

Chief's Corner – November 2012

Two years certainly flies by here in the State EMS Office. I continue to hear that all of you want and need more communication from our Office. That falls squarely on my shoulders, and we will continue to try and improve our communication with you.

As always, if you hear of things or have questions you are more than welcome to give us a call at 307-777-7955, or you can call toll free at 888-228-8996 and we will be glad to answer any questions. You can also email any of us directly or through the website.

I would also encourage you to keep your eye on the website and visit it frequently. We are trying to keep it updated and are trying to make it a little more user friendly.

Finally, you can help us out by copying and distributing this to your service members, posting it in your training areas and meeting rooms, and encouraging others to contact us.

Update:EMT Classes

Confusion still seems to be around as to what my intent is with our EMT classes. This happens because of new policies, actual budget cuts, and of course, rumors. That should underscore for you the importance of contacting our Office...if something is confusing, let us know and we will try to clear it up.

FAQs About Education:

Is it true that we won't be able to do an EMT class in our hometown?

No. We are well aware that we will have to continue to bring EMS education into many smaller areas of Wyoming. It is true that we weigh these decisions very carefully, and we can not conduct every course that is requested, but we spend a lot of time trying to ensure that we make instruction as available as we can.

Is it true that our people are going to have to travel to take an EMT course?

Yes and no. As I have said previously, as funding decreases we will not be able to do all of the courses that get requested. We are trying to balance frequency, need, cost and local resources to make the training as available as we can. That is difficult to do, particularly when some locations are 50-60 miles from any other course being taught. We are trying to do more centralized instruction to make any single course as available to as many communities as possible.

Am I going to have to go to a community college to take an EMT course?

Not necessarily. We are working to build more community college courses. This is an advantage for us, because in those communities that have colleges, the costs to my Office are greatly reduced. That means we are able to get into more remote communities that don't have access to one of the colleges.

Update: AEMT

The newest EMS educational program for Wyoming is the AEMT (Advanced EMT) that has replaced the EMT-Intermediate at the national level.

Currently the OEMS is beta testing one site for the AEMT program to determine the number of hours and content of the program. There are two additional sites already designated for beta testing to begin in the near future.

The AEMT curriculum is comprised of the first three modules of the Wyoming EMT-I program i.e. IV/IO, Multi-Lumen Lower Airway, and a very limited list of Medical Emergency medications. This will become a certification/licensure level of its own.

Those agencies who feel that this is sustainable for their service can stop at that point. Those who can feel that they can sustain the "Intermediate" level will be able to progress to the next level after completion of the AEMT as the precursor to the Intermediate. Sustainability and clinical competency are the key words in the new certifications.

The AEMT and the Intermediate curriculum revisions contain a much heavier focus on anatomy and physiology as well as scenario based instruction. The "putting it all together" begins with the first night of class and continues throughout. A significant change will be the focus on clinical competencies vs. the hours spent in the ambulance or hospital.

These changes require additional hours of classroom and independent study along with the strengthened clinical competencies and better developed critical thinking skills. Initially the hours of the AEMT are in the 165 to 200 hour range for completion. The Intermediate portion (which is completely cardiac care related) will contain qualitative rhythm interpretation and cardiac medications as well as ACLS, PALS etc.

Update: WATRS

What an exciting change the last two years has brought; moving from a static paper patient care report to a dynamic, comprehensive, prehospital electronic documentation system. Our EMS system has been blessed with primary funding and support from the Wyoming Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office. WATRS has also had the support of the EMS Office's Hospital Preparedness Program and CDC grants through the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program.

New data elements are in the future for the WATRS. With the NEMESIS 3 dataset finalizing and the requirement to move from ICD 9 codes to ICD 10 codes, there will be training opportunities for EMS systems and providers. Watch for updates coming this next year!

Below is additional information on WATRS:

Inventory: The inventory system will help providers and agencies keep track of supplies on each ambulance, storage cabinets and monitor medication expiration dates. The inventory system has the capability to monitor vehicle maintenance as well.

Scheduling: The updated scheduling system now ties crew schedules to Field Bridge units. Crews can now be automatically downloaded onto the tablets for a particular shift, if so desired. This component is improving regularly, watch for updates!

Field Bridge: The EMS Office will be performing an audit of Field Bridge licenses in the next month or two. The audit is to confirm the licenses are in use and duplications eliminated. Field Bridge licenses may only be used on a single computer.

Hardware: The EMS office has received another round of Xplore ruggedized tablets. This recent shipment is anticipated to provide a tablet to approximately 63% of the state's ambulances. Please contact Jay Ostby at the EMS office if your system is in need of additional tablets. Docking stations for the tablets are available for hospitals as well. If you would like a docking station for your hospital, please contact us for more details. EMS Agencies are reminded to keep their anti virus programs up to date along with Microsoft and other software updates to maintain security.

Please check the screens for your Xplore tablets. A screen protector is a must to extend the life of the tablets. If the screen protector is showing scratches, please ask to get the stylus refurbished. The EMS Office can easily refurbish the stylus and has a limited supply of screen protectors for replacement.

The Xplore tablets come with a four year accidental damage warranty from the time of purchase. **As these warranties begin to run out, it will be the responsibility of the agency to repair the tablet if damage occurs.**

Additional Hardware: The EMS Office has a limited number of Xplore tablets available for check out for special events (fires, floods, community events, disasters, etc.). If your area has a need for increased capability during an event, be sure to call and add a unit. The Field Bridge continues to function and can be used in local emergencies when utilities fail or the internet is not available. Patient care reports continue to be available during local emergencies!

WATRS Training: The EMS Office is planning a three day training for WATRS. This training will be focusing an entire day on specific components of the WATRS. A day is scheduled for Inventory, Scheduling, Report Writer, and a review of common components.

On Line Credentialing Named "Licensure": Development is continuing for Licensure, the on-line credentialing system. Last year the EMS Office identified some issues that needed to be updated for Wyoming's EMS system. The EMS Office will be testing the system in mid January, pending any major issues; we hope to begin rolling the system out this year.

New Critical Care: The WATRS is scheduled to add a new component named Critical Care. The Critical Care Template will be for interfacility transfers of patients needing care, and will include lab values, ventilators, medication pumps, isolettes, etc.

Cardiac Monitor Integration: The Field Bridge units have the ability to integrate with many of the cardiac monitors on the market. This feature imports the ECG into the patient care report. Software for cardiac monitor integration is available at no charge through the EMS Office. We look forward to the partnership with Mission LifeLine – WY and the improved care that will be provided to patients with cardiac emergencies.

The EMS Office would like to thank everyone for their support and comments to improve the WATRS! Together we are improving patient care, operational efficiency and the continuum of care to our patients!

Update: Trauma

Conducting reviews of the facilities for designation under the Trauma Rules continues to be a huge task for the Trauma Program. As part of the process, we are continuing to place more emphasis on the level of involvement by the local EMS agencies. We are also beginning to utilize EMS specific data in these reviews.

It is imperative that EMS be an integral part of the Trauma System. We need greater involvement from EMS in the Regional Trauma meetings and the overall quality improvement process.

If you are unaware of who your Regional contact is, or need more information, please contact Kelli Perrotti at 307-777-3470 or at kelli.perrotti@wyo.gov

Update: EMS-C

The National Pediatric Readiness Project (NPRP) is a quality improvement initiative formed out of a partnership between EMSC, the AAP, ACEP, and ENA. Close to 30 million children are treated in emergency departments (EDs) each year. Most of these children are cared for in local community hospitals, rather than pediatric hospitals. The goal of the project is to enhance the emergency care provided to children throughout the nation. The first activity is a national assessment emergency department readiness to provide emergency care to children. This national assessment is based on the Guidelines for the Care of Children in the Emergency Department, which was developed by the AAP, ACEP, and ENA and supported by numerous national organizations. The Wyoming EMSC program will be working with hospitals to complete this survey process when the third group of states is scheduled to begin; tentatively in February or March of 2013.

Update: Mission Lifeline Wyoming

The inaugural meeting for the Mission Lifeline project was held in Casper on October 29. Mission Lifeline Wyoming is an effort to improve cardiac care across the state. *Every* EMS agency (regardless of licensure level) is eligible for funding through this project. The funding will be used to purchase cardiac equipment and provide training. Hospitals are also participating. The American Heart

Association has hired Ben Leonard to act as liaison to all EMS agencies in this project. You can contact Ben at:

Ben Leonard, NREMT-P
EMS Director, Mission: Lifeline
American Heart Association
SouthWest Affiliate
PO Box 2512
Cheyenne WY 82001
877-610-3990
307-333-3641 (cell)
ben.leonard@heart.org

We have created a link on our website with more information.

Update: Hospital Preparedness

As many of you are aware, Merit Thomas recently left her position with the Office of EMS as the Hospital Preparedness Coordinator. Merit accepted a position with the Governor's Office as a Policy Adviser. Merit served Wyoming's EMS, hospitals, health care facilities, and emergency preparedness community for nine years. We thank her for all of her work and dedication to our community and wish her the best as she pursues her new position.

We are currently working with the Department of Health Human Resources Office to post and advertise the Hospital Preparedness Program position, and will let all of you know when advertising has begun and when a new coordinator has been selected.

2013

The New Year will be as busy as ever. I have high hopes that we will be successful with some upcoming legislation, significant changes in rule, and a host of other projects that need to be completed. I am also hoping that we can host some events that will assist EMS leadership and educators in particular. The dates for the 43rd Annual Wyoming Trauma Conference have been set for August 15 through 18 of 2013. We will be adding some Sunday events back into the schedule.

Finally, as the holidays approach, on behalf of Beth, Kelli, Bob, Jay, Carol, Coleen, Skip and me, we wish all of you an enjoyable holiday season. Please stay safe as you provide an invaluable service to our state. We know many of you will end up running many EMS calls between now and the start of the New Year. Many of you will do this on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day, and you will sacrifice your own time, and time with your families to ensure that this care is provided. We are forever in your debt.

Thank you and Happy Holidays!