

1. EMS Week 2008 runs from May 18th through the 24th. Mark Thursday, May 22nd on your calendar for the 2008 EMS Memorial service to be held at Empire State Plaza in Albany. A ceremony honoring EMS providers who made the ultimate sacrifice will be held starting at 11 am at the EMS Memorial Tree of Life. This is an event that every EMS service should be represented at. Details will be out soon. Note that the event was previously scheduled for Wednesday, May 21st (and may still be listed as such on the Bureau website), but you read it here first: it's been moved to Thursday, May 22nd.
2. Training and Education's SCT (Specialty Care Transport) curriculum TAG presented a preliminary report. They propose a modular SCT curriculum, regionally based and formatted as a CME program (not an additional certification). Discussions are ongoing with the Bureau about possibly endorsing the curriculum as a DOH approved CME program. This would assign each course a number and allow students hospital access for practice of clinical skills. There is ongoing discussion about the most appropriate venue for sponsorship - which appears might be best parked with Paramedic level sponsors. Without funding (and there is none available), it's questionable whether Paramedic course sponsors would jump for joy to offer the SCT program. Additional work is ongoing.
3. Don't pinch yourself – it really wasn't a dream. The December 2007 mandate that, "all out of hospital adult non-arrest patients and all pediatric patients who require endotracheal intubation MUST have waveform capnography in place at time of intubation and continuously thereafter, effective January 1, 2009. REMACs have authority to extend this deadline on demonstrated hardship with an implementation plan and report to SEMAC." never really came out in any official format. Since the appearance of this motion in SEMAC and SEMSCO minutes (and in these entirely unofficial notes), inquiring minds have asked just where they could locate the policy on line. No can do. Yet. Stay tuned...the SEMAC chair may soon issue an official advisory.
4. In case you follow the cast of characters attending SEMAC and SEMSCO, you might notice that some mugs never seem to go away. Thank the Health Commissioner for a backlog of vetting new members. Some Regions and stakeholder organizations have had new appointments held up for more than 2 years awaiting confirmation. Director Wronski has an upcoming meeting with Executive staff at DOH in an attempt to iron this mess out. Meanwhile, a little bird tells me that a large state fire association may well have a little talk with a couple legislative leaders to help things along...
5. The Safety TAG gave an update on their work. Based on a survey conducted at Vital Signs 2007 (still under analysis), a couple pressing issues seem to stand out: increasing use of seatbelts in both the front and rear compartments of ambulances and eliminating use of lights and sirens when responding to known non-life threatening calls. The committee is also finalizing a reportable incident form they propose the Bureau use for collecting information on adverse events occurring in EMS agencies (currently required by DOH but lacking a formal process). They have also asked Medical Standards to elucidate precisely what patient care procedures requiring an EMS provider to be unbelted in the back of a moving ambulance are truly necessary. This oughta be interesting to follow...

6. Transition to PES (the new written exam testing vendor) has been a bit rockier than expected. January cards were delayed until late February; score reports to course sponsors were delayed even longer. Glitches are slowly being ironed out.
7. The Bureau reports frequent phone inquiries, many quite frantic, requesting extensions of certification. If you know someone who intends to try this stunt, you might ask them if they hear a ringing sound. That would be the clue phone and they might wanna get it. Here are the facts: (1) Enrolling in a refresher course does not extend your certification. (2) Taking the NYS written exam will only extend your certification when you sit for the test before your card expires – in those cases, certification is extended only until receipt of test results. (3) There are no provisions in regulation to extend EMS certification for providers who forgot their card was about to run out, already ran out, couldn't attend a refresher course, didn't complete the CME recert in time, or have a note from their mother attesting to their good character. Renewal is a personal responsibility – don't be a slacker!
8. Correspondence went out March 3rd to all specialty course sponsors outlining the revised CLI (Certified Lab Instructor) prescreening process. In case you missed it, the changes include permission for one retest of one failed skill without remediation and a requirement that all candidates be provided with skill sheets as part of the pre-screening registration process.
9. Get ready to brighten up your life with some high visibility safety apparel. Effective November 24, 2008, new federal (NHTSA-DOT) rules require all workers on the right of way of a federally funded highway to be outfitted with ANSI/ISEA class 2 or 3 brightly colored reflective vests/clothing. The Bureau will work with the Safety TAG to develop a guidance policy to assist agencies in compliance.
10. Amongst many pranks you're sure to see on April fools day, look out for draft 3.0 of the National Educational Standards for EMS. Surf to www.nemsed.org or if that site makes your head spin, try www.nemsed.org/draft_standards/index.cfm. The final document is due to the Feds (NHTSA) in October 2008. When draft instructional guidelines might become available remains unclear. Groups such as NYSVARA weighed in with comments on draft 2.0 (see: www.nysvara.org/news/2008/feb/08_02_01a.pdf). The National Education Standards group is considering producing a gap curriculum that would highlight differences between old and new curricula at each certification level as well as instructor resources for “bridging” these gaps. The psychic network is sticking with an earlier prediction that new EMS Courses and textbooks won't hit the streets 'til summer 2011. Maybe.
11. The Bureau released a new EPCR Policy Statement (#08-01). Have a peek for yourself at: www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/policy.htm.
12. On the subject of conferences, you might want to scope out the STEP conference April 10-12, 2008 at the Rochester Institute for Technology (RIT). Surf to <http://stepems.org/conference/index.htm> for the low down.
13. If you're a camping sorta person, EMStock 2008 may be the perfect EMS Conference for you. Check out www.emstock.com for this September 26-28 (2008) event.
14. Vital Signs will move to Buffalo this year. Mark October 2-5 on your calendar and keep your mouse on www.vitalsignsconference.com/ for details coming soon.

15. The Bureau mailed out Budget Templates to all the Regional Councils and Program Agencies due back in May. The Finance Committee will meet May 27th starting at 6 PM to review templates and make a crack at the 2009-2010 budget for EMS.
16. Last, but never least (and maybe never to leave these notes), is the age old topic of Spinal Immobilization. Yes, Virginia, it will soon appear on the Bureau website. Bureau field staff are currently being updated on the changes and once that process is complete, presto – the rubber will hit the road. Expect to see it before summer. Wait – was that a pig that just flew by?
17. Remaining SEMAC and SEMSCO meetings in 2008 are scheduled for May 28 and 29, September 10 and 11, and December 2 and 3, to be held at the Best Western Sovereign, 1228 Western Avenue in Albany, NY 12203. Yes indeed, some meetings do fall on Wednesday and Thursday instead of the traditional Tuesday-Wednesday format.

These notes respectfully prepared by Mike McEvoy, PhD, RN, CCRN, REMT-P who was the 2005 Chair of the State EMS Council where he represented the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs. Mike finished his six year tenure on the Council in December 2007 and hopes to begin serving as an alternate to the yet to be confirmed NYS AFC representative Mike Murphy, RN, EMT-P (no comment on how long that might take). McEvoy 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 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.