

1. These notes are dedicated to a friend and true American hero, Dr. John Paul Pryor, Trauma Program Director for the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, who was killed by an enemy mortar in Iraq on Christmas morning 2008. John was a colleague, friend, student, and teacher to many in the NYS EMS community and he will be deeply missed. Born and raised in New York State, John was attracted to medicine by volunteering at Clifton Park-Halfmoon Ambulance. He finished medical school and his surgical residency at the University of Buffalo. Like many New Yorkers, John was deeply influenced by the September 11th attack on America. He spent 2 days working on the pile in the City. Subsequently, in his own words, John “could not sit home and drink a beer knowing that there were young soldiers who needed a trauma surgeon in Iraq.” He responded by joining the US Army Reserve Medical Corps and, less than one month into his second tour as a combat trauma surgeon, Major John Pryor gave his own life in service to others. He leaves behind a wife, Dr. Carmella Calvo, three children ages 4, 8, and 10, his parents, and brother Richard, a local emergency physician. While saddened and heartbroken at the loss of such a young brother, colleague, and friend we are also proud. Proud of the upbringing New York is responsible for giving this loving father, dedicated husband, skilled surgeon, gentlemanly teacher, and true American hero. While incomprehensible to many, those of you reading these notes probably know exactly what John Pryor was doing in Iraq and why he went there. The life of John Pryor is a story that needs telling (www.drjohnpryor.com). His spirit of service calls each of us to examine how we live our own lives. Godspeed to you, beloved brother: may you rest in peace and may God watch over your loved ones.
2. Another tragic loss for NYS EMS occurred on January 31st, 2009 when Mark B. Davis, a 25 year old firefighter/EMT with Cape Vincent Fire Department was shot to death by a patient he was treating. Aside from the EMS providers murdered on September 11th, Mark is the only EMT murdered on duty in New York State. An EMT for just over 2 years, Mark was deeply loved by his EMS and fire families and will be greatly missed. A 6 mile long procession of ambulance and fire vehicles carried Mark to his final resting place. Not sure if this is official, but a memorial page to Mark is at www.ti-rescue.org/Mark%20Davis%20Memorial%20Page.htm. In our shock and grief, it is important to remember that there is no such thing as a “routine” EMS call.
3. Are the NYS written exams running on empty? Hope not. The Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) gave the Bureau a 3-month extension of the examination contract to allow testing through the end of March 2009. Bids returned in December from a reissued RFP were reviewed by the Bureau and a recommended vendor was forwarded to the money people. If all goes well, a contract should be awarded before the extension expires. If all goes well. Hold your breath and you’ll probably find yourself cyanotic.
4. Sick of these humorous jottings? Can’t bear to watch the webcasts of your SEMSCO and SEMAC meetings? Fret not; you now have the, um, luxury of full access to stenographic records of every State Council meeting by visiting the bureau website at www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/meetings_and_events.htm. One reading and you’ll probably come right back to this puppy.

5. Got atropine? If you do, it probably came from a DOH lot distributed last year and likely expires in April of this year (2009). Rumor has it that NYS has allocated funds for replacement of atropine pens. No word on when or how many. Distribution will most likely be funneled through County EMS Coordinators. Stay tuned...
6. Rochester is the site for Vital Signs 2009. Scope out www.vitalsignsconference.com for the low down on the October 15 – 18 EMS conference. It's the place to be seen.
7. Pat a colleague or hero on the back by submitting their name for a 2009 EMS Award. Presented annually at the Vital Signs Conference Banquet, nominations are now open. A listing of available awards and application forms can be found at www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/emsawards.htm. Don't delay, these things have deadlines.
8. Another date for your little black book, iPhone, calendar, or whatever: May 17 – 23, 2009 has been designated as EMS week. The NYS EMS Memorial Service at the Empire State Plaza in Albany has now been set for Wednesday, May 20th starting at 11:00 am.
9. Med Standards and SEMAC approved several protocols: Midstate, Suffolk, and Mountain Lakes. A couple little ditties of note: Cyanokit (www.cyanokit.com) has increasingly appeared in protocol revisions. During this month's protocol debates and chair throwing, it was noted that the initial round of cyanide poisoning protocols were essentially retooled mass casualty and haz-mat protocols. In practice, they are not turning out to be well suited for patients who succumb to smoke inhalation at fire scenes. As you probably know, cardiac arrests at structure fires create quite a cluster (of activity, that is). A suggestion was made that cyanide poisoning protocols be separated into pure poisoning/haz-mat and smoke inhalation. Furthermore, given the goings on at fire scenes, Cyanokit should be a standing order for profoundly hypotensive patients or those in arrest. Secondly, it was recommended to Suffolk County that they require all ALS ambulances to carry controlled substances. Medical Standards and SEMAC were taken aback that ability to stop a seizure or manage pain were not universally available in that region's EMS system.
10. New York may have to get on the short bus according to the recently issued Emergency Medicine Report Card by ACEP (the American College of Emergency Physicians). Despite an A minus in both Disaster Preparedness and Quality/Patient Safety, NY got a D minus in Access to Care, an F for our Medical Liability Environment, and a B minus for Injury Prevention. Visit www.emreportcard.org for the dirty details. Don't cry in your soup: New York's overall grade of C beat the national average of C minus and would have been a heck of lot better without that darned F in medical liability. Sorta reminds you of that time you failed phys ed – dragged your whole GPA down, huh?
11. In case you missed the blast email, the Commissioner of Health released the hotly debated SEMAC Advisory # 08-01, "Confirmation of ETT Required Capnography" with the recommended June 1, 2009 deadline. Scroll all the way down to the bottom of www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/policy.htm for your very own copy.
12. A brief presentation on Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (www.caresfoundation.org) was delivered at SEMAC – you may have a child in your response area with this condition. More to follow.

13. Hard financial times continue to affect EMS. State staff travel has been restricted and DOH employees have less use of state vehicles; printing budgets have been slashed; prior approvals are now required for many expenditures. Protocol manuals (and Student Reference Guides, for that matter) may no longer be printed. In anticipation, (and for your reading pleasure), the Bureau has posted a completely up to date PDF of the BLS Protocol Manual on their website. They plan to annually post a fully updated version. One EMS budget is apparently on the guillotine: Article 6 monies. These so called “not essential” state match dollars are doled out to Counties (usually through Public Health Departments) and commonly used to support EMS such as County Coordinator activities. While the match has been a measly 30% for many years, the entire line of some \$1.6 million no longer appears on the Governors proposed budget. A primary survey of the remaining EMS budget shows no immediate life threats, major hemorrhage or missing extremities. For now...
14. Its official: SWN is DRT (dead right there). The Office for Technology announced January 15th, 2009 that M/A-Com, the vendor awarded the contract to build the statewide wireless network (SWN), failed to deliver an acceptable public safety communications network and is in default of the contract. The State exercised its right to terminate the contract for cause and presented a demand notice for the payment of a \$50 Million Standby Letter of Credit to the State (SLOC). If you want a peek at the autopsy, www.oft.state.ny.us/oft/swnindex.htm is the place to go.
15. Several Training and Education Committee TAGs continue work on marrying the new EMS National Educational Standards to the existing NYS curriculums at each certification level. No bum rush needed here: the national material won't hit textbooks for quite some time. Just a reminder (in case you forgot): the EMT-CC level will remain in NYS despite it's non-existence in the National Scope of Practice.
16. If you've been hiding under a rock or simply didn't get the memo about a CDC Trauma Triage Protocol released in January 2009, click to www.cdc.gov/fieldtriage for every picayune detail. In addition to being to order free copies, posters, and pocket cards with the new Guidelines, you can also obtain 2 hours of CECBEMS approved continuing education credit (ALS or BLS) for completing a self study program. The cost? Nada, nothing, free. Such a deal.
17. The Safety TAG announced that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requested a New York State EMS Council representative for a Committee to Develop Standards for Ambulances presently in formation. Mike McEvoy (the clown who writes these notes) will serve as the NY representative.
18. The Bureau announced that a paper version of the DOH Reportable Incident Form (DOH-4425 if the Radar O'Reilly in you must know the form number) will soon roll off the presses. This will standardize required reports under 800.21(q) and (r) which mandate reports of injury, illness, or death of a provider or patient to the Bureau within 5 business days. A web version for reporting the same will not likely be out real soon given fiscal constraints.
19. Anxiously awaited Policy Statement #09-01 on Muni-CONs hit the bureau web site in January. Surf to: www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/policy.htm.
20. The Finance Committee plans a March mailing of budget templates to all regional councils and program agencies, due back on May 15th. A budget workshop will most likely be held prior the night before the June SEMSCO meetings.

21. Course Funding levels were reviewed by the Finance Committee using 6 years of historical course data merged with 5 years of financial data to produce a fairly intricate picture of how training monies are apportioned. Proposed rate adjustments were made based on a survey previously conducted of course sponsors coupled with input from meeting attendees (see – show up and your voice will be heard). The committee will work to examine the consequences of these changes to produce a balanced budget at their next meeting(s).
22. Like you wouldn't have guessed this one: the City of Utica has filed a Notice of Appeal on the Mid State REMSCO denial of CON for continuation of their municipal ambulance service. The appeal will go to an ALJ (Administrative Law Judge) and then to SEMSCO for a decision. North Area Volunteer Ambulance Corps (NAVAC) is also expected to file an appeal of a Central NY REMSCO decision denying them expansion of operating territory (which promises to be one of the first challenges to the recent demise of grandfathering). Stay tuned...
23. The debate over how to improve EMS safety in the air got a bit testy in February when the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) held several days of hearings on the issue in Washington, DC. This is hardly cut and dry; no silver bullet exists to stem increasing numbers of providers and patients dying in air medical crashes. For info on what happened at the hearings, visit www.nts.gov/events/Hearing-HEMS/default.htm or (if their website is not cooperating), try www.nts.gov and dig around from there.
24. Hard economic times are being blamed for shuttering two hospitals in Queens: St. Johns Hospital (Elmhurst) and Mary Immaculate (Jamaica) both closed their doors in February following the bankruptcy of their parent corporation, Caritas. Lee Memorial Hospital in Oswego County has also announced plans to close this summer. Dr. Art Cooper, Pediatric Trauma Surgeon and long time SEMSCO member told the Council that these closings may well represent the “tip of the iceberg” given the financial climate of health care in New York State. Brrrrrr.
25. In the category of kewl ideas, FDNY*EMS launched an on-line patient satisfaction survey at www.nyc.gov/fdnyemssurvey. The 11 question, anonymous on-line survey allows patients and families to provide feedback to the FDNY on service provided by EMS and private ambulances dispatched through the NYC 911 system. Neat QI tool!
26. Draft changes to 10 NYCRR 58-2 (NYS Health Regs pertaining to blood transfusion) are in the works. Proposed changes to allow EMT-CCs and Ps with specific training to monitor transfusions and hang blood or blood products during interfacility transports were distributed for comment to SEMAC, SEMSCO, STAC, and Emergency Departments. They will be published shortly in the New York State Register following the formal regulatory process for public comment. The State Council on Human Blood and Transfusion Services (Dracula Council, for short) is in the process of finalizing a training program for EMS along with standard order forms, a transfusion record, and administrative process to approve ambulance services to perform transfusions. At present, only an RN, physician, PA, or NP can transfuse or monitor transfusions in progress during interfacility transports.
27. The EMSC (EMS for Children) program reported on their survey of NY EMS agencies pediatric equipment and pediatric on-line and off-line medical direction. The data were a bit suspect as many services reported not having pediatric equipment

required under Part 800 and demographics sometimes seemed inconsistent with SEMSCO studies and PCR data. Improvements in pedi equipment and pedi medical direction are needed to meet federal EMSC targets. No word yet from EMSC on how they plan to facilitate these changes. Waaah.

28. Could there be a meeting without controversy? Heck no. Kinda like writing a sports column without once using the word ‘grueling’ – it can’t be done. Here’s the newest debacle destined to tie up future meetings: medical control. Seems like there’s a disconnect between Public Health Law and DOH Policy Statement when it comes to who can actually provide on line medical control (OLMC). Policy statement requires a physician; law allows others working under the direction of a physician to provide OLMC. What’s it gonna be? No clue right now except there appears to be conflicting requirements and inconsistencies with how OLMC is delivered across New York State. Medical Standards members will probably bring their boxing gloves to the next meeting. SEMAC members will bring QuikClot®.
29. Still a few hanging chads: No response yet from STAC on eliminating extremity elevation and pressure points from external hemorrhage control protocols. This inquiry after a National Registry recommendation for application of a tourniquet when direct pressure fails to control external extremity bleeding. Medical Standards still has a grid of skills and procedures done in the back of a moving ambulance by unbelted EMS providers and is categorizing what should, should not, and what could be done with caution. Drafting a change in Part 800 regulations making defibrillation capability required equipment for ambulances is still out there and will pop up at some future date.
30. 2009 SEMAC and SEMSCO meetings are scheduled for June 9 and 10, September 2 and 3, and December 1 and 2, to be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, State & Lodge Streets, Albany, NY 12207. No word yet on whether members will need to bring their own coffee and brown bag lunch. Note the September meetings had previously been reported as scheduled for Sept. 8 and 9. Fail. They are really scheduled for the 2nd and 3rd.

These notes respectfully prepared by Mike McEvoy who represents the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs on SEMSCO. Contact Mike at McEvoyMike@aol.com or visit www.mikemcevoy.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.