

1. Like Christmas without snow, what would SEMSCO News be without an update on spinal immobilization? Scratch a broken neck off your list to Santa, but definitely keep an eye out for the “Suspected Spinal Injuries” protocol and a Power Point educational presentation in early 2007. After years of wrangling, the real McCoy will hit the streets once the Bureau completes formatting changes and adds final touches to the educational component. Full implementation is expected by June 2007. Yippee!
2. Burn Kits from the State Hospital Preparedness group have finally arrived at each County EMS Coordinators office. It’s up to each County Coordinator to deploy the kits. The idea is to provide one kit for every ambulance in the State. If you’ve not the foggiest clue who your County Coordinator is, check the Bureau listing at: www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/counties/map.htm.
3. SEMSCO gave its blessing to a brand spankin’ new QI Manual written by the Evaluation Committee. Plans call for the Committee to roll out their new manual regionally in a “train the trainer” format starting sometime in the second quarter (Q2 for financial aficionados) of 2007.
4. If you’ve ever thought a Senate Confirmation hearing was grueling, you’d definitely have felt sorry for the North Country folks who sustained a 90 plus minute grilling on their new ALS Protocols. Just when it appeared the Medical Standards committee might move onto questioning punctuation, the protocols were approved. One point of note, also from North Country, was approval for BLS use of hemostatic bandages for serious external bleeding. North Country is the third region in New York to employ hemostatic bandages (Westchester and Nassau County already allow them). While the jury is still out on their exact role in the EMS exsanguation toolbox, you might want to Google the topic and read up on ‘em. Hemostatic products are playing an increasingly important role in surgery where a small slip of the scalpel can have dramatic consequences...
5. Remember those 8 ½ by 11 Pediatric Prehospital Care Reference Cards that the EMS for Children (EMSC) program distributed a few years back? Well the card is undergoing revision to include the 2005 CPR guidelines and should be up on the EMSC section of the Bureau website within 2-3 weeks. Surf to: www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/nysemc.htm.
6. The Bureau expects to shortly release a guidance document for Regional Councils and Program Agencies use in evaluating applications for Course Sponsorship. For reasons unclear, a recent glut of applications in several regions has prompted requests for review guidance. Prior to making a decision on Course Sponsorship applications, the Bureau seeks recommendations from the Regional Council, amongst others.
7. Here’s a little ditty for CICs and CLIs out there: DOH now cross checks your name against the personnel roster of the agency you list as your field experience location. If you don’t appear on the personnel roster, but claim to be actively riding, you’ll probably be asked for additional proof. This brings to mind a term used in previous SEMSCO notes, “filing false paperwork.” Enough said.
8. Writhing in pain? SEMAC voted to add ketorolac to the statewide ALS formulary for pain treatment. Ketorolac is the generic form of Toradol®, a non-narcotic agent given IV or IM for moderately severe acute pain. Although morphine is the preferred agent to treat acute pain, the hurdles needed to get morphine into ALS units and then

to restock it once administered continue to make ALS systems seek non-narcotic alternatives. Shameful, no? Especially when you can pick up a dime bag of some pretty good narcotic on most urban street corners without even flashing a valid MAC certification.

9. SEMAC will advise their 18 REMACs to update their ALS protocols in compliance with the 2005 AHA/ILCOR resuscitation guidelines. Updates should be completed by January 2007 (yeah, right...). Rather than review all 18 Regional Protocol sets, SEMAC is asking each REMAC to submit a letter by July 1, 2007 confirming updates are in place.
10. While we're on the subject of CPR changes, confusion runs rampant on AED updates, shock protocols, and associated revisions to CFR and EMT protocols. SEMAC and the Bureau plan to issue a series of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) to close some of the knowledge gaps created, in part, by the protocol revisions issued last summer.
11. SEMSCO heard a neat presentation from the Rural Health Community Systems group in Steuben County (www.rhcsys.org) describing a needs assessment and action plan initiated to bolster EMS in their rural county.
12. The PCR might get another facelift sometime soon. Well, maybe. A couple new "time" boxes have been requested; one for time of call receipt at the 911 Answering Point, and one for time of First Responder arrival on scene. Prior to implementing either change, the Evaluation Committee will review the entire PCR with an eye towards conformity with NEMESIS data collection. What might actually happen is an evolution of the data set required for agencies using electronic PCRs versus any immediate changes to the paper and pencil forms.
13. Ever have a hankerin' to know what's going on like, everywhere? A Hungarian Disaster Management group website continually culls data from a variety of sources and displays major incidents worldwide on a map overlay. Check it out at: http://vizs.rsos.hu/alertmap/usa_alert.php?lang=eng.
14. Vital Signs 2006 was one of the five largest conferences ever with over 2,100 attending the show in Syracuse. Mark your calendar; the show will return to the 'Cuse October 18-21, 2007. Randolph Mantooth presented awards at the annual awards banquet. The 2006 awardees were: BLS Provider: John Carnes (Westchester REMSCO), ALS Provider of the Year: Vincent Coletta (Suffolk REMSCO), Agency of the Year: Dix Hills Fire Dept. Rescue Squad (Suffolk REMSCO), Leadership Award: Sharon Chiumento (Monroe-Livingston REMSCO), Educator of Excellence: Edward Moser (Central NY REMSCO), EMS Communications Specialist: Andrew Eve (Monroe-Livingston REMSCO), Nurse of Excellence: Elizabeth Montgomery (Monroe-Livingston REMSCO), and Physician of Excellence: Erik Larsen (Westchester REMSCO).
15. Is your agency ready for a pandemic? Much of the business world has beefed up their corporate continuity plans for the unique challenges a pandemic flu might bring. To evaluate how prepared your EMS service is, take a peek at: www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/healthcare/emgncymedical.html. You might discover a thing or two you still need to do.
16. Know anyone who's failed a CFR or EMT course? Make sure they know there's a one year deadline from the date of their original written exam to pass the test. One

year and one day later, they'll have to return to go and start over. The written exam can be retaken once. If a student fails the retest, they need to complete a refresher course to sit (up to two more times) for the written exam.

17. A recommendation from the Evaluation Committee on whether or not New York should get on board with NEMESIS (National EMS Information System - www.nemesis.org) is on hold pending a closer analysis of our entire PCR reporting and data analysis process. The ramifications of joining versus not need to be fleshed out more clearly as well. Stay tuned.
18. Dr. Terry Fairbanks (Assistant Professor Emergency Medicine, University of Rochester) delivered a brief SEMAC presentation on medical error reduction using a systems approach. A TAG has been formed to recommend some EMS safety contributions for consideration by SEMAC. A kewl website you might want to check out for additional safety ideas is www.emssafepatient.com which details an error reporting network called MEPARS.
19. The PIER Committee unveiled a new brochure they've developed for people on the move. The brochure, "Choosing a New Residence – Questions You Should Ask about EMS in Your New Community" should be available soon through the Bureau.
20. SEMSCO heard an appeal of an operating certificate denial by the Hudson Mohawk REMSCO (REMO) to NEALS (North East Advanced Life Support). An ALJ (Administrative Law Judge) concluded that there were conflicts of interest in the REMO process and NEALS had demonstrated need for their service in certain areas of Rensselaer County. The ALJ recommended SEMSCO reverse the REMO denial and issue an operating certificate to NEALS for certain areas of Rensselaer County. The SEMSCO systems committee recommended the appeal be remanded to REMO for consideration of issuance of an operating certificate for parts of Rensselaer County pursuant to statutory definition of need and report back to the SEMSCO within 90 days. SEMSCO took the advice of the systems committee and did just that.
21. On the subject of appeals, Commissioner Novello upheld a decision of the New York City REMAC to allow FDNY to reduce medic staffing of their ALS First Response Units to a single paramedic.
22. The Paramedic Licensure TAG met to hear about Pennsylvania's system of permanent paramedic certification which took effect in 1994 following a 10 year effort. A survey of medics during Vital Signs 2006 in Syracuse returned 107 responses with 99 favoring licensure and 8 opposing. The TAG will meet again the Monday evening prior to the next SEMSCO meetings and plans to hear representatives from Detroit where medics are presently licensed. A draft report should be ready before summer 2007.
23. If you haven't seen or heard of the Berger Commission report, you should point your web browser to: www.nyhealthcarecommission.org and at least read through the Executive Summary. The Commission recommended a series of health care facility closures, mergers, and realignments, amongst other changes in how New York's ailing health care system operates.
24. On the more positive side of New York's Health Care System, DOH released an analysis of the NYS Trauma System this past July. The 103 page report provides detailed information on the performance of the system and individual trauma centers during 1999 through 2002. You can grab a copy of the report off

www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/nystrauma.htm. Look for the 99-02 New York State Trauma Report link.

25. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA) collaboratively published a very readable 18-page booklet called, “FCC Narrowbanding Mandate: A Public Safety Guide for Compliance.” You might want to snag a copy before your next radio purchase. To make sure you understand the new rules (which will affect all public safety radio users), request your copy online at www.imsasafety.org/
26. The 2007 SEMAC and SEMSCO meetings are yet to be scheduled. Problems finding a suitable location that cares to bid on a meeting contract with the State of New York has thrown a wrench into the works. What a shocker!

These notes respectfully prepared by Mike McEvoy, PhD, RN, CCRN, REMT-P who was the 2005 Chair of the State EMS Council where he represents the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs. Mike remains on the Council as a wise old past-chair, kinda like an old Fire Chief. Mike is EMS Coordinator for Saratoga County, a paramedic for Clifton Park-Halfmoon Ambulance Corps, a firefighter and chief medical officer for West Crescent Fire Department. At Albany Medical Center, Mike works as a clinical specialist in the Cardiac Surgical ICUs, Chairs the Resuscitation Committee, and teaches pulmonary and critical care medicine at Albany Medical College. Contact Mike at McEvoyMike@aol.com. If you want a personal copy of these “unofficial” SEMSCO minutes delivered directly to your email account, surf to the Saratoga County EMS Council at www.saratogaems.org and click on the “NYS EMS News” tab (at the top of the page – or you can simply click here to be taken directly to the source: www.saratogaems.org/NYS_EMS_Council.htm). There, you’ll find a list server dedicated exclusively to circulating these notes. Past copies of NYS EMS News are parked there as well.