TERMINAL CONDITIONS

The Five Diseases That Will Kill Your EMS Agency
Presented by

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The opinions expressed in this presentation are strictly those of the presenter and not any agency he works for, has worked for, or may have been associated with in the last century. Furthermore, the presenter harbors bias toward none and a healthy skepticism about all, therefore, the lame, stupid and counterproductive habits of the great and small shall be skewered equally, regardless of source. The audience is encouraged to cheer, stomp, shout, but refrain from throwing solid objects or damaging any property of the hotel. In addition, all audience members should plan on being offended by at least one comment or idea presented herein. All differences of opinion shall be resolved by a post-conference adult beverage amongst people whose heart and soul bleeds EMS, and who strive to keep their organizations alive and healthy, sometimes in spite of themselves.

-Gene Iannuzzi
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EMS people use the “eyeball test” to determine if a patient is “sick” or “not sick” all the time.

If they “look sick”, they probably are, and you know that before you ever touch them.

Can you also tell if an organization is “sick” just by looking?

ABSOLUTELY!
Is the Culture Ethical?

There is no right way to do a wrong thing.
ETHICS IS KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO DO AND WHAT IS RIGHT TO DO.

~ POTTER STEWART ~
No Bulls**ting the Public

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT..YOU HAVE NO DAYTIME COVERAGE AND USE MUTUAL AID 75% OF THE TIME

BUT YOU'RE SAVING THE COMMUNITY ALL SORTS OF MONEY?
City fire chief suspends Baltimore EMS training after cheating revealed
Cheating allegations by applicants investigated

NEW YORK (CBSNewYork/AP) — Three emergency medical technicians stole more than $325,000 from a Queens volunteer ambulance corps, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA
June 20, 2010
Editorial: Cheating EMTs violated the public's trust

N.Y. ambulance company owner pleads guilty to Medicaid fraud scheme

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2002
DOI ARRESTS EMS LIEUTENANT FOR THEFT
-- Stole Five Thousand Dollars In Unearned Overtime Payments --

NEW YORK (MYFOXNY) - An upstate paramedic is facing felony charges after being arrested for stealing from victims he was called to help.
Tom Got to the Bottom of This (so can you)

“You want answers?”

WE LIE
BECAUSE
YOU CAN’T
HANDLE THE
TRUTH.
Most reasonable people agree on “the big stuff”

It’s the “little stuff” that goes on day to day that slowly kills an organization

Usually, it goes on right in front of you

Could you identify the symptoms and signs of these TERMINAL CONDITIONS?
TERMINAL CONDITIONS

#1. THE GANG MENTALITY
Everybody Knows These Guys
But What About THESE Guys?

- Volunteers vs. Paid
- Fire Dept. vs. Private
- Union vs. Non-union
- Urban vs. Suburban/Rural
- EMTs vs. Paramedics
EMS Displays of Gang Mentality

**GANGS**
- Protect turf
- Use colors and signs to identify group
- Insular, attack rivals at will
- Will use intimidation and violence to achieve goals
- Survival of the group matters more than anything

**EMS GANGS**
- Protect Turf
- Use patches and titles to identify group
- Insular, attack rivals at will
- Will use intimidation and manipulation to achieve goals
- Survival of the group matters more than anything
Ever try to have a rational discussion about....

- EMS Education?
- EMT-CC vs. EMT-P?
- The “morality” of volunteers vs. paid?
- Why should medics be in fly cars?
- “Combination” Depts. and regional plans?
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#2 NO SENSE OF HISTORY
If you know these people...
But don’t know THESE people..
You should at least know THESE people
Questions That Need Answers

- How was your system/agency founded?
- Who were the major players?
- Why is your system designed the way it is?
- Why hasn’t it changed?
- Is that good or bad?
- The roots of current problems are often found in the past
- If you don’t know what came before, you CAN’T be part of the solution
Fire services have long recognized the value of traditions and history (yes, it can be a two edged sword)

EMS history, both collective and local, is rarely kept, honored less, and known by very few

We are at a point at which the founders of modern EMS nationally and locally are gone

We are also at the point where a generation of new EMS providers were under the age of 10 on 9/11/01

Because EMS is so fragmented, few organizations have the dollars, time, and space to preserve EMS history on a national level; almost no one on a local level does, and if they do, only for their small corner of the world
St Vincent’s Hospital Cardiac Ambulance, one of the first attempts at modern ALS in NYC 1970’s

But some of these guys would like you to believe EMS in NYC started in 1996

Dr. William J. Grace, the father of modern cardiac care. He recognized the urgency (code 99), defined the continuing risk (arrhythmia) and reconfigured the delivery system by bringing heart care to the patient. Portrayed in 1970 in front of SV Mobile Coronary Care Unit ambulance.
Who’s Keeping YOUR EMS History Alive?
(and are you honoring those who came before you?)
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#3 PROFESSIONAL RESENTMENT
Wanna P*ss People Off?
(in a sick culture?)

- Get promoted
- Get an advanced certification
- Attend a conference
- Become an Instructor
- Write an article
- Express an opinion publicly
- Offer a suggestion
- Challenge the status quo
Of Course, There’s Another Way Too

- Do all the previous things, and then get a swelled head
- Forget where you came from
- Treat anyone with a clue suspiciously
- Use the phrase “who the f**k do they think THEY are?” frequently
- Lose sight of what’s important
Is THIS What’s Important in YOUR Organization?

Oh THAT one...

National Spelling Bee 1941!
Do You Hear What I Hear?
(and what it really means)

- He’s just a freakin’ dinosaur
  (His experience is threatening)
- She doesn’t know crap, all she ever did was volunteer in cupcake county
  (She might know just as much as we do)
- We do it for love, you do it for money
  (I wish I could get a job doing what I love and I’d take the dough in a heartbeat)
- They think they’re hot s**t because (fill in blank)
  (We better sign up for the next (fill in the blank) )
Is this How Your Squad Rewards Success?
(or obtains it?)
TERMINAL CONDITIONS

#4 BLATANT HYPOCRISY ABOUT PATIENT CARE

BAD LIEUTENANT

#fatladytweets Look what my husband did to my wheels couch!!!! That bastard!
pic.twitter.com/QZkKwCjb

Wide Load
Think This Is an Isolated Incident?
(or that it only happens in someone else’s agency?)

- It isn’t, and it doesn’t
- Things previously spoken of only in private, as “stress relief” now go public
- Sometimes, its even said to patient’s faces
- Social media has enabled the jerks among us
Remember THIS one? (Yes, they walk among us)
Squad refuses to accept calls from local nursing home, citing strain on services
Volunteers turn out en masse for arrests, fires, MVC’s, and MCI’s, but go to mutual aid for elderly sick, minor injuries, other low priority calls
Anything not a call type deemed “worthy” of response is derided as “system abuse”
Expired meds, broken equipment, dirty vehicles
Blatant disrespect for culturally different patients (and crew members)
No, I’m Not
(although I DID grow up in the 60’s)
But Let’s Be Honest

- Is the culture in your organization enabling people who behave as if patients don’t matter?
- Are only “certain” patients treated with respect and dignity?
- Does your culture confuse arrogance with “street smarts”?
- Does “public service” mean you serve the public, or are they expected to serve you?
#5 WORSHIPPING AT THE ALTAR OF PURCHASING
Is THIS guy Running Your Finances?
"Beach Response Unit" bought at EMS Conference

(No Beach in District...but they might need it for mutual aid!)
WOW! That’s BIG!!! But.....

- What’s actually in those cabinets?
Why is There Money to Purchase..

- Rescue tools (for non rescue agencies)
- Ambulances the size of a condo (to replace one with less than 50k miles)
- Bars (but no one EVER drinks on duty!)
- Gyms (when crews don’t stay in quarters)
- Command cars (for half a dozen chiefs, assistant chiefs, deputy chiefs, past chiefs...)
But No Money For...

- Hemostatic Dressings (Too expensive...true story!!)
- Conferences and educational presentations
- Maintaining a pharmacy for ALS units (too much paperwork...oops...NYSDOH just fixed that)
- Personal protective gear
- Reliable radios and communications
Could other motives be at play here?

He’s just checking..... (while the checking account gets depleted), but it’s your community that’s getting screwed.
Is There A Cure for Organizational TERMINAL CONDITIONS?
“Most discussions of decision making assume that only senior executives make decisions or that only senior executives’ decisions matter. This is a dangerous mistake”

“Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility”

“Never mind your happiness, do your duty”

-Peter Drucker
Developing a Culture Of Excellence

- The Disney Company’s 10 Management Principles:
  1) Make Everyone’s Dreams Come True
  2) You Better Believe It
  3) Never a Customer, Always a Guest
  4) All for One and One for All
  5) Share the Spotlight
  6) Dare to Dare
  7) Practice, Practice, Practice
  8) Make Your Elephant Fly
  9) Capture the Magic with Storyboards
  10) Give Details Top Billing
Developing a Culture of Excellence

Good references for good organizations:

- Speaking Truth to Power - Aaron Wildavsky
- In Search of Excellence – Tom Peters
- If Disney Ran Your Hospital – Fred Lee
- Reframing Organizations – Bolman and Deal

OMG…he expects our bosses to READ!!
(no, I suggest YOU do, to educate yourself, to save your organization!)
Steps YOU Can Take NOW

(whether your organization changes or not)

- Personal integrity
- Form alliances with like minded people
- Encourage new ideas
- Maintain boundaries-what behavior you’ll allow is what you’ll get
- Treat others as you wish to be treated
- Find healthy ways to vent
- Accept leadership (whether it comes with a title or not)
- Speak truth to power and let the chips fall where they may
- Never forget what’s really important in EMS

- MAKING PEOPLE FEEL SAFE AND CARED FOR
And Remember, No Matter What..

Please Don't Drink The Kool-aid