outsourced emergency room doctors. Bloomberg-Businessweek quoted an industry analyst saying “The US health care overhaul passed last year, designed to give millions of uninsured Americans taxpayer-subsidized medical coverage, made EMS Corp. an attractive takeout target. The company’s ambulance and emergency staffing and management units may both profit from the overhaul.”

AMR, on behalf of its subsidiaries PARK AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC., FIVE COUNTIES AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC., and ASSOCIATED AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC., agreed to pay \$2.7 million to the United States to resolve allegations that it defrauded the Medicare programs as well as other federal health insurance programs. The federal government began its investigation of AMR after several former employees filed a complaint against the company on behalf of the United States in the Eastern District of New York. In resolving this case, the United States alleged in the civil settlement agreement that between 2001 and 2005, AMR, through information provided to its administrative departments in its Brooklyn and Long Island offices, knowingly submitted falsely inflated claims for transportation services to federal health insurance programs. AMR, which has not admitted to engaging in the conduct at issue, has also agreed to enter into a Corporate Integrity Agreement with HHS-Office of Inspector General.

The company has had other problems with Medicare. In 2006 AMR paid the United States over \$9 million to resolve allegations that the company violated the False Claims Act. The government alleged that the Greenwood, Colo.-based company provided or offered illegal inducements to Texas hospitals in the form of contracts known as “swapping arrangements.” Such contracts gave the medical facilities discounts on transports in exchange for the referral of all or some of the ambulance transports of patients being discharged from the hospitals, which were billed to Medicare. Under the False Claims Act, those who cheat the government are liable to repay triple the amount of fraud. The statute also allows the Department of Justice to pay rewards to the whistleblower. In this case, a reward of \$1.6 million was paid to the whistleblower. In 2002, American Medical Response paid \$20 million for ambulance fraud, with the whistleblower receiving \$3.8 million.

ASSIST AMBULANCE was involved in collision with a cement truck on Friday afternoon 8/26/11. The incident took place at 16 Avenue and 45 Street in Boro Park, Brooklyn. Online sources indicate the ambulance had been on its way to Maimonides Medical Center with a patient. The patient was subsequently transported to the hospital by Hatzalah EMS while two others (the crew?) were transported by another Assist ambulance.

BEDFORD-STUYESANT VAC changed its business mailing address to 176 Ralph Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11233. Phone number is (917) 652-4421 and FAX is (917) 652-4423. Ambulance operations and training will continue from the trailers at 727 Greene Avenue & Marcus Garvey Boulevard.

BRAVO VAC held its third annual Keep BRAVO Running 5K Race on Sunday 5/22/11 along the Shore Road Promenade overlooking Manhattan, Staten Island and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. More than 100 participants ranging in age from 11 to 75 ran or walked in light rain as they made their way from John Paul Jones Park at 101st Street and Fourth Avenue along the promenade to 69th Street and back to the park for the post-parade ceremonies, at which awards were presented for posting the fastest times for the top 3 male and female finishers as well as age group awards. Several BRAVO members participated as well, including Nick Nikolopoulos, the group’s vice president. Race coordinators were Recording Secretary Michelle Harrison and Diana Ortiz. Pre-registered participants paid \$15.00 while race day registration was \$20.00. BRAVO has served the communities of Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights and Fort Hamilton for 35 years and has seen a recent growth in both call volume and in-service time.

CENTURY AMBULANCE SERVICE moved to 87-32 123 Street, 1L, Richmond Hill, NY 11418. Ambulances are stored in a driveway next to a small apartment building. The previous address was at the former Parkway Hospital in Forest Hills.

CITYWIDE EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE & EMERGENCY RESCUE SQUAD briefly had a web site at [www.citywidevac.com](http://www.citywidevac.com) from about 5/31/11 but it was gone by 7/11/11. The site indicated the organization served Harlem and the Northeast Bronx 24/7 and "provides emergency rescue service and ambulance service to the New York City area. Our services include:

- Emergency Rescue Services
- Emergency Medical Services
- Other Emergency Vehicle Services"

Organization representatives have been sent a number of application packages for an Ambulance Operating Certificate but have not yet followed through with a completed application to NYC REMSCO.

EAST MIDWOOD VAC is in the process of upgrading to ALS. They received NYC REMAC approval and are awaiting NYS DOH Bureau of EMS to act on their application.

GLENDALE VAC President Ryan Gunning was inducted into the Christ the King High School Hall of Fame at the school's annual awards dinner on 4/16/11. Ryan graduated in 1993. The hall of fame was established in 1983 and recognizes individuals who embody the ideals, principals and mission of Christ the King, and whose spirit and generosity have led to extraordinary personal and professional achievements. Members include alumni, faculty, staff and exceptional leaders of the community.

FLATLANDS VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE was involved in an accident at the intersection of Avenue L and East 31 Street on Monday evening 4/11/11. The ambulance was responding to an emergency when it struck a NYC bus and then collided with a private vehicle. There were no serious injuries reported.

#### HATZALAH

CHEVRA HATZALAH VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE is credited in a NY Post article on 8/24/11 with being a force behind the city's decision to rip up "a cluster of tree-lined pedestrian islands -- installed just 10 months ago to make it safer for the elderly to navigate traffic -- after ambulance drivers complained the narrower streets slowed their response times to a busy Brooklyn hospital". The Post indicated the NYC Department of Transportation paid \$70,000 to build the stretch of islands on Fort Hamilton Parkway in Borough Park and another \$10,000 to tear most of them down and added "In a letter to the community board, Chevra Hatzalah -- a volunteer Jewish ambulance service -- said the islands "significantly imperiled Hatzalah's patients" by creating traffic jams near Maimonides Medical Center".

CHEVRA HATZALAH received a donation of computer hardware, software and technical services from the Big Apple Chapter of the Ingram Micro Venture Tech Network. The project aims to enhance the collection, storage and retrieval of data related to a new state-of-the-art system for the collection, tracking and storage of more than 50,000 patients reports and data annually. Hatzalah operates central administration functions including ambulance dispatch to support 14 semi autonomous divisions around the city similar to a franchise system.

BORO PARK DIVISION ambulance was involved in an accident at 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 48<sup>th</sup> Street on Monday afternoon 7/4/11. Online news reports indicate the ambulance with a crew of three was responding to an emergency with lights and siren at the time of the crash but the driver of the other vehicle failed to yield to the ambulance. One of the crew and two people from the other vehicle were transported to hospitals.

CROWN HEIGHTS DIVISION held their annual raffle on 6/14/11. Grand prize was \$18,000.

#### FLATBUSH DIVISION

Ambulance reportedly responding to an emergency call was involved in an accident on Monday 5/16/11. The incident took place at the intersection of Avenue N and East 5 Street in the Midwood area. One person was injured and another ambulance was brought to transport the patient to a local hospital.

First Responder was involved in an MVA on Monday afternoon 8/29/11 at Coney Island Avenue and Avenue L. Internet sources indicate the responder was on his way "to an emergency call with lights and siren on and another vehicle failed to properly yield to an emergency vehicle, causing the crash". No serious injuries were reported.

MILL BASIN/CANARSIE DIVISION ambulance was involved in an accident on Thursday night 10/8/11. Online sources report the accident happened at the intersection of Ft. Hamilton Parkway and 49 Street and that the ambulance had just left Maimonides Hospital, was returning back to Canarsie, when a truck turned left in front of the ambulance which had the right of way. Point of impact was right rear of truck and right front of ambulance. No injuries were reported.

WILLIAMSBURG DIVISION ambulance W-02 was involved in a four vehicle MVA on Tuesday evening 4/26/11 at Marcy Avenue and Rodney Street while transporting a patient. Three other Hatzalah ambulances responded to the accident and all patients were reported to be stable. An Internet blog posting indicates a camera in the ambulance recorded the vehicle proceeding through a green light at 35 mph and being struck by a car

## JAMAICA ESTATES-HOLLISWOOD-SOUTH BAYSIDE VAC

The squad assisted St. John's University College of Allied Health Professions with a Career Day on Friday 5/20/11 at IS 72 in South Jamaica. After hearing about EMS, radiology, pharmacy, physician assistant, clinical laboratory work and other specialties the students were given a short talk on what an EMT does and then a look at patient care and handling equipment carried on an emergency ambulance.



Hollis Hills Civic Association's annual block party was covered on Sunday 6/12/11. Squad members provided free blood pressures.

Blood Drive was held on Sunday 7/31/11. NY Blood Services had one of its mobile units in front of squad headquarters at 207-07 Union Turnpike from 10 AM to 4 PM.

LITTLE NECK-DOUGLASTON VAC held a community open house on Saturday 5/21/11 to showcase their refurbished headquarters. The event featured equipment demonstrations, ambulance tours, health screenings and free hot dogs and drinks. Following a one-month, \$7,000 rehab, the headquarters now offers WiFi and boasts a new paint job, floors and carpeting, new foosball and pool tables, computers, a couch, a widescreen television and an entertainment center.

NORTH SHORE AMBULANCE & AMBULETTE moved to a new off street location at 112-09 14 Avenue, College Point, NY 11356. Operations continue in the prefab units that were moved from the old location on Northern Boulevard in Corona. The new Operations Supervisor is Stephen Davis.

## NORTH SHORE-LIJ HEALTH SYSTEM

Interfacility transfer ambulance crew was attacked by a patient on Sunday afternoon 5/15/11. The incident took place on the Northern State Parkway near the Willis Avenue exit in Albertson, Nassau County while a 20 year old male psychiatric patient from Jamaica, Queens, described as "acting appropriately" was being transported from Long Island Jewish Medical Center to South Oaks Hospital in Amityville. According to news reports, when the EMT in back of the ambulance was attacked the driver pulled over, the patient jumped out and began chasing the male EMTs along the shoulder of the highway. A passing motorist stopped to help but was punched in the face and thrown over a guardrail. The patient then began beating the head of one of the EMTs with the ePCR Toughbook from the ambulance. A passing off-duty NYPD officer stopped to help but the patient got away from the officer, jumped in the officer's car and sped off. The patient was pursued by NCPD and NYPD units through Queens and into the Bronx where he crashed the car. He was then taken to Jacobi Hospital for evaluation by a NCPD ambulance that responded to the Bronx scene to assist NCPD officers. Numerous charges are pending. At least one of the EMTs was seriously injured and was transported by another NS-LIJ ambulance with a NCPD Emergency Ambulance Bureau paramedic on board.

Ambulance 53G tour 2 responding to an emergency on Friday 5/20/11 at about 5:35 PM was involved in an accident at



Commonwealth Boulevard and 85 Avenue in Bellerose. Unit 4976, a Chevy/Demers Type II, collided with a Nissan Versa. Side airbags in the car deployed but airbags in the ambulance did not despite significant front end damage. Six patients were transported to hospitals by units from NS-LIJ and Glen Oaks VAC.

Photo Credit: Timothy J. Downey

Ambulance 54G crew member was seriously injured on Thursday evening 10/13/11 while operating at Baisley Boulevard and Farmers Boulevard in Queens. Although wearing a traffic vest the EMT was struck by a car which left the scene. She was transported as a red tag patient to the trauma center at Jamaica Hospital and was later transferred to North Shore Manhasset. FDNY EMS 64M was responding to the scene and was struck on Conduit Avenue by an ambulette knocking the ambulance on its side.

WEST QUEENS VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION (WQVAA) elected Alan Wolfe, President of Forest Hills VAC to its Board of Directors and to the position of President. Other officers elected or reelected to positions include Ralph Cefalo as Chairperson, Brenda Morrissey as Vice Chair, Daryl Mazlish as Secretary and James Downey as Treasurer. The WQVAA is an organization comprised of nine volunteer ambulance squads in Queens. It's mission is to enhance community based volunteer ambulance services by fostering volunteer participation, coordinating resources, facilitating joint operations, and sponsoring education. "My goal as president is to enhance the coordination of resources amongst the member squads, specifically with a communications project that will allow everyone to operate on a joint system," said Wolfe. Also planned is the launching of a leadership training program that will include workshops and forums for squad leaders in the areas of recruiting, training, fund raising, and publicity. Member squads include: Corona VAC, Flushing VAC, Forest Hills VAC, Glendale VAC, Glen Oaks VAC, Jamaica Estates-Holliswood-South Bayside VAC, Ridgewood VAC, Whitestone Community VAC and Woodhaven-Richmond Hill VAC.



PULSE CHECK 2012, the 57th Annual Educational Conference & Trade Show of the NYS Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association, will be held Thursday evening October 11, 2012 to Sunday morning October 14, 2012 at the Crowne Plaza, Suffern, Rockland County located just off I-87 NYS Thruway exit 14B.

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 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 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 Secretary Teresa Hamilton is serving as the PULSE CHECK 2012 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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