

Texas EMS Trauma News

Winter 2021

Volume 8 No. 1

Office of EMS Trauma Systems

Texas Department of State Health Services
dshs.texas.gov/emstraumasystems/



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From This Side	1
COVID Vaccine Update	2
GETAC Committee Selections	4
Fingerprinting Update	5
5 Things You Should Know	6
OEMSTS Updates	7
News and Links	11

"These unprecedented times may have put our system and way of life under immense pressure, but they will not crush our determination or spirit to provide the best care possible to those in need."

From This Side

By Joe Schmider,
State EMS Director



A lot can happen over the course of a year, and 2020 has proven to be no different. What started as a two-week halt in normalcy soon became a six-month change to the way in which the world would approach life, now known as the "new normal." As we reflect on the past twelve months, we will be reminded of the many questions, challenges, and unknowns that were part of everyday language during the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Much has been learned over the past year as Emergency Services personnel worked feverishly to take on the challenges of meeting the urgent health care needs dictated by this pandemic. The day-to-day business of EMS was drastically altered during this time. While our communities were told to remain home, healthcare and EMS workers were revamping procedures to keep personnel and patients safe and tracking down and reallocating resources to areas of need, all while facing their own fears and concerns.

These unprecedented times may have put our system and way of life under immense pressure, but they will not crush our determination or spirit to provide the best care possible to those in need. While Covid-19 has not gone away, there is cause for hope and celebration with the new opportunities that lie ahead. May the New Year bring health and wellness as we continue to move forward and gain ground on the challenges brought forth in 2020.



COVID-19 Vaccine Information

Texas has begun vaccine distribution

Texas continues to receive doses of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines and is distributing statewide to hospitals, pharmacies, local health departments, freestanding ERs, and other clinics. DSHS has a web page dedicated to the latest information on vaccine distribution, alerts, expert guidance and resources.

[GET THE LATEST INFORMATION >](#)

What's happening now

Texas Announces COVID-19 Vaccination Hub Providers for Week of Jan. 11 News Release Jan. 10, 2021

The Texas Department of State Health Services has instructed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ship first doses of COVID-19 vaccine to 234 providers this week. That includes 28 hub providers that will focus on large community vaccination efforts as Texas vaccinates health care workers, people 65 and older and those with medical conditions that put them at greater risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

The hub providers, linked below, will receive 158,825 doses of vaccine based on the number of people each provider estimated it could serve in a week. An additional 38,300 doses will go to other providers to continue vaccination in communities statewide. Providers in 104 counties will receive vaccine shipments this week, bringing the cumulative number of counties to 222. Vaccine has been administered to residents of all 254 Texas counties.

In addition to the vaccine outlined above, Texas will reserve 121,875 doses for the federal [Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care program](#). This completes the first doses the state has been required to set aside, freeing up that much more vaccine to be shipped to providers each week in the future. Texas providers will also receive about 500,000 doses intended as the second dose for people first vaccinated a few weeks ago.

Vaccine remains limited based on the capacity of the manufacturers to produce it, so it will take time for Texas to receive enough vaccine for all the people in the priority populations who want to be vaccinated. The supply is expected to increase in the coming months, and additional vaccines are in clinical trials and may be authorized by the Food and Drug Administration.

People can find more information on COVID-19 vaccine at dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine.aspx.

Helpful links:

- [Vaccination hub providers with contact information](#) – Contact a provider in your area to learn about vaccination. Some may already have a waiting list for appointments.
- [DSHS/TDEM map of vaccine providers](#)
- [Full list of vaccine allocations for the week of Jan. 11](#)

What's happening now cont.

DSHS Stresses Urgency for COVID-19 Vaccination

DSHS directs all entities that have received COVID-19 vaccines to vaccinate all willing Phase 1A, then Phase 1B, individuals now. Much of Texas' vaccine allotment has yet to be administered.

Entities are reminded to:

- Administer your entire allocation of vaccines, more vaccines are coming.
- Report administered doses to the state's immunization registry, ImmTrac2.
- After vaccinating as many willing members of Phase 1A as possible, quickly then provide vaccines to Phase 1B persons.

Smaller health care facilities and medical offices can reach out to large vaccine providers to arrange for vaccination of their employees and Phase 1B populations. Visit the [Texas COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Locations](#) map to see which providers have received vaccine.

[See additional guidance from DSHS and the Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel.](#)

[PROVIDER INFORMATION >](#)

Vaccine Data

The dashboard has information about vaccine distribution and administered doses in Texas. [Texas COVID-19 Vaccine Data by County](#) (XLS) (updated daily)

[DASHBOARD >](#)

Distribution Stage

[Phase 1A](#) groups, including front-line healthcare workers and residents of a long-term care facility became eligible to receive the vaccine on December 14.

[Phase 1B](#), groups are also eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine, depending on availability and the vaccine provider. Vaccine supply remains limited, but more vaccine will be delivered to providers each week.

If you are in Phase 1A or 1B, you can view the [Texas COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Locations map](#) to see if and where you might be able to get a vaccine today.

Remember, your ability to get a vaccine today or this week will depend on vaccine availability at your provider's office, clinic, or facility. Please call ahead to your provider.

Alert

The CDC has issued [an updated guidance on allergic reactions associated with COVID-19 vaccines](#). Please visit the [CDC Clinical Considerations webpage](#) for all the latest updates.

GETAC Committee Member Selections

The Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council mission is to continuously enhance our EMS and Trauma system for our stakeholders in Texas as we meet the emergency health care needs of all Texans. This mission is met by the GETAC council members' continued support through the endless work of dedicated professionals serving on various committees. I would like to express my appreciation to the outgoing committee members for their commitment of time and service to fulfill our vision of a unified, comprehensive, and effective Emergency Healthcare System. I also welcome new committee members to the Team as together we progress the Texas EMS Trauma System forward in these challenging times.

Dr. Alan Tyroch
GETAC Committee Chair

Air Medical and Specialty Care Transport Committee

Outgoing:

Charles Benham, MD, Justin Boyd,
Brandon Leasure

Reappointed:

Martha Headrick, Stacy Putman,
Jim Speier, Jr.

Newly Appointed:

Brandon Joines, Melissa Kendrick,
Hashim Zaidi, MD

Emergency Medical Services Committee

Outgoing:

Nathan Jung, Bryan Taylor,
Justin Wells

Reappointed:

Robert Fox

Newly Appointed:

John Baker, Kevin Deramus,
Michael Hayes, Selena Xie

Injury Prevention and Public Education Committee

Outgoing:

Julia Perez, Lisa Sicilio

Reappointed:

MaryAnn Contreras, Debra Curti,
Kevin Rix, Rohit Shenoj, MD,
Steward Williams

Newly Appointed:

Mariselda Salazar, Timothy Spice,
Brittney Tice

Cardiac Care Committee

Outgoing:

Catherine Bissell

Reappointed:

James McCarthy, MD,
Craig Cooley, MD

Newly Appointed:

Alexa Timbrook, Neil White

EMS Education Committee

Outgoing:

Derek Briggs, Kelly Weller

Reappointed:

Diedra Blankenship,
Gregory LaMay

Newly Appointed:

Justin Boyd, Jacob Braddock

Pediatric Committee

Outgoing:

Gabriel Marsh, Jeffrey Mills

Reappointed:

Ronald Mlcak, PhD,
Crissie Richardson

Newly Appointed:

Joshi Prashant, Tabitha Selvester

Disaster Response and Preparedness Committee

Outgoing:

William Craig, Brent Hahn

Reappointed:

Eric Epley, Emily Kidd, MD,
Nim Kidd

Newly Appointed:

Angela Cornelius, MD,
Marcus Smith

EMS Medical Directors Committee

Outgoing:

Robert Gerhardt, MD,
Gerad Troutman, MD

Reappointed:

Heidi Abraham, MD, new Chair,
Jeffrey Jarvis, MD

Newly Appointed:

Christopher Winckler, MD

Stroke Committee:

Outgoing:

Vanessa Rodriguez

Reappointed:

J. Neil Rutledge, MD,
George Cravens, MD, Lisa Hutchinson,
Robin Novakovic-White, MD

Newly Appointed:

Robert Dickson, MD, Carla Escobar,
Amanda Webb

Trauma Systems Committee

Outgoing: Melinda Fox, Kenneth Wamer

Reappointed: Kevin Cunningham, Stephen Flaherty, MD, Craig Rhyne, MD, Scott Sagraves, MD

Newly Appointed: Kristie Brown, MD, Krystal Jordan, Heather Strange

**Update
For
2021**



FINGERPRINTING

In June of 2020, DSHS began requiring all EMS certificate/license holders, who have not already done so, to complete a fingerprint-based background check at the time of renewing certification/license.

What does this mean?

Before an application to renew or obtain your initial certification can be approved, you will have to complete a fingerprint-based background check. You will only need to complete this process once, not every time you renew. In the event your license expires and remains inactive for a year or longer, you will be required to complete the fingerprint process again.

How will I know if I need to complete one?

A list of names of EMS certificate/license holders that **have** completed a fingerprint-based background check is available to view on our website at www.dshs.texas.gov/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm. This list is updated on the 1st and 15th of every month. In the event those dates are on a weekend or holiday, the list will be updated the following business day. Those that are not listed can visit our website for instructions on how to complete a fingerprint background check. If you have already completed your fingerprints and still do not see your name on the list after 7 business days, please contact EMS/Trauma Systems at 512-834-6767.

Can I complete a fingerprint-based background check before I renew?

Absolutely. However, you will need to schedule an appointment for a fingerprint-based background check with IdentoGO, using the correct service code number for DSHS EMS. The service code number can be found on the Texas Service Code Form which is located on DSHS website at www.dshs.texas.gov/emstraumasystems/formsresources.shtm.

What if I have already completed one for another agency?

Unfortunately, because of legal restrictions, criminal history information can't be shared between organizations. You will need to complete another fingerprint-based background check for DSHS.

Will you provide updates on this new requirement?

Yes. For any future updates, please visit our website at www.dshs.texas.gov/emstraumasystems/ and watch for updates here in the Texas EMS/Trauma Newsletter.



EMS Certification and Licensing Unit - Renewals

Is it getting close to your renewal date?

DSHS no longer sends renewal notices, so don't be late!

Here are five things you should know, and additional information can always be found on our website at:

www.dshs.texas.gov/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm.

Best time to renew

An online electronic renewal application can be opened six months before your license expiration date.

Note: A late renewal application is assessed late fees and other penalties, such as skills proficiency verifications.

Press "Next"

The most common mistake renewal applicants make is not using the "next" button when moving to the next section of their renewal application. Use the "next" button, or your selection won't be saved.

Renewal EMS Personnel - Select Attributes

Listed below are the license attributes you may add or delete. For more information about Military Status, visit <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/emstraumasystems/>.

Please select/de-select the desired attribute and press "Next" to continue.

Press "Previous" to return to the previous section.

Press "Cancel" to cancel this application and return to the main menu.

If Return to Summary Button is available, Press "Return to Summary" to return to the summary.

Attribute Type: Options

- Clinical Management Program
- Continuing Education
- Currently Maintaining National Registry
- Re-Certification Course
- Written Exam Assessment

Attribute Type: Military Status

Attributes:

- Military Service Member
- Military Spouse
- Military Spouse holds a current license issued by another jurisdiction
- Military Veteran

Previous Next Cancel

Weekends and holidays

Applications submitted on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday are not reviewed until the next business day. Please allow time for DSHS to review application before inquiring on its status.

Jurisprudence

Applicants, please complete your jurisprudence exam before submitting your application. What is the jurisprudence exam? A Texas Jurisprudence Exam is a CE course over Texas EMS laws and rules. This course is required of all applicants. Generally, the course is included with your initial EMS courses in Texas. EMS personnel entering via reciprocity must complete the course. All EMS personnel renewing their license must complete this course at each renewal cycle. The course completion certificates may be uploaded with your application. Ensure you use the PDF format when uploading with your application. Texas Jurisprudence CE Course is offered by the following [education programs](#).

2020 Stats

By the end of 2020, over 11,000 EMS personnel will have renewed their EMS certification. Of these:

- Over 1,600 applications upgrading to a higher level of EMS certification were processed.
- DSHS issued over 4,500 new EMS certifications; 800 were reciprocity applicants from other states.
- Over 300 new EMS Instructor certificates were issued.

Our New World

*By Chuck Rowe, A.A.S
on behalf of all the EMS Trauma System staff*

Greetings to all!

We are now going on ten months into the new “normal,” a change to the way we manage so many different aspects of our personal and work lives—everything from distancing from family and friends and wearing masks to keep everyone safe to “How much toilet paper do I need to have in stock!”

We would like to applaud all the healthcare stakeholders that have cooperated with Department of State Health Services (DSHS) EMS/Trauma System Section in changing how we communicate and interact with each other. Communication changes have created video-chat masters and mobile camera operators while continuing inspections. Overall, the whole system has become more flexible and adaptable as we strive to assist our stakeholders in maintaining compliance during these challenging times. The certificants, EMS Providers, and First Responder Organizations all have unique hurdles to stay safe while maintaining the expected level of care, and let’s not forget our education programs! It has been especially challenging with schools closing, restrictions at medical facilities, and EMS Providers stopping or severely limiting student access for field internships due to safety concerns.

This is just a message to thank all of you for your efforts. I know that whatever else should come our way, we will be ready, or we will quickly adapt. Always remember that we are here to help **YOU** be the best that you can be.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!!!



87th Legislation Session

In January, lawmakers from across the state will convene the 87th Texas Legislative Session. The following briefly summarizes bills filed directly affecting EMS Trauma System stakeholders.

HB 306 is related to the Medical Advisory Board member appointments and the rules under Section 12.095, Health and Safety Code.

SB 183 amends Health and Safety Code Section 773.011 requiring air ambulance companies who offer subscription services to enter into reciprocity agreements with all other air ambulance services in the state

SB 199 amends Health and Safety Code Section 779, automated external defibrillator requirements for the acquisition and maintenance of automated external defibrillator.

DESIGNATION UPDATES

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) has completed their revisions to the Resources for Optimal Care of the Injured Patient 2020. This document will be available in March of 2021 for purchase or download. The document has changed in format and is now divided into six different sections:

- Institutional Administrative Commitment
- Program Scope and Governance
- Personnel and Services Resources
- Patient Care: Expectations and Protocols, Data Surveillance and Systems Quality Improvement
- Education: Professional and Community Outreach
- Research: Basic and Clinical Trials

Hospitals being reviewed by the ACS's verification program should start to review this new document when available. The verification surveys scheduled for September 2022 and after will be accountable to these new standards. This will not impact the level III and IV facilities that have Texas in-state designation surveys and follow the Texas Trauma Designation Rules.

The Texas Designation Rules are in the beginning processes of review. It should be noted that all hospitals seeking designation, including the level I and IIs, must meet the defined Texas criteria to achieve state designation. The Stroke Designation Rules (157.133) were approved in August at the Stroke Committee and by GETAC Council at the November meeting. They have been prepared and forwarded to the Rules Coordination Office.

The department is currently revising the processes for requesting designation extensions and the designation appeal process for trauma and stroke centers. The Perinatal process for designation appeals is defined in rule but needs to be operationalized. The department is defining measures to move forward with this appeal process as well.

The department is moving toward a more streamlined process and when possible, a paperless system. Beginning February 1st, designation letters and certificates will be sent to the facilities electronically instead of through the mail.

Emergency Equipment Funds (EEF)

Funding is set aside each fiscal year from the EMS and Trauma Care System Account (911 Funds), the Trauma Facilities and Trauma Care System Fund (enacted by Senate Bill 1131, 78th Legislature) and the Designated Trauma Facility and Emergency Medical Services Account (enacted by House Bill 3588, 78th Legislature) to support the emergent, unexpected needs of EMS providers or DSHS-approved organizations.

FY21: \$1M available on 9/1/2020.

- 6 Applications received since 9-1-2020
- 2 Applications Awarded
- 3 Applications Denied
- 1 Application Pending additional information

Total awarded \$192,894.46

Total Remaining \$807,105.54

Designation Virtual Survey Guidelines

EMS/Trauma Systems Section has created Designation Virtual Survey Guidelines to establish a standardized process for virtual facility site surveys.

The guidance document can be found on the following designation program pages:

- [Maternal](#)
- [Neonatal](#)
- [Stroke](#)
- [Trauma](#)

The virtual survey process can be utilized for initial designation surveys or surveys for facilities increasing their level of designation; however onsite surveys are strongly recommended for these types of surveys.

Please email any questions regarding this guidance to DSHS.EMS-TRAUMA@dshs.texas.gov.

Rule Revision Process Changes

The department is implementing the rule revision process with changes due to the required safety measures for COVID. Listed are the rules that need revisions to move into the current national standards:

- 157.122 TSA Rules (2004)
- 157.123 TSA RAC Rules (2004)
- 157.125 Requirements for Trauma Facility Designation (2006)
- 157.128 Trauma Denial, Suspension, and Revocation of Trauma Facility Designation (2006)
- 157.133 Requirements for Stroke Facility Designation (2009)

The GETAC Council and the GETAC Committees will serve as the point for stakeholder comments, participation, and recommendations. The Trauma System Committee will serve as the point for the trauma rule revisions.

Once these committees approve proposed rule revisions, they will move to GETAC. The GETAC Council will review and approve the proposed rules to make final recommendations to the department as the advisory council. The department will finalize the rule recommendations to move forward to the Rule Coordination Office (RCO). The process takes approximately forty-two weeks once the rule recommendations reach the RCO.

The Stroke Committee will serve as the stakeholder participation lead as the Stroke rules continue through their process. The Stroke Committee-approved recommendations moved to the GETAC Council last August. Again, the GETAC Council approved the Stroke Rules (157.133) revision recommendations last November. These rules were then addressed by the department.

The RAC rules (157.123) will utilize the RAC Chairs group and the GETAC Council to obtain stakeholder comments and feedback. As other rules are opened for review, the rule revision will follow this same process for stakeholder comments.

TSA Rule (157.122) was reviewed by the department and submitted to the Rules Coordination Office. There will be a time for stakeholder comments as this rule moves forward.

The Perinatal Advisory Council will take the lead role in stakeholder comments and recommendations for any revisions of the Neonatal rules, which were approved in 2016, as well as the Maternal rules, which were approved in 2018.

If you have any questions regarding this process please contact Jorie Klein, Director of EMS / Trauma Systems Section at jorie.klein@dshs.texas.gov, or Joe Schmider, State Director of EMS, at joseph.schmider@dshs.texas.gov.

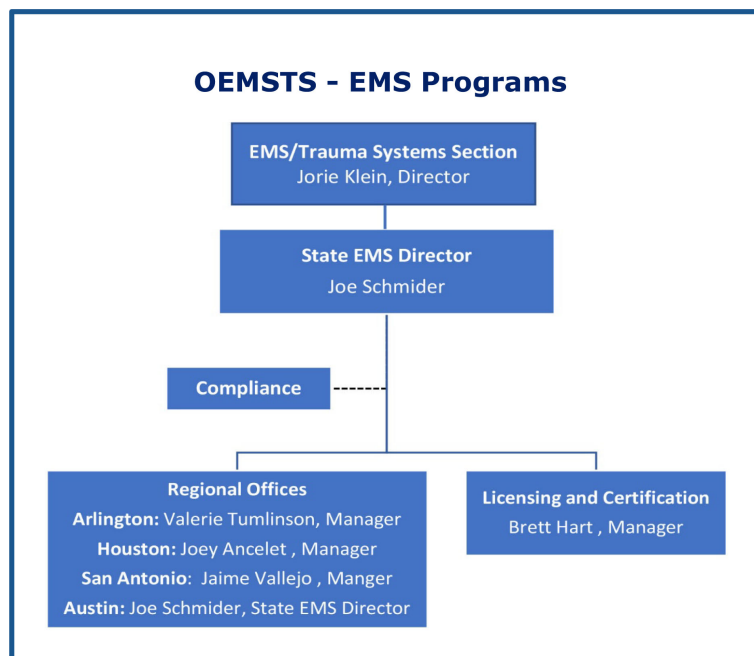
EMS Virtual Inspections

Since March of 2020, COVID-19 compelled the need to keep everyone safe but still allow for the processing of inspections; in cooperation with many stakeholders, the Texas EMS office staff developed a virtual inspection process. During this time, the Texas EMS Team has conducted over 200 virtual inspections of ambulances, air ambulances, first responder organizations, and EMS Education programs. This process has saved travel costs and staff hours while ensuring a safe operation when conducting regular business for all our stakeholders.

As we move forward toward a more normal operation, the lessons learned from these virtual inspections will continue as a standard part of doing business. Doing so will allow for quicker inspections and the ability to get new vehicles in service, as well as new programs onboard.

Restructure

We have realigned our EMS programs to better serve our stakeholders. The chart below displays the updated structure.



Program Contacts:

For questions regarding EMS personnel, EMS instructor, coordinator and information operator email emscert@dshs.texas.gov.

For questions regarding EMS Provider/FRO email EmsProviderFro@dshs.texas.gov.

For help with EMS education programs and course approvals email EMSEducation@dshs.texas.gov.

All other questions or comments email: emsinfo@dshs.texas.gov.

Texas EMS Trauma News

Winter 2021

Volume 8 No. 1

NEWS

NHTSA's EMS Update: Learn more about current projects and efforts in EMS from NHTSA and its Federal partners.

CDC Newsroom: View the latest CDC public health news and press releases.

Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons: *The Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons is published monthly by the American College of Surgeons.*

Washington Update: The Washington Update is produced bi-monthly by the National Association of State EMS Officials in cooperation with NHTSA OEMS, with funds also provided by HHS EMSC.

NACo County News: The voice of American counties.

EMSC Pulse: The EMSC Pulse Newsletter is a digest of program news and activities. Each issue includes a wealth of information about the pediatric emergency medical care community.

Integrated Healthcare Delivery: Integrated Healthcare Delivery focuses on improving the patient experience of care through inter-professional collaborations.

External links to other sites are intended to be informational and do not have the endorsement of the Texas Department of State Health Services. These sites may also not be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Links

GETAC: Visit the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council web page to view council, committees, and meeting information

Rules: This page contains links to the Texas Administrative Code rules pertaining to EMS/Trauma Systems.

Disciplinary actions: This page provides public notice of disciplinary action by the Department of State Health Services and the Consumer Protection Division, Consumer Safety Unit.

Staff Contacts: This page provides contact information for the Office of EMS/Trauma Systems staff and programs.

Preparedness: The Center for Health Emergency Preparedness and Response is to provide public health leadership and improve health and well-being in Texas.

Homes for Texas Heroes Home Loan Program: The program, spearheaded by the Texas legislature, provides a 30-year fixed rate home loan to Texas EMS personnel, firefighters, peace officers and others. In addition, this program offers down payment and closing cost assistance of up to 5% of the mortgage loan amount, in the form of a grant.



The Code
Green
Campaign



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

Questions, comments or suggestions about *Texas EMS Trauma News*? Contact us at EMSTraumaNews@dshs.state.tx.us.