

**PINELLAS COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

July 1, 2020

Zoom Conference Call

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met virtually at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Commissioner Julie Peluso, Independent Fire District Elected Official – Chair
Chief Scott Ehlers, Clearwater Fire Department
Chief Ian Womack, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue
Chief Tom Jamison, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
Capt. Michael Leiner, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department
Mayor Woody Brown, Mayors' Council (Largo)
Mayor Wanda Dudley, Mayors' Council (Kenneth City)
Mayor Chris Alahouzos, Mayors' Council (Tarpon Springs)
Karen Mullins, Citizen Representative (District 1)
Larri Gerson, Citizen Representative (District 2)
Jeri Reed, Citizen Representative (District 3)
Becca Tieder, Citizen Representative (District 5)
William Holmes, Citizen Representative (District 6)
Jorge Mercado, Citizen Representative (District 7) – Secretary
Nancy Hopkins, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter
Chief Terry Tokarz, EMS Leadership Group
John Peterson, Sunstar Paramedics
Commissioner Kevin Kenney, East Lake Fire Rescue
Rosalie Bousher, National Alliance on Mental Illness

Absent:

Mayor Joseph Manzo, Mayors' Council (Belleair Beach)
Mike Jones, Citizen Representative (District 4)
Dr. Steven Epstein, Pinellas County Medical Association
Dr. Kenneth Webster, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society

Staff Present:

Jason Ester, County Attorney's Office
Jim Fogarty, Safety & Emergency Services
Dr. Angus Jameson, EMS Medical Director
Dr. Donna Dooley, Office of the Medical Director
Craig Hare, EMS & Fire Administration
Greg Woodrum, EMS & Fire Administration
David Hudak, EMS & Fire Administration
Lynn Abbott, EMS & Fire Administration

Also Present:

Chief Anthony Tedesco, Clearwater Fire Department
Chief David Mixson, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
Chief Doug Zimmerman, EMS Leadership Group

Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics
Chief James Marenkovic, Gulfport Fire Department
Chief Brett Schlatterer, Pinellas Park Fire Department
Julie Bacon, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
Glenn Reihing, Tampa Bay Video Citizen

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Commissioner Julie Peluso called the special meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Roll call was taken, and it was determined that there was a quorum. There were 17 voting members in attendance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

COVID-19 SYSTEM STATUS UPDATE

Gayle Guidash presented a situational update and provided information related to case counts, percent positivity, and daily case average, noting that though the cases have decreased in age, not all of the outcomes are poor. She reported that the State has mandated long-term care facility staff testing, self-test kits are being issued to every LTCF, and the roll-out begins July 7.

Dr. Jameson presented a clinical status regarding COVID-19 data trends, including exponential case growth, hospital and ICU bed occupancy, and rising death rates; whereupon, he discussed workforce impacts and call volume, relating that the level of strain on the system is increasing.

Referring to a document titled *MCB and EMSAC COVID Briefing 07-01-20*, Craig Hare presented a system status update and provided an overview of the recommended changes and updates to the Pandemic Plan and Protocols, as follows:

- Current Situation
- Universal Masking
- Booties
- Response Configuration
- COVID-19+ Long Distance Transports
- Surge Capacity – Fire Rescue Transport
- Hospital Divert System

HOSPITAL BYPASS DISCUSSION

Mr. Hare, with input by Dr. Jameson, briefed the members, as follows:

- EMS Hospital Plan: Updated on June 4 to return the transfer of patient care back to normal operations, except for suspected or COVID-positive patients.
- COVID Divert: A specialized divert instituted on June 20 for lab-confirmed COVID patients for ALF and nursing home transfers.
- System Status Management: A protocol used to equitably distribute patients to avoid overwhelming any one particular facility.

Following the presentation, Mr. Hare, with input by Gayle Guidash, responded to members' questions and provided the following information:

- Summarization of the pandemic condition structure and preparedness modes.
- Long-distance transfers of hospital-discharged COVID-19 patients are made due to the small number of local skilled nursing facilities that are able to safely care for COVID-positive patients. Facilities maintaining their positive patients are becoming overwhelmed and experiencing staffing issues.
- PENT Medicaid funds have been made available to help support Medicaid transports, lessening the impact on insurance and family. Medicare categorizes COVID transports as medically necessary.
- FEMA Category B and CARES Act funding is being utilized to offset operational and equipment costs.
- Alternative methods of long-distance transport are being considered, noting concerns of clinician safety in the enclosed space of an ambulance, fixed-wing aircraft, or helicopter during any COVID transport.
- There are typically 70 adult ICU beds available county-wide.

Commissioner Peluso recognized the attendance of Glenn Reihing. Upon query by Mr. Reihing regarding the application process for serving on the EMS Advisory Council, Mr. Hare indicated that he will follow up offline and provide the requested information.

PANDEMIC PLAN AND PROTOCOL UPDATES – APPROVED

Following discussion, Commissioner Peluso indicated that there is consensus among the members to support the updates to the Pandemic Plan and Protocols; and that no objections were noted for the record.

Following further discussion, Mr. Hare briefly explained the propagation method for pandemic phase modification and assured members that the system is not close to moving to Condition Red, noting the Council would be called together to discuss any dramatic changes. Dr. Jameson related that the system is currently in Condition Yellow and able to continue to maintain its normal level of service and standard of care to the community, adding that there are Condition Red contingency plans that can be implemented without increasing the category level.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2020, format to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Peluso adjourned the meeting at 10:47 A.M.

*Audio and any correspondence received for this meeting is on file at the
Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration.*