

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

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

*Hybrid Meeting*  
February 10, 2026  
11:00 A.M.

Members Present

Kim Askew, MD  
James Albright  
Viola Harris  
Todd Baker  
David Glendenning  
Barry Britt  
Richard O'Donnell  
Joshua Loyd, MD  
Andrew Baird  
Gail Shue  
John Grindstaff  
Lyle Johnston

Rebecca Pittman  
Sarah Rivenbark  
Robert Poe  
Roberto Portela, MD  
Douglas Swanson, MD  
Timothy Lietz, MD  
Jefferson Williams, MD  
Jim Gusler  
Chuck Elledge

Members Absent

Kevin Staley  
Eric Toschlog, MD  
Kimberly McDonald, MD

Staff Members Present

Tom Mitchell  
Susan Rogers  
David Ezzell  
Chuck Lewis  
Todd Messer  
McKenzie Beamer  
Amy Douglas

James Hood  
Jim Morris  
Anthony Davis  
James Caldwell  
Melynda Swindells  
James Winslow, MD

Others Present

Sharon Taulbert  
Sarah Pittman  
Elizabeth Freeman  
Joshua Potter  
Tyler Thompson

Crystal Wright  
Mallory Deluca  
Bryan Edwards  
Josh Holloman  
Jennifer Simone

Carr Boyd  
John R. Studnek  
Lee Westbrook  
Stacey Thompson  
Zeb Holland  
Bradley Cooper  
Anjini Joiner  
Kari Lynch  
Scott Wilson  
Matt Masters  
David Reed  
Kaylee Pittman  
Terrie Smith  
Jeremy Cabe  
Sara Griffith  
Jessica Mariano  
James Larsen  
Todd Doster  
Joel Faircloth  
Brandon Locklear  
Candace Barker  
Danny Wilner  
Paul Seaman

Mickey Boyles  
Paul Seamann  
Cassidy Kearns  
Juan Bowen  
William Butler  
Alyssa Monda  
Alex Belanvich  
Jesse Harris  
Mike Dutton  
Trent Davenport  
Summer Kivett  
Robert Bednar  
Pete Allen  
Caitlyn Colson  
Angela Magill  
Kara Clarke  
Rebecca Connors  
Danny Wilner  
Mickey Boyles  
William Godwin  
Richard Lane

(1) Purpose of the Meeting: The North Carolina EMS Advisory Council met to hear reports/updates from Injury Committee, Compliance and Education, HealthCare Preparedness Program, Trauma System Plan update, Medical Director report and agency activity report. The Council also held annual elections for Chair and Co-Chair, as well as voting on the EMS Advisory Council Awards to be presented at the EMS Expo conference.

(2) Actions of the Council:

Dr. Kim Askew, Chairman of the Council, called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

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

RESOLVED: The EMS Advisory Council minutes from the November 18, 2025 meeting be approved.

b) Motion was made by Mr. Baker, seconded by Mr. Poe and unanimously approved that:

RESOLVED: Dr. Kim Askew be re-elected as Chairman of the North Carolina EMS Advisory Council

Explanation: Dr. Askew opened the floor for nominations for the office of Chairman. A motion was made to nominate Dr. Askew, and with no other names submitted, it was unanimously agreed that Dr.

Askew would continue to Chair the Council. Dr. Askew thanked the Council for their confidence in him.

- c) Motion was made by Mr. Baker, and unanimously approved that:

RESOLVED: Mr. Robert Poe be elected as Vice Chairman of the North Carolina EMS Advisory Council

Explanation: Dr. Askew opened the floor for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the EMS Advisory Council. No other names were submitted. Mr. Poe thanked the council for the opportunity to serve.

- d) Motion was made by the Injury Committee, seconded by Mr. Elledge, and unanimously approved, with three abstentions, Gail Shue, Dr. Doug Swanson and Dr. Kim Askew, that:

RESOLVED: Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center's Level I designation be renewed for three years.

Explanation: Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center was reviewed for a Level I trauma center designation renewal in a joint ACS/State site visit on September 25-26. There were several notable strengths, along with a few opportunities for improvement. No non-compliant standards were identified.

- e) Motion was made by the Injury Committee, seconded by Dr. Swanson, and unanimously approved:

RESOLVED: Duke University Hospital's Level I designation be renewed for three years.

Explanation: Duke University Hospital was reviewed for a Level I trauma center designation renewal, in a joint visit with the ACS/State on December 1-2. There were several notable strengths, along with few opportunities for improvement. No non-compliant standards were identified.

- f) Motion was made by the Injury Committee, seconded by Mr. Baker, and unanimously approved that:

RESOLVED: Cape Fear Valley Medical Center Level III designation be renewed for one year.

Explanation: Cape Fear Valley Medical Center was reviewed on January 6 and 7, 2026 in conjunction with the ACS consultation in support of a future pursuit of a Level II designation and verification. Several notable strengths were found with some opportunities for improvement. Three non-compliant standards were noted. OEMS recommendation is that Cape Fear Valley Medical

Center be granted a one-year designation as a Level III. Upon submission of evidence demonstrating correction of the non-compliant standards, to be received by December 31, 2026, the center will have the opportunity to receive the remaining three years on their designation.

- g) Motion was made by the Injury Committee, seconded by Ms. Shue, and unanimously approved, with one abstention, Dr. Jeff Williams, that:

RESOLVED: WakeMed Cary Hospital Level III designation be renewed for four years.

Explanation: WakeMed Cary Hospital was visited on January 13, 2026 by a survey team and OEMS for consideration of a Level III trauma center designation renewal. Many strengths were found with some opportunities for improvement. There were no non-compliant standards found.

- h) Motion was made by Mr. Baird, seconded by Mr. Albright, and unanimously approved that:

RESOLVED: The Council accepts the recommendations of the 2026 Advisory Council Awards Committee for the nominations of Mr. William Kehler to receive the Graham Pervier Award.

Explanation: The Graham Pervier Award is in recognition of his long-term dedication to Emergency Medical Services serving on the EMS Advisory Council for 41 years, and as Chairman of the Council for 14 years. The award, given in the name of the Council and OEMS staff, is given to individuals who have made outstanding and long-lasting contributions to the development and improvement of Emergency Medical Services in North Carolina

- i) Motion was made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Baird, and unanimously approved that:

RESOLVED: The Council accepts the recommendations of the 2026 Advisory Council Awards Committee for the nomination of Mr. David Silfen to receive the Kent R. Spitler Award.

Explanation: The Kent R. Spitler Award is in recognition of his life-long contributions to Emergency Medical Services education in North Carolina. The award, given in the name of the Council and OEMS staff, is given to individuals whose achievements in EMS education have resulted in substantial impacts or changes in how EMS education is delivered, how EMS personnel are trained or how EMS curricula are developed.

(3) Other Actions of the Council:

- (a) Dr. Askew welcomed guests to the Council meeting and announced to the guests and the Council the following appoints:
- Mr. Jim Albright was reappointed to represent the NC Association of EMS Administrators. Mr. Albright holds an active Paramedic credential and is the Director of Guilford County EMS. He has been an active member of the Council since 2017
  - Ms. Viola Harris was reappointed to represent the NC Board of County Commissioners. Ms. Harris has been an active member of the Council for over 10 years and is an Edgecombe County Commissioner representing District 2
  - Dr. Roberto Portela has been reappointed representing the NC Medical Board. Dr. Portela is the Director of Pitt County EMS and a Clinical Assistant Professor at the East Carolina Brody School of Medicine, Department of Emergency Medicine. He has been an active member of the Council since 2019
  - Mr. Chuck Elledge has been reappointed to represent the North Carolina Senate. Mr. Elledge is from Moravian Falls and has been an active member of the Council since 2018. He held a Paramedic credential for over 20 years
  - Mr. John Grindstaff has been reappointed as a public representative. He has been an active member since 2018 and is a retired supervisor of Air Medical Services of the Mountain Area Medical Airlift (MAMA) at Mission Hospital in Asheville
  - Mr. Rick O'Donnell is a new appointment representing the NC Healthcare Association. Mr. O'Donnell is from Wilmington, NC, and is the Senior Director/Chief of Mobile Health with Novant Health Regional Medical Center. He has held a Paramedic credential for over 20 years and has an Associate Degree in Applied Science with a major in Emergency Medical Services
  - Dr. Timothy Lietz is a new appointment representing the NC Medical Board. Dr. Lietz is the Medical Director for Elon University Physician Assistant studies in Charlotte. He is also in the process of aiding in the start-up of a PA program in Charlotte. He is board certified in Emergency Medicine and holds a Fellow certification from the American College of Emergency Physicians
  - Dr. Joshua Loyd is a new appointment representing the American College of Emergency Physicians. Dr. Loyd is an attending physician in emergency medicine at Mid-Atlantic Emergency Medical Associates. He is a volunteer adjunct assistant professor in emergency medicine at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine educating medical students during clinical rotations. He is also the Medical Director of Novant Health Critical Care Transport. Dr. Loyd will be fulfilling Dr. Nelson's unexpired term on the Advisory Council, which will expire on 12/31/2026

Dr. Askew reappointed, without objection, Mr. Johns Grindstaff as Chairman of the Injury Committee, and he reappointed, without objection, Mr. Robert Poe as Chairman of the Compliance and Education Committee

- (b) Mr. John Grindstaff reported the following Injury Committee update:
- Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center underwent a successful combined site visit and renewed their three-year Level I Trauma verification. It is recommended by the Injury Committee that they should receive their state designation renewal as a Level I trauma center
  - Duke University Hospital underwent a successful combined site visit with the ACS and state. They received their verification as a Level I trauma center for three years. It is recommended by the Injury Committee that their designation renewal as a Level I trauma center be extended for three years
  - Cape Fear Valley Medical Center underwent a site review for consideration of renewal of their Level III designation. This was done as a combined ACS Consult visit as they prepare to potentially move to a Level II designation. The center has several notable strengths, some opportunities for improvement and three non-compliant standards were noted. State recommendations are that Cape Fear Valley Medical Center should receive redesignation as a Level III trauma center for a period of one year. After submitting documentation of compliance for the three non-compliant standards, the trauma center will receive the remaining three years of their designation
  - WakeMed Cary Hospital underwent a site review for consideration of renewal of their Level III trauma center designation. The center had several notable strengths, several opportunities for improvement and no non-compliant standards were identified. It is the recommendation of the Injury Committee that WakeMed Cary Hospital receive a Level III designation renewal for the period of four years
  - UNC Blue Ridge Hospital underwent an initial site visit in April of 2025 and received designation as a Level III trauma center. However, due to two non-compliant standards, they received a one-year designation at that time with follow-up due by January 2026. The trauma program has submitted documentation to show evidence of the correction of the non-compliant standards and will receive the remaining two years of an initial designation
  - Upcoming site visits are scheduled at Womack Army Medical Center for April 23-24; this will be a combined State/ACS visit for a Level III designation renewal. Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center has a combined State/ACS site visit scheduled for May 13-14; this will be a Level II designation renewal
  - Ms. Douglas reported on the Trauma System Plan. The Executive Committee of the Trauma System Plan continues to meet bi-monthly. Dr. Krohmer, the surgeon who has been tasked with writing the plan, has provided the first written draft of the plan. The Executive Committee is in the process of reviewing the document and fine tuning it to meet the future needs of the North Carolina trauma system

- (c) Mr. Robert Poe reported the following Compliance update:
- For the period of November 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026, OEMS issued 2,258 credentials, with 305 at the Paramedic level (14%)
  - Data shows waiting time for issuing credentials is due to waiting on applicant to submit the fingerprint packet. Staff is processing paperwork the same day it is received with all necessary documentation. Processing legal recognition applications takes approximately 20 days and there it takes approximately 18 days turnaround time for testers requiring a federal background check. If no background check is required, credentials are being released the same day. Military equivalency requests are averaging same day turnaround time, also, and the SBI is processing fingerprint cards within 1 day
  - During the months of November and December 2025, the top reasons individuals were reviewed by the EMS Disciplinary Committee were for violent pending charges or convictions (average of 24% of cases). Patient care issues averaged 18% of the cases
  - There are two new members who have been appointed to the Disciplinary Committee; they are Kristy Bryant and Dr. Walter Hall. Chief. Bryant is representing the NC EMS Administrator's Association; replaced Bryan Blanton. She is the administrator of Yancey County EMS. Dr. Hall is representing the NC Medical Board, he replaced Dr. Udekwu. Dr. Hall is a licensed physician with the Women's Health Group-Blue Ridge Medical Group (UNC Blue Ridge)
  - Compliance training will be held at the Program Director Workshop at the Administrators Conference in Wilmington in March, at Expo in May and at the Administrators Conference in Asheville in August. The training will focus on 10A NCAC 13P .1507(b)(22), specifically harassment of EMS personnel. The training will be delivered by Melynda Swindells with co-presenter Tonja Pool. There will be a pre-workshop comprehensive survey for participants to gauge how much training on the topic is completed, what type of training is offered and the level of awareness of the legal and monetary costs of harassment to agencies and institutions. Also inquiring of interest in forming a work group of program directors, agency leadership, county managers, attorneys, OEMS staff, etc. to develop comprehensive training policies and a way forward to address this issue.
  - Two compliance training courses are scheduled at Stanly County EMS on March 11 and March 18
  - Investigation training is scheduled for Cabarrus County EMS on April 22
  - Schedules are being determined for compliance training requests at Tri-County Community College, Rockingham County EMS and Currituck County EMS
- (d) Mr. Robert Poe gave the following Education report:
- CoAEMSP AEMT and Paramedic Program Accreditations; forty-five accredited Paramedic Programs and one AEMT (first in the Nation) accredited program at Durham Tech

- 2026 Program Director Workshops will be held at the EMS Administrators Symposium, which is presently full and will be held at the NC EMS Expo on May 1 and 2
- In 2026 the office will be moving to in-person instructor workshops with two virtual offerings. Pre-course is still required to attend
- OEMS Education Steering Committee has updated the job task analysis and Measure Learning is working on the accompanying surveys to send to all credentialed individuals. Surveys should be launched sometime in March. Once the surveys end, Measure Learning will be able to complete the Job Task Analysis
- Courses ending through May 1, 2026:

Level	Number
EMR	17
EMT	47
AEMT	11
Paramedic	24

(e) Mr. David Ezzell gave the following HPP update:

- Staff Update:
  - Kandace Smith has been hired in a temporary position as the grant manager. Kandace was the HPP Director for the state of Mississippi. When funding temporarily stopped over the summer, Mississippi terminated all their staff. Kandace aided the NC EOC during Hurricane Florence
  - Emily Kilmartin has been hired as a Partner Engagement Coordinator. She will be starting at the end of the month. The position was created to help coordinate all the different partners; she will be the primary point of contact for partners for communication purposes
  - There is a pending post for a data specialist to help with hospital data, trauma data, EMS data, etc. to help grow and expand; this will be a temporary position
- The Rural Health Transformation grant is a \$50 billion grant to be dispersed to states over a period of 5 years, \$10 billion a year. The grant was split, half was divided equitably and half was based on project submissions. The state of North Carolina received approximately \$210 million; year one ends June 30, 2026. The Department of Public Health and the Office of Rural Health are leading the initiative; however, all DHHS are very actively involved. There are three initiatives that specifically involve EMS, they are recruitment and retention of personnel, expanding connectivity and telemedicine and expanding MAT (Medical Assistance Team) and CP (Community Paramedicine) programs
- The HPP grant was received, and the program will be supporting the SMATs; however, funding strategies have shifted. Previously, funds were allocated based on submitted receipts. Under the new procedure, funding will be determined by capabilities. Each response component-such as medical shelter packages, ambulance strike team trailer, mass casualty

trailers, etc.-will receive a flat rate to maintain essential resources. How the funds are spent will be the agency's purview, they will receive a specific dollar amount for each capability

- SMAT III's, which are local agencies (approx. 30-35) are scheduled for renewal in July 2026. The plan is to utilize the flat fee funding for them as well. The renewed MOAs will contain pe-designated mission ready packages
- Pediatric restraint devices are in the process of being purchased and will be distributed to agencies, based on a recent survey. The purchase is funded by the EMS for Children grant
- The Hospital Preparedness Program will be conducting Resiliency and Readiness training. There will be two webinars and a series of trainings. A set of ten tabletops will be conducted, in person, throughout the State
- Murdoch Developmental Center in Butner lost total power on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The water company, while jackhammering, accidentally cut through the main power fee to the entire campus. The facility houses over two-hundred fifty residents and had no back-up generators. Granville County EM, CapRac SMAT, Mid-Carolina SMAT, Piedmont SMAT and NCOEMS responded providing generators and light towers. The campus was back up and running within about six hours. The power company was able to make a temporary patch to restore power shortly thereafter, however, it was decided to leave the generators in place temporarily because they would be needed while the power company made a permanent repair
- During recent inclement weather, the state EOC was activated. OEMS staffed the EOC 24/7 during the activation
- The OEMS continues to work with Public Health partners tracking the measles outbreak. The number of cases is continuing to increase. The DHHS website has continuing updates on the status of the outbreak
- Agencies that step-up for funeral coverage are very much appreciated. There has never been a time when funeral coverage could not be covered

(f) Mr. Todd Baker reported EMS Advisory Council Award Recommendations:

- Mr. William Kehler was nominated for the Graham Pervier Award. Mr. Kehler is the Emergency Services Director in McDowell County. He started as a hospital EMT intern in 1998 with McDowell County. He has served in all roles in McDowell County culminating in his current position as Emergency Services Director. He was instrumental in establishing a Community Paramedic Program which now serves as the model for other agencies across the state and the nation. He is the past Chair of the North Carolina EMS Administrators Association where he was instrumental in establishing leadership programs. He has a deep commitment to professionalism, leadership and quality patient care. His entire career has been devoted to McDowell County.
- Mr. David Silfen was nominated to receive the Kent Spitler Award. Mr. Silfen is an all-levels EMS educator, a field provider, researcher, training officer, and supervisor. He has had over twenty years in EMS. Much of his work revolves around the Orange/Durham County area. He is on the board of the South Orange Rescue Squad and a faculty member at Durham Tech.

He participated, in collaboration with Orange County EMS and the Orange County Department of Aging, in research on reducing falls; especially in patients who had frequent falls.

- No nominations were received for the George Johnson, Jr, MD Award.

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

- Updated protocols are due to the Regional Specialists by April 15<sup>th</sup>
- The Medical Director update will be held in Wilmington on March 5<sup>th</sup>. The next update will be held in May at the EMS Expo. In order to be a Medical Director in North Carolina, you must meet the North Carolina College of Emergency Physicians requirements; one of these requirements is to attend a Medical Director update annually
- Due to the present measles issue in North Carolina, measles vaccination is strongly encouraged for anyone who has not already been vaccinated. The vaccine is safe and effective. Measles can cause severe disability and death. Vaccination can not only protect you, but it can also protect your community
- James Hood and Tony Fernandez have been examining data recently on the care of women at the time of childbirth, using the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology guidelines. They have been working closely with Chief Mitchell and have received an award at NASEMSO that was accepted by Chief Mitchell, Tony Fernandez and James Hood. There are a lot of opportunities for EMS to improve the care of women in North Carolina mainly post-partum and peri-partum

(h) Chief Tom Mitchell gave the following agency update:

- Staffing updates:
  - Mr. David Ezzell accepted the position of Assistant Chief. He was with the HPP program in operations.
  - Mr. Doug Bullins filled the position of the Central Regional Office Regional Specialist that was vacated by Anthony Davis who was promoted to Regional Manager
  - Mr. Justin Jarrell, who previously worked for Surry County EMS, has accepted the position of Central Regional Specialist; he started on February 9

There will be a couple of other hires that will be forthcoming in the next few months that will be announced in upcoming meetings

- Move has been completed from the Dix Campus in Raleigh to the new DHHS headquarters Building, which is located on the corner of Blue Ridge Road and Reedy Creek Road. OEMS is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the new headquarters
- EMS Expo '26 will be held from May 1<sup>st</sup> through May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. A considerable amount of planning has been done for the event, and some highlights will be released as the date approaches; the schedule has been finalized. The conference hotel is the Marriott Downtown Winston-Salem on Cherry Street and is connected by covered access to the Benton Convention Center

- There are early-stage developments on training which will be rolled out to the EMS System Administrators. The training provides information on how to utilize data to drive System and Quality Improvement. James Hood and other OEMS staff will be instructing the class when it is complete. The goal is to ensure that administration within the organization knows how to access the data systems (Insights/Continuum and Biospatial) that they have access to so they can pull data to drive changes that the system may be considering.
- OEMS is in the process of building a new regulatory platform that will house all of the information that is currently in Continuum. It is scheduled to be released in the fourth quarter of 2026, along with a new Trauma Registry that will be released in the second quarter of 2026

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Susan Rogers