

**PINELLAS COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2017

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met at EMS & Fire Administration, Conference Room 130, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, Florida, at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Dr. David Weiland, Pinellas County Medical Association – Chair
Chief Anthony Tedesco, Clearwater Fire Department
Chief Ian Womack, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue
Chief Shelby Willis, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
Capt. Brian Browne, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Mayor Max Elson, Mayors' Council (South Pasadena)
Mayor Wanda Dudley, Mayors' Council (Kenneth City)
Rev. Dean Young, Citizen Representative
Beth Rawlins, Citizen Representative
Joy Lewis, Citizen Representative
William Holmes, Citizen Representative
Chief Rob Angell, EMS Leadership Group
John Peterson, Sunstar Paramedics

Absent:

Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department
Ashley Hoskins, Pinellas County Health Department
Mayor Julie Ward Bujalski, Mayors' Council (Dunedin)
Anne Scofield, Citizen Representative
Kelly Cullen, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter – Vice Chair
Susan Byrd, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter
Dr. Eric Carver, St. Petersburg College
Dr. Kenneth Webster, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society – Secretary
Julie Peluso, Independent Fire District Elected Official
Kathleen Litton, Independent Fire District Elected Official

Staff Present:

Jim Fogarty, Director, Safety & Emergency Services
Craig Hare, Director, EMS & Fire Administration
Dr. Angus Jameson, EMS Medical Director
Jason Ester, County Attorney's Office
Greg Woodrum, EMS & Fire Administration
Rita Brickey, EMS & Fire Administration
Pam Bell, EMS Ambulance Billing

Also Present:

Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics
Chief Rick Graham, Lealman Special Fire Control District
Chief Guy Keirn, Pinellas Park Fire Department
Jeremy Tinter, Sunstar Paramedics
Kelly Cisarik, Citizen
Kaila Yeager, Pinellas County Health Department
Donald Turnbaugh, National Alliance on Mental Illness
John Jones, National Alliance on Mental Illness

Carol Bissinger, Bayfront

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Dr. Weiland called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Roll was taken and it was determined that there was a quorum present. There were 13 voting members in attendance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE for MR. GEORGE MCCARTHY

Dr. Weiland led a moment of silence for Mr. George McCarthy.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 16, 2017 meeting were presented. Mayor Dudley motioned to approve the minutes and Rev. Young seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED – LETTER FROM THE CITY OF LARGO

Dr. Weiland addressed a letter from the City of Largo, found on page 3 of the handout, which was in response to the city's disappointment regarding the announcement that there would be no additional funding. He asked if there was any other action the committee could take in regards to the requests made in the letter.

Mr. Hare stated that there was no action for the committee to take at this time. He stated that budget recommendations had been made and they were continuing to work with all the Fire Chiefs and an update would be provided in the future.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens that wished to speak.

RECOGNITION – MEDICAL BAG PROJECT TEAM

Mr. Hare and Dr. Jameson introduced and discussed the Medical Bag Project. Dr. Jameson talked briefly about the issues that prompted the creation of the project, namely that medical bags on different emergency vehicles were not standardized. The mission of the Medical Bag Project was to standardize medical bags across the County. He stated that several years of research and trial implementation have resulted in the successful implementation of this program and they are pleased with its success.

He addressed concerns about how the standardization would be maintained going forward by describing the strict protocols put into place to inventory and restock the bags after each shift.

He stated that now, with the successful implementation of this program, paramedics and EMT's in Pinellas County know how to use the gear that is on the truck, and they know how to find the gear regardless of what emergency vehicle comes on the scene, or what agency it has come from. He and Mr. Hare suggested that this will not only improve overall care, but also reduce supply costs and save tax dollars in the long run.

Mr. Dickey discussed in detail the great amounts of effort that went into getting this project off the ground.

Mr. Hare, Dr. Jameson, and Nick Berry recognized the hard work of all those involved

Brian Kludy
Sarah Tyler
Jazmin Solomon
Sam Weldon
Karlle Mastrogiuseppe
Greg Shower
Ricky Shannon

Gary Dickey
Mike Nieves
Mallory Walker
Keith Caron
Katie Homme
Zachary Koziel
Timothy Maldonado

Group photographs were taken

RECOMMENDATION - SUSTAINMENT OF THE WATER RESCUE PROGRAM

Mr. Hare called for a motion to draft a resolution for the sustainment of the Water Rescue Program. He requested a letter of recommendation from the Council. He gave a brief overview of the purpose of the program which is to provide water rescue support to the cities and fire districts that do not have the resources to provide their own. He detailed improvements using the Sustainment such as: radar, sonar, search patterns and techniques, communications equipment, rapid diver training, rescue boat operator training etc. The resolution details were discussed. Rev. Young made a motion to support the Resolution and Mayor Elson seconded the motion and it passed with a full vote.

More details can be found on pages 5-14 of the handout

RECOMMENDATION- NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI)

Mr. Hare introduced and welcomed Donald Turnbaugh, a former president of the local chapter of NAMI. Mr. Turnbaugh gave a brief introduction and history of NAMI. He also gave a brief overview of the Crises Intervention Team (CIT) program.

Ms. Rawlins made a motion to accept the recommendation for county representation. Mr. Holmes seconded the motion and it passed with a full vote.

RECOMMENDATION – CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Peterson presented the applications the Selection Committee considered for Citizen Representative vacancies. He stated that there was 1 vacancy in District 1 and 1 vacancy in District 7.

There were a total of 10 applicants: 3 applicants were from District 7 - there were no applicants from District 1. The Selection Committee ranked the 3 applications from District 7 and then ranked the top 3 from the remaining 7 applicants for District 1.

District One

Top Choice - Karen Mullins

Second Choice - Franklin T. Hartzell

Third Choice – Jeri Reed

District 7

Top Choice - Jorge Mercado

Second Choice – Jeri Reed

Third Choice - Joshua Flores

Ms. Rawlins made a motion to accept the Selection Committee's recommendations and provide a letter of recommendation to the Authority. Mayor Elson seconded the motion and it passed with a full vote.

PRESENTATION – PRE-AUTHORIZATION

Mr. Hare introduced Pam Bell, Ambulance Billing Manager, who gave a presentation educating the council about a trending issue that had been identified regarding insurances denying a growing number of pre-authorizations for non-emergent ambulance transport. She highlighted the ways this was having a dire impact on their ability to collect the revenue which supports the critical services they provide. She also discussed how this was impacting the patients they served.

Highlights included:

- Insurance companies becoming more strict about authorizations
- A 200% increase in these denials in the last two fiscal years
- Many coming from Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Claims going uncollected. Once they've become patient responsibility the collection rate drops to 30-40%
- Patients and their families being put in precarious financial situations because they do not realize that these non-emergent transports may require an authorization
- The hidden costs created by these denials which is increasing the time employees spend processing them

Mr. Hare brought up some of the things that have already been done to address this issue, which he identified as a 2.5 million dollar problem. He stressed that once a process was identified which would allow them to pre-authorize with all the different insurers, they would be pushing that forward to their Communication Centers so that when they were taking the calls they would make sure that they have pre-authorization before the ambulance would make the run. He and Ms. Bell both stressed that educating the patient was also necessary so they would know that their insurer may require a pre-authorization.

Mr. Hare suggested that the Advisory Board may need to have a policy discussion in the future because there are no other alternatives for ambulance transport in Pinellas County.

More details can be found on pages 18-23 of the handout

PRESENTATION – OPTIMA DEPLOYMENT

Mr. Hare introduced Keith Murray, for a presentation discussing Optima.

Mr. Murray described Optima, giving an overall description and examples of how it could be used. He explained that Optima is a resourcing and deployment modeling system. It has been focused on the data collected for Pinellas County over the past year. It uses historical data to look at present day operations and model scenarios such as where they might add a new station, and then modeling the impact the new station may have on the area in a simulation.

Mr. Hare provided more examples highlighting the versatility of the modeling that Optima is capable of helping with, such as the current discussions with the Fire Chiefs about priority dispatch for emergencies. He suggested it would be a great way to look at how much load that would take off the system and how long before call volume decreased. He explained that they would be able to see what something like that would look like before they make a policy change – i.e. The Gateway Express that's going to go through, how that would impact where future fire stations should be built.

Other data that Optima can look at:

- Emergency disaster simulations
- Shift schedules
- Fuel and maintenance of vehicles
- Strategic Planning

More details about Optima Deployment can be found on page 24-30 of the handout

PRESENTATION – FIRE & EMS TRAINING

Chief Shelby Willis gave a presentation on Fire and EMS training. She discussed in detail the considerable amount of training that is required and provided for Fire and EMS.

More details can be found on pages 31-38 of the handout.

DIRECTOR, EMS & FIRE ADMINISTRATION – Mr. Hare

- Introduced and welcomed Jim Fogarty as Director of Safety and Emergency Services.
- Gave overview of packet of nominees/recommendations being sent to the Authority for review: NAMI representatives, citizen representatives and Vice Mayor
- Emphasized working with Data Driven Focus Groups making sure the approach to resources and projects is data driven
- Due to the Referendum for Penny for Pinellas they are trying to hold back on adjusting any other tax rates. They've been asked to stay within the tax rate they are currently at for EMS, needing to maintain reserves at about 25% or slightly below.
- As of late Tuesday, they have a package that they've worked with the Chiefs on – a 2 year agreement with 3 - 1 year extensions to get them through the Homestead Exemption Referendum as well as the Penny for Pinellas Extension. If it passes, and it's expected to, there will be a number of funding

supports for EMS overall that will be penny supported which will allow for an update to the financial forecast.

- The proposal is to accept all of the submitted First Responder budgets, which have been capped by contract over the last several years. In order to bring them in line it will be an additional 2.8 million dollars this next fiscal year.
- Due to increased quality and workload including narcotics auditing, medical quality assurance plan, and more community outreach they have added EMS Administrative Coordinator positions for Largo, Pinellas Park and Clearwater and had added back a 24 hour supervisor to St. Petersburg but that had left the remaining agencies with an additional workload. Under this plan the other 10 agencies would gain additional quarter FTE funding which they can use for overtime, a paramedic to help in the office, or to expand the roll of the EMS Coordinator
- Funding is approximately \$356,000 and once prioritized will be in next year's budget
- Proceeding with implementation of ESO
- Proceeding with special needs software that was recommended by Advisory Council – funding approved
- Proceeding with EMS public education and outreach – putting it in the First Responder agreement
- Maintaining a 1% station and overhead reimbursement per County resolution and reduce the paperwork burden for the agencies
- Units that were recommended by the Advisory Council will be pursued:
 - Clearwater Engine 49
 - Largo Squad 39
 - Largo Rescue 40
 - Lealman Engine 19
 - Pinellas Park Engine 16
- The County is working with the cities and Lealman Fire District asking them to look at phased in funding starting at 25%, 50%, 75%, then 100% over the next few years in order to fund that. Funding accelerated if financials come up, they will be the core contract over the 2 year period
- Proceeding with First Responder Agreement which are standardized across all of the agencies
- Jodie Sechler and her ambulance billing team have worked on a bid for ambulance billing services that can be done more inexpensively by a contractor – also relieving some of the work created by fighting insurance claims created by the pre-authorization rejections. EMSMC is the company that has been retained
- Final approach for the new 5 year agreement with EmCare for medical direction services.
- Last fall there was a recommendation to disband the PALS private non-profit, the County wanted to keep the meeting and constituent group. There were suggestions to take it under the County EMS Rules and Regulations and the chiefs agreed. However, under the rules per the County Attorney, this causes issues with the Sunshine Laws. Asked for recommendation to support drafted rules that are protectionary stating that you can have people get together for a meeting which is fact finding, but that doesn't have the weight of voting or officers - the EMS Leadership Group and the Fire Chiefs agreed. Ms. Rawlins made a motion to approve, Mr. Holmes seconded the motion to approve, and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Rawlins added a request that any funding recommendations going before the County Commission have numbers added to it gained from the Data Driven Focus Groups.

Additionally, Ms. Rawlins asked Mr. Hare to clarify funding request from the last meeting that were based on the information from the DDFG as well as what the reserves were, how they were arrived at, and how they were being used.

Ms. Rawlins also discussed her concerns about operating under funding levels from a decade ago while expenses have grown exponentially, which isn't sustainable and emphasized that this would need to be addressed.

EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR – Dr. Jameson

- Update about outstanding issue of ongoing medication shortages: Due to the hard work of David Hudak and the Sunstar Material Management folks they have been able to mitigate most of those and are in a good place with it
- CME continues to evolve and improve – for the first time all clinicians across the system are going through Scenario Based Training on Medium Fidelity Medical Simulators – something they had not been able to do previously – now possible because of the CME program has been reworked including improved training of CME instructors
- Clarified what a Medium Fidelity Medical Simulator is: mannequin with a computer inside which can be accessed from laptop or tablet and can control what the simulator does IE: have a fast heartrate, students can feel pulse, can get stronger or weaker, it breathes, can speak, if hypoxic turn blue around mouth, students can shock them, students can start IV's on them. Emphasized that they are a huge advancement in training.
- Two new CME instructors who are firefighter paramedics in the system here, but are also simulation technicians at center for advanced medical learning and simulation at USF in Tampa – both great assets
- Will be hosting a 3 day intensive training for core group of CME instructors which will focus exclusively on Adult EMS Education – committed to developing this group of instructors and making sure they have all the appropriate training and certifications to be delivering this kind of continuing medical education – Already underway planning 2018 CME curriculum
- EMS fellow Dr. Lefebre is graduating in a few weeks and will be eligible to sit for her board certification exams in EMS – congratulated her and wished her the best – new EMS fellow Dr. Mannion will start in July.
- Work is underway on 2018 protocol book

SUNSTAR

Mr. Peterson gave updates on BLS program

- Originally anticipated 10 BLS units on the road, but have now identified that certain times of the day, specifically during the week, having 12 is ideal number – seeing positive results and happy with program
- Received 2 state EMS rewards
 - 1st The Education and Training Department is being recognized as Educator of The Year for state of Florida for EMS – Director of Clinical Services Jeremy Tinter's team – This is the first time an entire group of individuals is being recognized, usually it's just one – Mr. Peterson commended the team on a great job streamlining hiring process and orientation for new employees and getting those folks clinically ready to operate as EMT's and paramedics in our system.
 - 2nd Stephen Glatstein is going to be recognized for his work with Special Operations

Dr. Jameson stressed that the level of importance of education cannot be overemphasized. There have been several hundred brand new paramedics brought into the system and what it takes to get them from graduation to ready to be on the trucks is incredibly impressive.

OPEN FORUM

There was no discussion under open forum.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on September 21, 2017 at 10 A.M. at the EMS & Fire Administration, Conference Room 130, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL 33774.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Weiland adjourned the meeting at 11:40 A.M.

An audio recording of this meeting as well as any correspondence received is on file at the Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration.