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Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) Meeting**

MEETING MINUTES

Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC)

Monday, November 23, 2009, 6:07 p.m. – 8:29 p.m.

Call to Order: Interim Chair Pete Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. Members present included Pete Wolf, Interim Chair; Mike Click, RN; Luis G. Fernandez, MD, FACS; Jodie Harbert III, LP; Ryan Matthews, LP; Vance L. Riley, MPA, LP; Shirley Scholz, RN, CCRN, EMT-P; Joan Shook, MD; John D. Smith; and Ronald Stewart, MD. Members absent: Hector Longoria; James Randall Loflin, MD; and Marti VanRavenswaay.

Approval of Minutes: *A motion was made by Luis Fernandez, MD, and seconded by Ronald Stewart, MD, to approve the meeting minutes from August 21, 2009. All council members were in favor; the motion passed.*

Chair Report: Interim Chair Pete Wolf welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Texas EMS Conference in Fort Worth. A new committee orientation session was introduced at this GETAC meeting for newly appointed committee members. The invitation was extended to current and reappointed members, as well, as no formal training has been offered in several years. Texas EMS, Trauma, and Acute Care Foundation (TETAF) also joined the effort with DSHS to establish the new committee orientation. Mr. Wolf would like to see this continue in the future and considered it beneficial.

Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Staff Reports

Kathryn C. Perkins, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Regulatory Services, began her report with an update on the council chair appointment. The Governors Office has been talking to some organizations and other offices around Texas and has asked for input as well as nominations. No formal appointment has been announced at this time.

DSHS Council has expressed interest in becoming more involved with councils around the state, and it may be possible DSHS council members would begin attending GETAC meetings. DSHS Council wants to have a better comprehension of our system. If a member present is at a future meeting, Ms. Perkins will make sure he or she is introduced at the meeting.

Mr. Perkins also talked about health care reform, stimulus funds and their possible effects on the department. Stimulus funds would be available for the agency but their impact would be minimal. If government decides to make health care universal throughout the country, the biggest impact may be on the uncompensated trauma care account. Ideally, all citizens would be covered under some sort of health insurance; thus, trauma care accounts would no longer be funded.

Lastly, Ms. Perkins spoke about the effects of the recession on Texas. Texas has been fortunate to not suffer excessive cutbacks and soaring unemployment rates, but this may begin to change. State agencies have already begun cutting back staff and working hours, and more staff cuts are being considered for the next legislative session.

Jane Guerrero, Director of the Office of EMS and Trauma Systems Coordination, followed up on the previous meeting request to conduct an American College of Surgeon (ACS) trauma survey for the state of Texas. Ms. Guerrero has implemented the necessary steps to request this process through DSHS. Tentative dates are May 18-21, 2010, in conjunction with the GETAC committee and council meetings. These meetings will be in conjunction with the survey to allow stakeholders and committee members the opportunity to provide statements and figures to the ASC survey team.

Ms. Guerrero reported that 247 Texas hospitals currently have trauma designation status and 15 are in active pursuit at this time. All funds available for facilities have been dispersed, and DSHS is expecting an estimated \$72 million for appropriations in 2010. Ms. Guerrero pointed out that all monies must be accumulated in the budget before it can be dispersed.

The Local Project Grant monies for 2010 funded 86 requests out of 106, totaling \$1.23 million

for EMS; \$2.6 for RACs; and \$1.2 for hospitals.

Lastly, Ms. Guerrero updated the group on the newly implemented stroke designation application process. Since acceptance of application began on October 1, 33 applications have been received by the Office of EMS/Trauma Systems. The first designation was awarded to St. David's in Austin, and DSHS staff attended the presentation. DSHS would like to continue presenting these awards to hospitals and would consider working with the RACs to coordinate joint presentations as the applications are approved. DSHS is in discussion with TETAF about the possibility of a stroke designation program other than the joint commission, and it will present more information to stakeholders as plans begin to finalize.

Lucinda Suarez, PhD, Environment Epidemiology and Disease Registries briefly discussed the assessment of the EMS/Trauma registry and how important it is. A question-and-answer session for stakeholders was available during the GETAC meetings this weekend. The executive summary is now available. It explains the results of the report and the implementation of Phase II, which should be out by March 2010. The vendor selection should begin in June 2010 and the selected vendor is scheduled to begin work by July 2010.

Standing Committee/Task Force Reports

Air Medical Committee – Chair Shirley Scholz, RN, presented the committee report. Reports on the Texas Air Medical Licensure and Texas Association of Air Medical Services (TAAMS) Disaster Plan with pediatric components were shared with the committee. The DSHS Memorandum of Agreement for Mutual Aid in Disasters for Rotor Wing Ambulance Providers (MOA) was discussed, and the committee suggested the MOA should include a fixed-wing component for air providers who would consider participating in the MOA. The proposed draft would change the wording from “rotor wing/fixed wing” to “air ambulance providers.” The committee would also like to add a proposed funding schedule using the current U.S. Forrest Service contract rates for rotor wing and current Medicaid rates for fixed wing. The committee has worked on the language that could be considered as the additional component to this contract

and presented the draft version at this meeting.

Cardiac Care Committee – In the absence of Chair David Persse, MD, committee member Rodney Parish presented the committee report. The agenda item concerning the development of a mission statement and committee charges was tabled. DSHS staff Remmy Morris presented a report concerning data sets from the Texas CV Health and Wellness Program. The information distributed was with regard to heart disease, stroke and heart attack, and all information was obtained from the Trauma Registry and Trauma Service Area surveys. This information will be posted on the DSHS website by December. Lonnie Denne from the American Heart Association (AHA) gave an update on the Mission Lifeline project with the RACs. Sixteen of the 22 RACs address cardiac care in their organizations. Topics addressed by the RACs' cardiac care committees include best practices, treatment protocols, and transportation plans. Ms. Denne addressed the topic of terminology usage and discussed the use of “protocols” versus “guidelines.” She also talked about the recently released 2008 AHA ST-Segment Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) update. She requested the committee consider supporting legislation for a mandated STEMI coordinator to pattern the stroke legislation. A meeting should be set up through TETAF and should coordinate with the following groups: EMS Medical Directors, Texas Ambulance Association, RAC Chairs, AHA, Texas Hospital Association and others. A motion was made for the committee to request that GETAC ask the RACs to create a Cardiac Care Committee in each RAC.

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness Committee – Chair Eric Epley began with a discussion of the new DSHS PanFlu Medical Ethics Workgroup. This workgroup met at the beginning of November with representation from various public health officials, bioethicists, legal/education representatives, and other stakeholders. Their report should be available for review at the beginning of next year. A report from the Ambulance Staging Logistics workgroup was presented, and it focused on portable liquid oxygen (O₂) needs in disasters. Mr. Epley will look into the possibility of forming an “O₂” workgroup to look into this issue. A report from the Regional Medical Direction workgroup was presented at the meeting, and the two main items from this group were the MOU between DSHS and physicians who agree to work in this capacity during disasters and sufficiency of care protocols for care in severe conditions. The

amb-bus workgroup continues to work on draft documents that address equipment needs, staffing and capabilities. DSHS Ambulance Utilization Plan is still in draft version, but the committee will ask the council to approve the draft as well as review the document annually for necessary updates.

Education Committee – Chair Jodie Harbert presented the committee report. The committee sent a letter of recommendation to GETAC to require medical directors education for Texas EMS medical directors by 2013. The committee also discussed ways EMS educators can look at best practices and how educators can teach the latest proven techniques in EMS education. The committee discussed ways to stimulate research and narrow the focus to education issues at all levels, including quality improvement outcomes. The committee would like to develop a presentation on this topic to display or present at the next Texas EMS Conference in Austin. A letter to GETAC will be sent from the committee regarding adopting the National EMS Educational Standards for use in Texas. This is not to be confused with the National Standard Curriculum. The EMS Education and Training Manual, which was previously reviewed, was discussed and the committee is looking for ways to update this manual to reflect the needed changes. The committee will continue to move forward to implement competency-based ethics in EMS continuing education. George Hatch, PhD, Director of Commission on Accreditation of EMS Programs, and Debbie Cason, National Registry board member, presented an update on the progress of the national accreditation of paramedic programs. The next committee meeting will be January 21, 2010, at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, Texas.

EMS Committee – Chair Dudley Wait reported the committee received a presentation by Dr. George Hatch and Debbie Cason regarding accreditation of EMS paramedic training programs. The committee also received an update on DSHS rules 157.36 and 157.37 regarding certification and discipline actions following the legislative changes. The EMS Committee asked GETAC to write a letter to the State EMS Director regarding how DSHS was going to interpret some of the legislative language. The language is currently being reviewed by DSHS legal department and the committee is waiting for its clarification. The next EMS Committee meeting is January 8, 2010, in Austin.

Injury Prevention Committee – Chair Rick Moore presented the committee summary. The committee’s resolution supports safe sleeping prevention programs, but the committee would like to add the statement “bed sharing is not recommended; however” to the proposed resolution. The committee is also in favor of the heat illness prevention recommendations. Discussions regarding child fatality review teams were tabled since the invited presenter was ill. An announcement was made about a statewide injury prevention practitioners survey, and everyone was asked to participate in the survey. A request from Linda Jones, DSHS Epidemiology and Surveillance Group, to support expanding the staff for the Trauma Registry was heard as well as a request to improve data collection rules. The committee asked that all language from the safe sleeping resolution regarding infant co-sleeping with parents be removed. The motion to accept the safe sleeping resolution with the additional wording was voted on and passed unanimously. The motion to accept and support the heat illness prevention resolutions was also voted on and passed. A tentative working day for the committee members has been set for January 15, 2010.

Medical Directors Committee – Chair Steve Ellerbe, DO, presented the committee summary. Topics discussed in the meeting included disaster/emergency preparedness, MOA for physicians and medical directors, a recruitment letter to send out to all RACs and standards of care during altered situations. The committee would like to work on developing a medical directors registration system and will be working with the Texas Medical Board to ask necessary questions for educational purposes when it comes time to renew. There was a presentation from Dr. Manish Shah from the EMS for Children (EMS-C) which talked about the state partnership grant.

Pediatric Committee – Chair Joan Shook, MD, began her report with the available committee liaison reports from the committee members. Committee member Charles Macias, MD, introduced Dr. Manish Shah, the Co-PI for the EMS for Children (EMS-C) State partnership grant. This group is updating contact information for the 1,000 EMS agencies in Texas. Once this is complete, an online survey will be distributed to a selected group of agencies that will focus on supplies, equipment, and online/offline medical control. The committee expressed a desire to include some questions in this survey about agencies’ disaster planning, specific to pediatric patients. Committee members asked whether there is a mechanism for small/rural EMS

groups to purchase pediatric equipment through a buying consortium. Dr. Shah offered to relate this inquiry to EMS-C and find out if anything is available. The statement of purpose for the Pediatrics Committee, which is still in its rough draft, was discussed and will continue to be worked on. On the topic of infection surveillance reporting, it was noted that Texas has not contributed to the national databases for H1N1 influenza reporting, which could be considered an issue in many ways including for research, outcomes, training curricula, and disaster resources. Committee member Charles Macias will investigate and possibly have more information available at the next scheduled meeting.

Stroke Committee – In the absence of Chair Neal Rutledge, MD, committee member Beverly Welch presented the report. DSHS staff Remmy Morris presented a report concerning data sets from the Texas CV Health and Wellness Program. The information distributed was in regards to heart disease, stroke and heart attack, and all information was obtained from the Trauma Registry and Trauma Service Area surveys. The DSHS rule timeline was discussed, but no action was taken at this time. TETAF is currently in discussion with DSHS to be considered an agency-approved foundation to perform Level III support facility surveys. Future agenda items that will be discussed are comprehensive stroke center surveys from the Joint Commission and a DSHS update of groups or organizations approved to conduct Level III stroke surveys.

Trauma Systems Committee – Chair Ronald Stewart, MD, reported the meeting began with a summary report from Texas EMS, Trauma, and Acute Care Foundation (TETAF). Jorie Klein gave an update on the Trauma Registry/TQIP workgroup and presented an overview of the plan to organize the committee. A discussion of the role of University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) and the plan for verification was discussed by committee members. There was some discussion and concern over the plan for UTMB to move to a Level III center prior to undergoing a Level I verification by the ACS. DSHS staff gave an update on the Texas Driver Responsibilities Program distributions. A timeline for revisions to EMS/Trauma Systems Rules in Title 25 of Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 157 was also discussed. DSHS staff presented a plan to review the rules after the proposed ACS visit and after the reporting to the legislature. This would delay the review until approximately 2011. There have been preliminary discussions with the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Trauma Systems Consultation with a plan for a

systems visit May 18-21, 2010, which would result in the reporting required by Senate Bill 1-Rider 90 of 81st Texas Legislature, and an assessment of the need for additional Level I and Level II trauma facilities. A review of House Bill 1357 of 81st Texas Legislature, 2009, related to regulating freestanding emergency medical care facilities was carried out, and the committee requested to review the proposed rules for comment concerning the care of trauma patients.

DSHS Preparedness Coordination Council – No representative was available at the meeting to present a summary for the council.

Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council – No representative was available at the meeting to present a summary for the council.

DSHS Hospital Licensing Rules Review Workgroup – No report was made available.

Texas EMS, Trauma, and Acute Care Foundation (TETAF)– Diana Welsh, CEO of TETAF, informed the group that the foundation has elected new board members: three current board members remained and two were newly appointed. TETAF continues to work on the stroke survey process and is looking to be accepted as a stroke certified surveyor by DSHS in the next few months. The injury prevention division has scheduled a symposium before GETAC in February. The RAC division is having a leadership meeting with the current participants and would like to have all RACs represented to discuss financial topics. The pediatrics division is working on setting up pediatrics facilities to receive Level III designation, since it is not currently available. The trauma systems division is continuing to work on surveys for Level III and IV throughout the state and continuing to develop their process. The Trauma Registry is still a big concern for the foundation, and it will continue to be active in the new system's development process. Marjorie Mellot's departure from the foundation was announced and appreciation for all her work was expressed.

General Public Comment

General public comments included setting up a guideline for bloodborne pathogens from Beverly Welch.

Action Items

A motion was made by Shirley Scholz and seconded by Joan Shook, MD, that GETAC draft a letter to recognize the EMS agencies and trauma centers that assisted in the recent Fort Hood events, and that it explore other ways to honor those affected by this event. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Shirley Scholz and seconded by Luis Fernandez, MD, to accept the updates and revisions of the proposed Memorandum of Agreement for Mutual Aid for DSHS-licensed rotor wing air ambulances to include fixed wing units as well. The draft document would request the wording be changed from “rotor wing/fixed wing” to “air ambulance providers.” In addition, Ms. Scholz would also like to include the addendum of “Rates for Disaster Response” as well as the number of aircraft and its location of aircraft to the DSHS contracts. There was a friendly amendment by Ronald Stewart, MD, to review the current language in the Memorandum of Agreement for Mutual Aid for ground units. Luis Fernandez, MD, accepted the friendly amendment. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Ryan Matthews and seconded by Vance Riley to support the DSHS 2009 Ambulance Utilization Plan draft as presented. The motion recommended a review at the beginning of each calendar year. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Ryan Matthews and seconded by Shirley Scholz to request DSHS conduct an impact study specific to EMS to fully understand the accreditation process. After further discussion, it was concluded that not enough information was available at this time to make a decision and this motion should be pulled. More information and further discussions would be available at the next scheduled GETAC meeting. The new motion passed unanimously.

Meeting dates in 2010: February 24-26, 2010; May 19-21, 2010; August 18-20, 2010; and November 20-22, in conjunction with the EMS Conference being held in Austin, Texas.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.