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# DSHS looking for partners as hurricane season approaches

**FROM THIS SIDE**

Hurricane season begins in just three short months and we're already gearing up for the annual state hurricane evacuation and sheltering exercise. Texas got a break with a relatively quiet season in the Atlantic. While we can always hope no major hurricanes will churn toward the Texas coast this year, preparations for a worse-case scenario continue unabated. DSHS is looking for additional licensed EMS providers, both ground and air, to sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to provide mutual aid in pending or actual disasters after ensuring their own areas are adequately covered. The advantage of the agreement is that it ensures providers will receive prompt reimbursement from DSHS of a predetermined amount, as outlined in the MOA, for costs incurred when dispatched by DSHS to respond to disaster situations. We currently have 71 firms that will provide 90 ground and air ambulances. If you have any questions about the MOA, please contact Maxie Bishop, state EMS director, at (512) 834-6737.



**Steve Janda**  
**Office of EMS/Trauma**  
**Systems Coordination**

The Lege is in town, and we're about midway through this session. The last day to file most bills is March 9. We've already done analyses on a number of proposed bills and provided information on others. If you want to keep up with the Legislature or a particular bill, turn to page 8 for instructions on how to access the information via the web.

Speaking of computers, we unveiled a new regulatory licensing computer system in late February. EMS/trauma systems staff has been working with system designers for the past year to modify the system to suit our needs and recently went through several months of testing and training. However, as with any new system, there may be challenges in the beginning, which could lead to delays. That said, we commit to working as quickly as we can with the contractor when we identify glitches.

Maxie Bishop recently attended a meeting in Austin that may signal the beginning of a change in the way cardiac patients are transported to hospitals in some regions of the state. Research has shown that direct coronary intervention is the preferred method for perfusion for ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI). As you know, not all hospitals have the capability to perform this procedure. The American Heart Association and the American Association of Cardiology brought together medical professionals from the various state regional emergency healthcare systems to discuss a comprehensive statewide approach to STEMI patients, much like what is being developed for stroke patients and has been developed for trauma patients. We will keep you updated on the progress of this effort.

We just finished our February GETAC meetings. The next series of meetings will be May 23-25 in Austin at the Hilton Austin Airport. As usual, we have reserved as many rooms as possible for attendees but can only get a limited number of rooms at the state rate of \$85. To reserve a room, call (512) 385-6767 and ask for rooms under the name of GETAC. Watch our website for announcements of task force meetings, which sometimes take place between GETAC meetings. We post the information on our website and to our listservs as soon as we have confirmation from the meeting chairs.

On behalf of all of us at DSHS EMS/Trauma Systems, thanks for all you do for the patients of this state...

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Janda'.