

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

November 12, 2024  
11:00 A.M.

Members Present

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

Sarah Rivenbark  
Kevin Staley  
Douglas Swanson, MD  
Pascal Udekwu, MD  
Jefferson Williams, MD  
Gail Shue  
Jim Gusler  
Horace (Lyle) Johnston  
Barry Britt

Members Absent

William Atkinson, PhD  
Rebecca Pittman  
Eric Toschlog, MD  
Chuck Elledge  
Viola Harris  
R. Darrell Nelson, MD

Staff Members Present

Tom Mitchell  
Susan Rogers  
Wally Ainsworth  
Todd Messer  
McKenzie Beamer  
Heather Majernik  
Chuck Lewis  
Toshiba Oates

Kimberly Clement  
Melynda Swindells  
Dale Sutphin  
Hannah Gompers  
James Caldwell  
Anthony Davis  
James Winslow, MD  
Allen Johnson

## Others Present

Dale Hill  
Scott Wilson  
Jenifer Simone  
Kim Messer  
Evan Bradley  
Danny Wilner

- (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, agency activity report and a Trauma System Plan update.

- (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. Swanson, seconded by Mr. Staley, and unanimously approved that:

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

- b) Motion was made by the Injury Committee, seconded by Gail Shue and unanimously approved, with two abstentions-Dr. Osi Udekwu and Dr. Jeff Williams, that:

RESOLVED: WakeMed Health & Hospitals Level I Trauma Center designation renewal be approved for a period of one year through July 31, 2025

Explanation: WakeMed Health & Hospitals was visited on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by an ACS and NCOEMS survey team for consideration of Level I reverification and redesignation. Two deficiencies were identified. WakeMed has the ability to extend designation for a period of two years through July 2027 following the successful completion of a Focused Site review no later than July 31, 2025

- (3) Other Actions of the Council:

- (a) Mr. John Grindstaff reported the following Injury Committee update:
- WakeMed Health and Hospitals Raleigh was visited on June 4 and 5, 2024 in a joint ACS and State survey for consideration of a Level I reverification and designation renewal. There were several notable strengths; however, two deficiencies were identified:
    - ✓ Standard 4.33 Trauma Registry courses – ensuring all staff members who have a registry role fulfill listed requirements
    - ✓ Standard 7.3 Documented effectiveness of the PIPS program in that there is not enough evidence documented of loop closure

- OEMS Staff recommendations are that WakeMed Health and Hospitals Raliegh campus be awarded a Level I designation renewal for a period of one year through July 31, 2025, with the ability to extend designation for a period of two years through July 2027 upon successful completion of a Focused Site review no later than their designation expiration date.
  - Atrium Carolinas Medica Center submitted documentation showing the correction of their deficiencies from the December 2023 site visit. Their designation as a Level I trauma center has been extended to the full designation time, ending December 31, 2026. Additionally, the ACS verification has also been extended to December 2026.
  - Novant New Hanover was visited on October 9 and 10 by a joint ACS/NCOEMS team. The ACS report has not been released as yet. Recommendations will be made at the February Council meeting after receiving the ACS report.
  - UNC Chapel Hill was visited on October 10 in a joint visit with the ACS for a focused site visit. The report from the ACS has not yet been received. Recommendations will be made at the February Advisory Council meeting upon receipt of the report
  - There is an upcoming site visit at the Naval Medical Camp Lejeune on January 13 and 14, 2025
- (b) Ms. Heather Majernik gave the following Trauma System Plan Update:
- The plan is continuing to move forward under the direction of Dr. Wayne Meredith
  - In the process of bringing an individual onboard to help with pulling together all of the Committee recommendations that have been submitted to the Executive Committee of the Trauma System Plan
  - The individual will be under contract and the hope is to begin to work on a rough draft of the Trauma System Plan which will then go to all stakeholders for input, recommendations, reviews, comments, concerns, etc.
- (c) Mr. Robert Poe reported the following Compliance update:
- For the timeframe of 8/1/2024 through 10/31/2024, the Credentialing unit issued 1,530 credentials, with 166 of them at the Paramedic level (11%).
  - Date shows wait time for issuing credentials is due to applicant delay in submitting fingerprint packet. NCOEMS staff is processing paperwork the same day it is received and able to be processed. To process legal recognitions and testing, it takes approximately 19 days for those that require federal fingerprint check; same day for those that do not require background checks. Processing Military equivalency averages same day turnaround time. The SBI is processing fingerprint cards within 4 days of receipt.
  - The top reason individuals were reviewed at the NC EMS Disciplinary Committee for this timeframe was for violent criminal pending charges or convictions (average of 29% of cases).
  - During this timeframe, patient care issues made up an average of 8% of cases.
  - The NC EMS Administrators Association has been contacted and the office has requested to present at the March 2025 (Wilmington) conference. The presentation will include Agent Chris Brown of the SBI

speaking on computer-based sex crimes, due to the large number of summary suspensions we have regarding this issue and the new law going into effect December 1, 2024, regarding AI generated images. Agent Brown is also a NC credentialed paramedic.

- Dr. Portela (ECU Medical Directors and NC EMS Disciplinary Committee member) and Ms. Swindells will be presenting at the NAEMSP conference in January 2025. The presentation is called, “The Good, Bad and the Ugly: Perspectives from the NC EMS Disciplinary Committee.” A joint submission request to present at the 2025 Expo, alongside fellow NC EMS Disciplinary Committee members Bryan Blanton (Catawba County EMS System Administrator) and Kara Clarke (Cabarrus County EMS Deputy Chief) has been made. This presentation focuses on the cooperative relationship between local agencies and OEMS working together for the betterment of EMS statewide.

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

- The NC Community College System has received a high-cost healthcare start-up and expansion grant. Funding supports community colleges in creating and enhancing healthcare training programs aligned with the industry demands, particularly in rural and economically distressed areas. There are two types of grants – program start up with an average of \$400,000 and expansion, which varies. Twenty-six colleges received a combined \$10.3 million. Funds helped with instruction, salaries, supplies, equipment and accreditation costs.
- The office is still working through the contract process with Measure Learning, who administers the state credentialing exam. The contract would be a five-year contract and the cost to sit for the exam will increase. The cost and effective date of the contract will be released as soon as possible.
- Following are the current courses ending 12/31/2024:

Level	Number
EMR	24
EMT	146
AEMT	28
Paramedic	35

- 2025 Program Director Workshops will be held at NCAEMSA in Wilmington on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and at EMS Expo on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Workshops will also be held at the NCAEMSA Summer Symposium in Asheville in July/Aug and at the NCAREMS Conference in Fayetteville in September. Exact dates will be announced as these events get closer.

(e) Ms. Kimberly Clement reported gave the following HPP report:

- Mark Casey and Billy Langston with training and exercise have moved on to other opportunities. Heather Stanley has been hired as a temp employee to help fill the role and responsibilities. She began 11/12/24
- During the Helen Response and recovery approximately 14 temp employees were onboarded. Two of these individuals will be staying on long-term. Blair Richey, Paramedic, will assist long-term with response and recovery. She started on 10/2 and has been functioning as the ESF-8 Deputy. Jonathan Stewart was hired as a temp employee to assist with long term warehouse operations.

- An update on Tropical storm Debbie was given by David Ezzell at the last Advisory Council meeting as part of that there was a nursing home evacuation. There was then post tropical cyclone #8 in Brunswick County which required another nursing home evacuation.
- Hurricane Helene: 49 NC EMS resources representing over 32 agencies across the state. All tolled, there were over 361 EMS resources activated at the height of the storm. Three hundred of these were from the federal ambulance contract. Through 10/25, there were over 3839 requests for service; as of this morning, there were over 4500 requests for service. These were for transports, patient care at different clinical sites and shelter locations
- Current operations, as of today, there are 20 ambulances left in Western NC; 16 are actively engaged in counties 911 and we will have these resources through 12/3.
- Two state medical support shelters were set up. CapRac, through the Wake Med team, and Central Carolina HealthCare Preparedness Coalition, through Duke, supported these sites with staffing and logistics. Also had state medical assistance teams and medical reserve corp staffing pulled in across the board and the Piedmont Healthcare Coalition supported in the Caldwell location. The shelters were open for a little less than three weeks, then patients were able to be successfully discharged to a safe location.
- Two field emergency departments were set up at the request of the counties. Polk County and Catawba County were the closest due to the extreme amount of devastation and destruction in those areas. These were set up to primarily support some of the helicopter operations that were rescuing patients from the flood waters, etc. They were set up with large base camps where there were 500-1000 first responders from across the state. In Polk County, 104 total patients were seen and in Catawba County there were 18 patients seen. Although there were not many patients seen, there were more personnel seen who needed support mentally and physically
- Medical support was needed, but they couldn't get to the physical locations where the ERs were set up due to the destroyed infrastructure. Community Care sites were established in Avery County (Mayland Community College), McDowell County (2 sites Old Fort and Marion), Mitchell County (Roan Mountain Baptist Church), and Yancey County (Big Creek Free Will Baptist Church). Four bed medical support unit trailers were setup with a small medical staff of 5-8 people (MD/DO, NP/PA), Clinical support (RN, LPN, Medic, EMT, etc.) and 2 ALS ambulances were on standby. Over 900 patients were seen.
- In Yancy County, a Community House check-in route was created and regular visits were made to be sure people had medications, etc.

(e) Dr. Tripp Winslow gave the following Medical Director update:

- Work continues with the regional specialist monitoring Ketamine and RSI usage. It has been discovered that whenever there is a performance improvement issue, local systems have been proactively identifying and correcting the issues prior to regional specialists' involvement. This is a very positive move.
- There are more systems working on getting blood to pre-hospital zones
- NCCEP EMS protocols will be released on 11/15. Thanks was given to Dr. Portela and his team for their work on this document.

- (f) Mr. Tom Mitchell gave the following agency update:
- Due to issues with the Continuum messaging system, the announcement of the Advisory Council meeting was not sent to systems and agencies throughout the state. This explains the lower-than-normal public attendance at the November meeting. Work is being done to correct the problem
  - Work with the NC Association of Rescue and EMS, Office of the State fire marshal and others monitoring the new proposed federal changes to OSHA Standards is ongoing. The proposed changes to OSHA Standards have the potential to impact all EMS Systems/Agencies throughout the state if it's adopted in its current format. Comments have been submitted during the comment period and we are awaiting the revised standard to come out or notification that they intend to proceed as is.
  - The office conducted the BLS Competition for the NC Association of Rescue and EMS Convention which was held at the Holiday Inn Biltmore West on September 5<sup>th</sup> through September 8<sup>th</sup>.
  - Turnover in several regulatory positions will occur over the next few months due staff retiring. Jeff Powell, the Western Regional Manager, will be retiring effective 12/17. There are a couple more other retirements that will occur closer to the end of the fiscal year; updates on those will be announced at the February Advisory Council Meeting.
  - Work is being done with the department on a transition plan to make sure that OEMS issues are included in the new administration that will be transitioning into office over the next few months.

(g) Other business

Mr. Todd Baker reported the Hospital Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics released updated guidelines on drowning resuscitation. Information can be found via an internet search.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:39 am

Minutes submitted by Susan Rogers