

1. SEMSCO and Committees met February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in Troy. These notes will include actions from last December's meetings as well; they were nothing short of adventurous. Video of the February meetings can be found at [www.health.ny.gov/events/webcasts/archive/](http://www.health.ny.gov/events/webcasts/archive/) but, likely due to commotion, an executive session, and other kerfuffle's, all you'll see in the December video archive is a television test pattern.
2. Mark your calendars for two upcoming events:
  - NYS EMS Memorial Service – Wednesday, May 22 at 11am in the Empire State Plaza. Eight names of fallen EMS providers will unfortunately be added this year. See [www.health.ny.gov/professionals/ems/docs/2024\\_ems\\_memorial\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/ems/docs/2024_ems_memorial_flyer.pdf).
  - Vital Signs 2024 will be held in Rochester this year, October 16-20. New to the conference this year will be a special ops/rescue track. Rochester also provides the opportunity to visit a [Wegmans](#) supermarket for those folks deprived of the luxury.
3. As numbers of CCT's continue to dwindle across the State, enrollees in the CCT to Paramedic Bridge courses have tapered off. Declining enrollment dropped class offerings from twice to once a year. While announced seven years ago, a sunset plan with actual dates was proposed by Training & Ed in December and, following solicitation of input from regions and the public, approved by SEMSCO in February. Discussion on this was extensive and at times quite passionate. Ultimately, this is the approved plan:
  - The final EMT-CC to Paramedic Bridge course will commence in April 2026.
  - ALS Collaborative Protocols will remove the EMT-CC level of care on July 1, 2027.
  - All EMT-CCs certifications will expire at 00:01 on July 1, 2027, and be automatically converted to AEMT certifications for the duration of their certification cycle.
  - All ePCR platforms shall reflect previously certified EMT-CCs by their new level at 00:01 on July 1, 2027.

Allegany County, which uses a high percentage of EMT-CCs recently reached out to Northwell and crafted arrangements for their CCs to do a remote bridge course using local instructors, funded by their County. Great solution!
4. [Revisions to the EMS Education Regs](#) were published in December for a 60-day public comment period. Word on the streets is that comments received were not substantive, so a second 60-day comment period will not be required. A final version of the reg changes might make it to SEMSCO for approval in May. Yay: 4-year cards! Next up for public comment will be changes to Part 800 equipment requirements and blood regulations.
5. MOLST revisions were finally released along with a training program available on the [Vital Signs Academy](#). The course is an impressive, case-based learning module.
6. Training & Education has several projects underway including a guide to alternate funding sources for students in EMS programs, a revision to eligible courses that would fulfil the HazMat awareness requirement, development of an FTO program, standards for critical care transports, and a workgroup looking at sunseting the paramedic PSE to coincide with the National Registry's elimination of the Paramedic and AEMT PSE's. More to follow on all of these. Two final actions allow use of calculators on the State written (i.e., computerized) exams and paramedic programs to use a portfolio in lieu of a final practical skills exam (PSE). The calculators have been implemented – one will appear on screen during exams. The PSE thing is more complicated so don't hold your breath waiting.

7. Mayhem at the December SEMSCO meetings evolved mostly around CON actions involving Scarsdale, Ossining, and the Town/Village of Alden. Between the several hundred pages of records released only days prior to the meetings and confusion about what constituted conflict of interest or the process for recusal, a perfect storm of messiness resulted, requiring repeated consultations with DLA (Division of Legal Affairs). Not a heck of a lot was resolved in December, but it concluded more peacefully during the February meetings. Adding to the holiday tension, SEMAC was unable to raise a quorum in December.
8. SEMSCO was charged last year with developing performance standards to promote positive patient outcomes, safety, provider retention, and EMS sustainability. Quality Metrics, Safety, Training & Ed, and Systems Committees all submitted dream lists of proposed performance standards last fall. A workgroup chaired by former SEMSCO chair Mark Philippy convened 49 volunteers from an open call to any New Yorker interested worked over the winter to whittle the proposed performance standards down to four that were turned over to SEMSCO in February. From these, SEMSCO selected two that will move forward later this year to be crafted into regulation:
  - Systems Performance Standard: EMS agencies and services will report monthly to the Bureau and their REMSCO on planned and actual staffing. They will also report total requests for service broken out by home territory calls, mutual aid provided and received, and crew sharing.
  - Quality Metrics Performance Standard: EMS agencies and services will select no less than 3 SEMSCO approved quality measures and report the findings of these measures to the Bureau and their REMSCO.

SEMSCO was not slighting other proposed measures but decided to select those most often requested by local and county governments to assist with supporting their EMS services.

9. A hot topic at the February meetings was the Governor's Budget Proposal and its (possible) effects on EMS. Director Greenberg and Deputy Director Dziura did a traveling dog and pony show summarizing the proposed changes. Rather than describe them here, I'll provide links to their two summary sheets:
  - Budget: <https://saratogaems.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FY24-25-Article-VII-HMH-Part-V-Summary-v2-24.02.01.pdf>
  - Task Force: <https://saratogaems.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/NYS-EMS-Task-Force-Infographic-v2-24.02.01.pdf>

It's interesting that EMS, for the past several years, has received significant moolah from the State. This likely reflects our increasing challenges (see item # 19 below). Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, Chair of the Committee on Health, attended the February meetings to see SEMSCO in action. She commented that EMS needs to get their house in order and speak with one voice when interacting with legislators. Last year's proposed changes in the Governor's Budget were opposed by some and supported by others, leaving elected officials confused about what is best for NYS EMS. Point well taken.

10. OMH presented their rollout plans for Crisis Stabilization Centers (CSCs) across NYS. They plan to open a couple dozen of these, some of which will be intensive and some supportive CSCs. All of these will need linkage to local EMS and may offer an alternative transport destination for appropriate patients, many of whom would be better served at a CSC than an

ED. The Innovations and Research Committee is actively working with OMH to develop model pathways that could be implemented regionally to better serve our patients. More to come...

11. Systems, in addition to their very messy CON actions, reported that their survey seeking input from across the State on definition of need had only 25 responses. They are nonetheless moving forward with revisions to Policy # 06-06 (CONs). They also reported on proceedings of the Daniel's Law Task Force established by the legislature to recommend ways that persons with mental health crises could be better served in NY. The SEMSCO rep on the Task Force expressed concern that the Task Force seemed to be leaning towards eliminating law enforcement responses to mental health emergencies. As SEMSCO felt this varies tremendously across the State and many EMS agencies depend on law enforcement for their safety during behavioral emergency responses, a letter outlining these concerns along with legislative changes that would better facilitate responses to mental health calls was sent by the SEMSCO Chair to the Daniel's Law Task Force.
12. The Safety Committee has several irons in the fire including revisions to Policy Statement # 00-13 (Operation of Emergency Vehicles), a provider resiliency project, de-escalation tactics training, hazardous response plan development, and Part 800 equipment changes. More to come on all of these...
13. The [NEMSQA](#) multi-year project to reduce lights and siren use produced a comprehensive change package incorporating lessons learned from the 50 participating agencies. The package can be downloaded at [Improving Safety in EMS: Reducing the Use of Lights and Siren](#).
14. Quality Metrics reported 80 agencies participating in the EMT i-gel demonstration project with 164 insertions as of February. Data is problematic with a variety of issues causing insertions not to appear in the State data bridge thereby eluding effective tracking. The complexity of these data issues sorta screams for a working group to delve into fixing the problem. My psychic hotline suggests that Medical Standards may be taking up the cause.
15. The Innovations and Research Committee also has a bunch of things up their sleeves:
  - Behavioral Health Workgroup: creating a roadmap to facilitate EMS interface with Crisis Stabilization Centers.
  - MIH/CP Workgroup: will make recommendations on implementation of new community paramedicine regulations.
  - Essential Services Workgroup: has developed a guidance document for Counties and local governments for maintaining EMS as an essential service.
16. The search for part-time State EMS Medical Director had no applicants. It's now back with Civil Service for posting as a full-time position. Fingers crossed.
17. The Rural Ambulance Task Force was expected to release their report on April 1<sup>st</sup>. As that has now passed, it may have been a cruel April Fool's joke.
18. SEMSCO/SEMAC recognized Lew Marshall for his 25+ years of service, having chaired the Medical Standards Committee for much of that time. Past SEMSCO Chair Mark Philippy was also recognized on his departure from SEMSCO after many years of service.

19. The State Comptroller on March 28<sup>th</sup> released a report calling for more involvement in addressing local EMS challenges. It's an interesting read: [www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/ems-report-2024.pdf](http://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/ems-report-2024.pdf)
20. If you've seen other notes from the December and February meetings, you'll notice that I left out a fair number of discussions. This was a purposeful attempt not to overwhelm you with what I consider to be relatively extraneous information. No offense to Committees and work groups I excluded herein.
21. Meetings will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Troy on May 7-8, Saratoga Springs at the Embassy Suites September 17-18, and back at the Hilton Garden Inn in Troy December 3-4. Dates for 2025 are currently being fleshed out. On Tuesday eve of May 7<sup>th</sup> starting at 6pm, the movie [Honorable But Broken: EMS In Crisis](#) will be shown for any interested meeting attendee.

These notes respectfully prepared by Mike McEvoy who serves on SEMSCO representing the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs. Contact Mike McEvoy at [mmcevoy@saratogacountyny.gov](mailto:mmcevoy@saratogacountyny.gov). 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). Also, past copies of NYS EMS News are parked at the bottom of the EMS News page at [www.saratogaems.org](http://www.saratogaems.org). Feel free to download any notes you missed. Tell your friends. The more, the merrier.