

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Health Service Regulation  
Office of Emergency Medical Services

Brown Building  
Dorothea Dix Campus  
801 Biggs Drive  
Raleigh, North Carolina

May 14, 2024  
11:00 A.M.

Members Present

Kim Askew, MD  
Jim Albright  
Andrew Baird  
Todd Baker  
Robert Bednar  
Barry Britt  
Kimberly McDonald, MD  
Brian Pearce  
Robert Poe  
John Grindstaff

Roberto Portela, MD  
Sarah Rivenbark  
Kevin Staley  
Douglas Swanson, MD  
Pascal Udekwu, MD  
Jefferson Williams, MD  
Gail Shue  
Viola Harris

Members Absent

William Atkinson, PhD  
R. Darrell Nelson, MD  
Chuck Elledge  
Jim Gusler  
Rebecca Pittman  
Eric Toschlog, MD

Staff Members Present

Tom Mitchell  
Susan Rogers  
Wally Ainsworth  
Todd Messer  
McKenzie Beamer  
Heather Majernik  
Anthony Davis  
Chuck Lewis

James Caldwell  
Allen Johnson  
Toshiba Oates  
Justin Bowers  
Melynda Swindells  
James Winslow, MD

Others Present

Bob Pudney  
Brian Simonson  
Candace Barker  
Chasidy Kearns  
Dale Hill  
Diane Bunch  
Don Morgan  
Elizabeth Freeman  
Don Garner  
Gabrielle Gostigian  
Haven Styles  
J. Gavin  
Jesse Harris  
Josh Holloman  
Justin Hargett  
K. Vaught  
Kara Clarke  
Katrina Schweisthal  
Keith Wells  
Kevin Richards

Kory Lane  
Mallory DeLuca  
Mark Casey  
Michael Keller  
R.E. Merrill  
Renee Bridges  
Ross McKamey  
Scot Wilson  
Tarsha Medley-McBride  
Tiffany Skimmiehorn  
V. Lyman  
Ryan Merrill  
John Hancock  
John Yarbrough

(1) Purpose of the Meeting: The North Carolina EMS Advisory Council met virtually to hear reports/updates from Injury Committee, Compliance and Education, HealthCare Preparedness Program, Medical Director report and agency activity report.

(2) Actions of the Council:

Dr. Kim Askew, Co-Chairman of the Council, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

a) Motion was made by Dr. Portela, seconded by Mr. Poe, and unanimously approved that:

RESOLVED: The EMS Advisory Council minutes from the February 13, 2024 meeting be approved.

b) Motion was made by the Injury Committee, seconded by Dr. Portela and unanimously approved, with two abstentions-Dr. Douglas Swanson and Mr. Andrew Baird, that:

RESOLVED: Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center Level I Trauma Center designation renewal be approved for a period of one year through December 31, 2024.

Explanation: Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center was reviewed on December 12 and 13 2023 by an ACS survey team and the NCOEMS staff for consideration of a Level I designation

renewal and reverification. Many strengths were found, but a deficiency was identified.

- c) Motion was made by the Injury Committee and unanimously approved, with one abstention-Dr. Roberto Portela, that:

RESOLVED: ECU Health Medical Center Level I designation renewal be approved for a period of one year through March 31, 2025.

Explanation: ECU Health was reviewed on January 24 and 25, 2024 by an ACS survey team and the NCOEMS staff for consideration of a Level I designation renewal and reverification. Many strengths were found, but two deficiencies were identified.

(3) Other Actions of the Council:

- (a) Mr. John Grindstaff reported the following Injury Committee update:

- Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center was visited on December 12 and 13, 2023 by an ACS survey team and NCOEMS staff for the consideration of a Level I designation renewal and reverification. There were several notable strengths found; however, there was one deficiency identified. The deficiency was Standard 5.30 Alcohol Misuse Screening; screening for alcohol and substance misuse was below the standard of at least 90%. Due to this deficiency, a Level I designation renewal was awarded for a period of one year, through December 31, 2024. Following the submission of documentation demonstrating the correction of the deficiency, no later than November 2024, the ability to extend designation for a period of 2 additional years through December 2026, will be granted.
- Eastern University Health Medical Center (ECU Health) was visited on January 24 and 25, 2024 by an ACS survey team and the NCOEMS staff for the consideration of a Level I designation renewal and reverification. Several strengths were found; however, two deficiencies were identified. Standard 4.30 Advanced Practice Providers and Standard 4.33, Trauma Registry Courses. Deficiency in Standard 4.30 was noted due to one APP certification having expired in November 2023. At the time of the visit, they were scheduled for a course in March 2024. Deficiency 4.33 was due to two of the registrars having not completed the AIS course. However, they have been employed for less than a year and all available courses since their hire have been full. Also, a registrar is requested to have six months' experience prior to taking the exam. Both registrars have taken the AIS course in March 2024. Documentation has been received by the OEMS showing the correction; however, the ACS has not yet provided a response regarding the documentation. Therefore, OEMS staff recommendations are that ECU Health Medical Center be awarded a Level I designation renewal for a period of one year through March 31, 2025. The designation will be extended for a period of 2 years, through March 2027, once acknowledgement and acceptance of the deficiency is received from the ACS.

- Upcoming site visit – WakeMed Raleigh in June 2024

(b) Mr. Robert Poe reported the following Compliance update:

- For timeframe of 2-1-24 through 4-30-24, the Credentialing unit issued 1,338 credentials as follows:
  - ✓ 379 EMD
  - ✓ 82 EMR
  - ✓ 649 EMT
  - ✓ 50 AEMT
  - ✓ 178 Paramedic (13% of all credentials issued)
- With regards to turnaround times, data shows that waiting for applicant to submit fingerprint packet accounts for lag in issuing a credential. Staff is processing paperwork the same day it is received. Legal recognition, needing background checks, typically a 22 day turnaround and testing needing background checks typically takes 21 days. If not background checks needed, turnaround is approximately same day. For military equivalency, turnaround is about 3 days. The SBI takes approximately 3 days to process and report.
- With regards to compliance, 27% of all cases seen in February were due to violent offenses; 4% for patient care. In March, 28% of all cases seen were due to violent offenses (tied with white collar crimes at 28%); patient care was 0% and in April, 36% of all cases seen were due to drug offenses; patient care 0%
- From January 1, 2024 to present, seven summary suspensions were issued. Offenses were: 3 impaired on duty, 2 drug diversion, 1 child sexual abuse, and 1 adult sexual abuse. Discussion was had on the Disciplinary actions and rehab. Rehab is available for those who want and need help.

(c) Mr. Robert Poe gave the following Education report:

- Currently, there are forty-one Fully Accredited Institutions for the Paramedic program, with nineteen more under Letter of Review
- There will be three virtual instructor workshops in 2024, with a maximum of 75 per workshop, and two in person workshops. The in person workshops will be held July 15 in Rowan County and October 14 in Johnston County with maximum seating available for 40 people.
- Program Director workshops will be held at the EMS Administrators Summer Symposium on Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, August 7 with 40 seats available. These workshops will also be held at the NC Association of Rescue and EMS annual conference in Asheville on Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup> and Friday, September 6 with 40 seats available.
- Exams administered/scheduled between January 1 and June 30, 2024 are as followed:

Level	Number
EMR	261
EMT	1828
AEMT	139
Paramedic	278

- Current courses ending June 30, 2024 are as follows:

Level	Number
EMR	16
EMT	150
AEMT	18
Paramedic	38

- (d) Mr. Tom Mitchell gave the following HPP update in place of Mr. David Ezzell:
- There are three new employees that have recently been hired by HPP. The three new hires are Hannah Gompers, who comes to us from Atrium Health. She starts in the middle of this month and will take the position as the HPP Business Office Manager. Mark Case, from Duplin Co, was hired as the SMRS Training and Exercise Coordinator and Repsi Castellow is the new HPP Administrative Specialist.
  - During the recent EMS Expo, HPP occupied a portion of the third floor at the Khoury Convention Center and held tracks on Healthcare Preparedness topics They also had exhibitors for healthcare preparedness in the hallway.
  - One track was The Waffle House Index; this is a presentation that was done at Expo and has been done at disaster symposiums that is put on by the state and various other entities. The presentation talks about the Waffle House and how they keep their operations running 24/7 – 365. In any disaster or significant event, many businesses are put at strain but you can always depend on the Waffle House to continue functioning. What they say and do during these events is applicable to the Health Care Preparedness program.
  - Other important stakeholders, such as Public Health Preparedness and Response and Emergency Management, had booths on the third floor of the Convention Center.
  - Recent HPP responses for planned events were the NASCAR All-Star Race & MerleFest in Wilkes County, Cherry Point Air Show in Craven County, NCAA Golf Championship in Davie County, the Apple Blossom Festival in Alexander Count, the US Open in Moore County and the Balloon Festival in Franklin County. Unscheduled events were request for VIPER Radios, handwashing stations and air conditioning requests.
  - Currently, HPP is fulfilling a mission at a school in Vance County. Recently, Vance County shut down a motel that was occupied by residents that had been housed there for quite some time. These people will be housed at the school for a short period of time. However, the school had no air conditioning so a request was made for air conditioning and medical personnel, which we fulfilled.
  - Hurricane season begins June 1<sup>st</sup> and it is predicted to be above average season with 20 named storms, 9 hurricanes and 4 major hurricanes. This season, names from the 2018 season will be used again, Florence/Francine, Michael/Milton
  - In preparation for the 2024 Season, there will be a full scale exercise May 21-23 in Carthage at Camp Durant. There will be over 100 participants from multiple agencies: OEMS/HPP staff, healthcare Coalition Staff,

NCEM State & Regional staff, NC Dept of Agriculture, Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers, State Medical Assistance Teams personnel and EMS Agencies.

- (e) Dr. Tripp Winslow gave the following Medical Director update:
- There were many attendees at the Medical Director update at EMS Expo this year.
  - There are now twenty-five counties providing Medication Assisted Therapy Bridge Programs for patients with opioid use disorder.
  - Seventeen EMS systems are now doing pre-hospital blood.
- (f) Mr. Tom Mitchell gave the following agency update:
- On behalf of the EMS Advisory Council, the Graham Pervier Award was presented to Christina Warren at the 2024 EMS Expo banquet.
  - House Bill 125 gave non-emergency agencies an exemption to staffing which expired May 11, 2024. As per this House bill, OEMS held a stakeholder meeting in Greensboro April 24 at Guilford County EMS. Approximately twenty people, representing on-emergency providers from the east, west and central regions, the North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS, the North Carolina Association of EMS Administrators and Dr. Portela, were present. There was discussion that would allow agencies to continue to utilize the waiver beyond May 11. The length of time for the waiver was extended from six months to one year, with a six month update. A concern was identified that the Office does not have statutory authority to run background checks on non-credentialed drivers, even if they are on an agency's roster, thereby placing the onus on the agencies to develop an ongoing process for background checks and disciplining non-credentialed individuals. A smaller group will convene to discuss potential statute language that would allow OEMS to run background checks on non-credentialed personnel who are on agency rosters in Continuum.
  - Presently, the General Assembly is in short session to make adjustments to the 2nd year of the biennium budget and address other issues. Senate Bill 889, titled "Protecting First Responders Act", is being tracked by the Office. This bill increases the penalty for individuals exposing responders to Fentanyl or other harmful drugs or chemical agents and it appropriates funds for ballistic equipment to protect first responders. It also sets minimum wages at \$26.00 per hour for EMT's and \$30.00 per hour for Paramedics and requires employers to provide mental health benefits for Paramedics and EMT's. It has been referred to a committee, but the Office is tracking it and has submitted the appropriate paperwork on the bill to the Dept.
  - The Office is collaborating with the NC Association of Rescue and EMS, the Office of State Fire Marshals, and other stakeholders to gather feedback on proposed federal changes to OSHA Standards. These changes have the potential to impact all EMS systems and agencies across the state. We will be assisting in disseminating information to EMS agencies to help determine the fiscal impact and to encourage comments during the open period, which is currently set to expire on June 21, 2024.

(g) Other business

Mr Poe report on the proposed federal changes to OSHA standards:

The NC Association of Rescue and EMS has been meeting with the State Fire Marshall, the Fire Chiefs Association and Raleigh Attorneys. There have been two meetings, and the information will, hopefully, be finalized this week. Emails will be sent all Fire Departments, Rescue Squads and EMS agencies. In this email, there will be a cover letter to send OSHA, as well as a spreadsheet to complete with the types of units agencies have, the age of the units, and the number of members/employees in the agency. There are stipulations with regards to replacing equipment, replacing tires on the equipment, whether you are exposed to hazardous materials and is the agency doing rehab in your unit. If so, the question is whether the person conducting the rehab was exposed. It is the understanding that if anyone is exposed 15 times or more in a year, the agency must not only do annual physicals, but also medical monitoring. The rules are very extensive, and we are still trying to get comments and information. In order for any changes, specifics of how the law will impact your agency, shortages on staff, etc, is necessary. Every comment sent to OSHA is read by a person to determine if it is valid or not. There are a lot of regulations in this, and NC has it's own OSHA. For years, NC OSHA has not overseen volunteers. We're not sure how this will apply with Federal OSHA. The rule used to state only fire brigades, it now mentions firefighters and emergency services organizations, encompassing everyone. It's difficult to oppose something that is to protect the lives of firefighters and emergency services personnel; however, there is a fine line so you have to watch what you ask for. Meeting will continue and we ask that you watch your emails and complete the spreadsheet with your date and your comments to OSHA.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.

Minutes submitted by Susan Rogers