

1. Clouds formed and it looked like rain at the first State EMS meetings of the year. This from news of dramatic restructuring proposed in the Governor's 2012-2013 budget. The New York State EMS Coalition, an unlikely partnership of four EMS associations, the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSAFC), the New York State Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association (NYSVARA), the United New York Ambulance Network (UNYAN), and the Fireman's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) held a widely advertised Town Hall meeting the evening prior SEMSCO to solicit input and commentary from EMS stakeholders across NY. The atmosphere was tense, and many more questions than answers were recorded. Comments were vetted by the Coalition and have served, along with feedback from Coalition member organizations and Regional Councils, to provide significant and substantial input to the Governor, the Legislature, and DOH. A separate web page pertinent to continued budget and Article 30 (Public Health Law) change discussions is at www.saratogaems.org/Gov_Budget.htm. Updates have and will continue to be pushed out on this list as well. We know you care.
2. May 23rd, 2012 is the date for the EMS Memorial Dedication at the Empire State Plaza, beginning at 11:00 am. While no names will be added for 2011, please consider attending to honor our fallen EMS brothers and sisters. Registration for ambulance and other emergency vehicles is coordinated through Donna Johnson (call 518-402-0996, ext. 3).
3. Vital Signs 2012 returns to Syracuse this October 18 – 21; www.vitalsignsconference.com is the link for info and, for the first time, on-line registration. Yippee! If you're on a quest for continuing education hours, check out the EMS sessions at Fire 2012; www.nysfirechiefs.com, this June 14 – 16 at the Turning Stone Casino in Verona and Pulse Check 2012; www.nysvara.org, October 11 – 13 in Suffern (the week before Vital Signs). You don't have to leave NY to find great CE. Nosiree.
4. Medication shortages topped the list of items discussed at Medical Standards and SEMAC. A 3 physician TAG will review shortages and evaluate the state formulary (list of approved EMS meds) for recommendations of additions and changes to facilitate substitutions when critical medications are in short supply or simply not available. The seriousness of the situation will also be communicated to the Health Commissioner.
5. About an hour into SEMAC, a brouhaha erupted resulting in abrupt adjournment of the meeting. It was discovered that the 14 docs present did not constitute the required quorum of 16 needed to do business. After several consults with DOH legal affairs, it was subsequently determined there was a quorum (when calculated based on vetted members). Members were lassoed up and the meeting restarted. Close call, but not the first time attendance was thin. SEMAC also bid adieu to outgoing Chair Dr. Mark Henry and welcome to incoming Chair Dr. Tim Haydock (Westchester REMAC/REMSCO). A very well attended reception was held following days end to honor the good Dr. Henry for his many years of outstanding service to NYS EMS.
6. The OLMC (On Line Medical Control) TAG was disbanded. Their stellar work led to the issuance of Policy Statement # 11-05, ending their original charge.
7. Droperidol was added to the state formulary for nausea and vomiting – one example of a needed alternative – ondansetron (Zofran[®]) is in extremely short supply presently.
8. Ketamine may get an expanded role in sedation protocols. SEMAC approved a request to BNE (Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement) to allow use of ketamine on standing orders. Currently, it can only be given with OLMC (see item 6 if you missed the definition).

9. An interfacility transport (IFT) policy statement draft was approved and forwarded to the Bureau to morph into an official DOH policy statement. The document provides guidelines for hospitals, EMS agencies, medical protocols, training, and physician oversight for IFT at all levels. About time.
10. Medical Standards and SEMAC approved three Regional Protocol sets: NYC, Westchester, and Monroe Livingston. No fisticuffs and very little argument evolved besides the usual nitpicking on language, age ranges, and medication doses.
11. On the topic of protocols, did you know that regional protocols must be submitted to SEMAC for approval? And when they come in, they're compared to a statewide minimum standard protocol template? Well Batman, they are; and the last time the statewide standards were updated was 1999. Until now. This January 2012, a revised statewide ALS standard protocol set for adults was approved. The new standard set is essentially a consolidation of all currently existing regional protocols. Shazam. And if you're a child reading these notes, fear not: pediatric protocols are next up on the agenda.
12. REMO and Western NY have finished approved trials of prehospital therapeutic hypothermia (TH) for ROSC (Return of Spontaneous Circulation) post cardiac arrest patients. The data appear to show benefit. Med Standards and SEMAC voted to allow the chilling to continue where agencies are able to provide it and promised to support TH in other regions. For informational purposes, the FDNY gave some cursory data of their phased TH study which is now using intra-arrest cooling (iced IV fluids). Stay tuned for a full report on their icy outcomes.
13. Here's an interesting ditty: Finger Lakes proposed, and was approved for a BLS CPAP demonstration project. The question, "can CPAP be safely moved to the BLS level?" will be tested in the demonstration project. Stay tuned.
14. Did you get your flu shot? SEMAC will ask the Health Commissioner if Paramedics should be included in the list of approved vaccinators. Pharmacists were recently added to the mix, as you can tell from the sexy LED signs flashing outside your local drug stores. Maybe medics will be next. Hey, if nothing else, at least this would provide a means to increase vaccine compliance among EMS providers. And perhaps EMS should be vaccinating patients, families, and community members. Who'd of thunk it?
15. Dr. Art Cooper presented a NYC Pediatric Disaster Response Plan. Let's hope it's never needed.
16. FDNY reports 11 instances in the previous 5 years where an ALS unit arrived on scene to find not one, but two, patients requiring intubation. The FDNY requested SEMAC approve a modification of their requirement for monitoring all intubated patients with continuous waveform capnography in these (very rare, but serious) instances. FDNY proposed monitoring the second patient with a calorimetric end-tidal device. After a brief debate, SEMAC refused to back down. Request denied.
17. A slew of new policy statements have been posted to the Bureau web site: Fentanyl (11-04), Medical Control (11-05), Clarification of Operating Territory (11-06), CPR Testing (11-07), Epi-Pen (11-08), Instructor Certification (11-09), Glucometers and albuterol nebs (12-01), PCR's (12-02), ePCR's (12-03), Patient Care in a Moving Ambulance (12-04). Get your very own copies gratis at: www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/ems/policy/policy.htm.
18. Speaking of policies, the 2006 CDC Guidelines for Field Triage of Injured Patients have been revised and were recently posted to the CDC site at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6101a1.htm?s_cid=rr6101a1_e. The CDC

- announced that, like the CPR Guidelines, updates will occur every 5 years to reflect changing science in EMS and Trauma care. What a unique idea.
19. A new CLI course curriculum was approved after several trial runs in Western NY. The revised curriculum eliminates the prescreening requirement for practical skills and instead incorporates much more extensive teaching and testing into the class itself. Watch for a roll out later this year.
 20. Can't find a CIC course? Well, your opportunities have just expanded. Training and Ed approved the NAEMSE (National Association of EMS Educators – www.naemse.org) Level 1 Instructor Course as an acceptable alternative to the NYS EMS CIC course WITH the addition of a 3 hour DOH session to review NYS paperwork and course administrative procedures. Maybe this will help alleviate the shortage of CICs.
 21. Educator references added to the Bureau web site include an AEMT Rapid Recert Manual and a CIC Quick Reference Guide. Surf to the Course Sponsor's page on the Bureau site: www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/ems/education/course_sponsors/index.htm.
 22. Violation notices were issued to 9 course sponsors for late submission of student applications (too late for students to take their planned NYS written exams). As fines have not ameliorated this chronic problem, the newest tactic being considered is denying recertification to the delinquent CICs when they come up for renewal. Yikes!
 23. CIU (Certified Instructor Update) courses will now include DOH updates and new regional equipment and protocol updates. Hopefully, that will keep instructors and their students more in the loop on state and regional changes. Hopefully...
 24. If you're sleuthing about the Bureau web site, you may have noticed that the HTML (web) version of the Pilot Recertification Manual is vastly different than the PDF version. Hello! The Bureau has pulled them and will repost correct matching versions in a couple months.
 25. Transition to the new national EMS Educational Standards is underway. A series of workgroups have been established at each certification level to develop objectives to accompany the national instructional guidelines. Written exams will need to be modified, textbooks referenced to exam questions, funding policies reviewed, and instructor updates prepared. It also appears that transition courses are warranted at each level for recertification (both Con ED recert and conventional refresher courses). More to come. Rest relatively assured that the earliest any new exams would appear will be May 2013.
 26. Remember Michael Tayler? He left DOH for SEMO and has now returned to DOH. Michael will work in Operations. Welcome back!
 27. You think you have problems with the State? DOH just discovered that their keypunch contract to enter student applications for all EMS courses was recently canceled. No warning, just kaput. So you can imagine a little scrambling is in progress. Apparently, digitally prepared student applications can be successfully read by DOH scanner software. To that end, the Bureau is requesting that course sponsors have students to fill out the PDF version of the Student Application on-line before they come to class, print the form out, and bring it to the first session of class. Eventually, a totally on-line system will be available, but for now, the student signature is required. Course sponsors will continue to package the computer completed student application forms and snail mail to DOH.
 28. Speaking of DOH, their Central Office is moving from lovely downtown Troy to the Corning Tower in Albany. To these much smaller digs, they will cart some 60 file cabinets of student apps and a plethora of other "stuff". When can you visit? Sometime this year, the moving vans will arrive. We'll suggest appropriate housewarming gifts.

29. Likely invisible to all but a few, a recent reorganization in DOH has changed reporting lines in some offices. Previously, regional (or field) office staff reported to OHSM (the Office of Health Systems Management, or the regional office director) rather than to DOH Central Office. Under the reorganization, OHSM was centralized and all DOH regional staff report to Central office. Seems minor, but there have been regional office directors who know little or nothing of EMS and had lots of potential to mess things up. No longer.
30. Rain, snow, sleet, and anthrax supposedly can't stop the US Postal Service from making their appointed rounds. Apparently, EMT exams can mess up the works. Last November, one box of student exams went AWOL between the test site and testing contractor. In addition to the highly peeved students who needed to retest, the Bureau has to consider the entire exam compromised and pull it from future circulation. This at a cost of \$10,000. Sadly, this is not the first time USPS has lost EMS exams. A switch to UPS or FedEx is being considered.
31. Version 6 PCR, which will actually be an ePCR, is in production – 4 pages long and NEMSIS compliant. For agencies without an ePCR (the “e” means electronic, like computer based, in case you're scratching your head), there will be an on-line form fillable version. No one can say exactly how that will work. Currently, only one vendor (EMS Charts) has been successfully uploading ePCR data to Image Trend, the Bureau's PCR contractor. Zoll is expected to be uploading data by February 2012. The archaic process of keypunching data from handwritten PCRs is now caught up through 2007. Yup, you read that right: 2007. Nothing like timely data to help manage a statewide EMS system. Some trivia: one-third of services currently submit PCRs electronically, accounting for two-thirds of all EMS runs in NYS. The writing is on the wall: time to think about switching to ePCRs before the earth runs out of pens and paper.
32. Another news flash: REMACs have authority to restrict not only ALS but also BLS providers from practice. This from a complex case that wound its way through the maze of regional and state regulatory folks. Watch for a policy from the QI committee.
33. Elections held last November were apparently in violation of SEMSCO bylaws, given the impromptu switcharoo in the slate. Former but actually current Chair Tim Czapranski opened the SEMSCO meeting, led a revote, and then turned the Chair over to Rich Brandt (Hudson Mohawk REMSCO), 1st Vice Chair Mark Zeek (Adirondack-Appalachian REMSCO) and 2nd Vice Chair Daniel Blum (Westchester REMSCO). In the end, it was as in the beginning, if you followed that. If not, fuhgeddaboutit.
34. So the December 31st deadline for BLS-FR agencies to update eligibility for their DOH issued agency codes was extended a couple weeks into January 2012. In the end, 49 of 700 agencies failed to respond and had their agency codes revoked. Others submitted partial documentation and are in various stages of completion. County Coordinators and Regional Councils are copied on correspondence renewing or revoking agency codes. Of note, especially for course sponsors wishing to verify agency status, the Bureau web site list of agencies is not up to date. Questions should be referred to Bureau Operations staff.
35. A fitting soiree was held following SEMSCO for Karen Meggenhofen who retired as Associate Director of Education and Certification at the end of December 2011. I say fitting because it was held a fine local brew pub only steps away from DOH offices. Andy Johnson has been named to replace her. Consult anyone who attended the party for a list of Andy's favorite brews.

36. The Safety TAG reported results of their survey conducted at Vital Signs last October. Of note, compared to a similar study done in 2007, RLS (Red Lights and Siren) use is down, 83% of providers routinely wear hi visibility vests when working on roadways, and only 42% use required shoulder harnesses on stretcher patients.
37. Check the bulletin board at your service. February 1 through April 30 is when you should find posted the annual PESH required OSHA Form 300A (Summary Report of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses). Nowhere to be found? Hmmmm.
38. The Safety Committee noted that the Reportable Incident form #4461 on the Bureau web site is not very user friendly and while mandated under 800.21, the unfriendly nature of the form may be discouraging submissions. Changes are in the works. Eventually, it may be possible to submit entirely on-line. Hallelujah.
39. Keep an eye out for the NAEMT Safety Course now being offered nationwide. This is an excellent program and is highly acclaimed by those who have attended. Check out www.naemt.org/education/EMSSafety/EMSSafety.aspx.
40. The Mutual Aid TAG report endured some minor tweaks and revisions and is currently on hold pending the outcome of the PHL changes recommended in the Governor's proposed budget. Stay tuned.
41. Some very preliminary Part 800 revisions were distributed to SEMSCO for comment. They are so preliminary that it will take some time and probably two or three more iterations before they're out for public comment. Eventually, you'll get a shot at 'em.
42. The deadline to submit nominations for annual EMS awards is June 1. They need to go to your Regional Council first and then to DOH for review by the PIER Committee. "Hey, wait a minute!" you might be thinking, "I thought it was March 31." Yuppers, it was. But something went afoul with plans to pass awards along to NAEMT and the AAA (American Ambulance Association); now we're going to keep doing them right here at home. So take this chance to recognize a peer or colleague for their excellence. See www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/ems/emsawards.htm and get your submissions in.
43. Old news, but no news on the City of Utica appeal – it's still in court. A whole lot of other activities with Municipal CON filings, appeals, and other stuff are in the works but, to be quite blunt, they interest only those involved so we won't drag the dirty laundry into this highfalutin statewide list.
44. Last, but not to be left out in cyberspace: the Safety Committee work on what should and shouldn't be done in the back of a moving ambulance. The end results of this work can be seen in Policy Statement #12-04, recently issued by the Bureau – see item 17 above.
45. SEMAC and SEMSCO will meet again on May 15 – 16, 2012 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 235 Hoosick Street in Troy, NY 12180. Depending on how the Governor's Budget bills affect Article 30, future meetings may have a significantly different format. None are scheduled beyond May. Check the Bureau meeting page beforehand for the May agenda www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/meetings_and_events.htm.

These notes respectfully prepared by Mike McEvoy who previously represented the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs on SEMSCO before (finally) being replaced by Mike Murphy. 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, go to <http://eepurl.com/iaXHY> to put yourself on the list (or adjust your delivery settings) or go to the Saratoga County EMS Council NYS EMS News page at www.saratogaems.org/NYS_EMS_Council.htm. There, you'll find a link to the list server dedicated exclusively to circulating these notes and all the past copies of NYS EMS News parked at the bottom of the page. Feel free to download any notes you missed.