



DSHS releases drug “shortage” statement

DSHS is aware of drug shortages cited by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/DrugShortages/ucm050792.htm). Some of the drugs on the FDA list, such as fentanyl, magnesium sulfate and lidocaine, are being used to treat patients in the prehospital setting by emergency medical services providers.

If DSHS receives a complaint that a provider is using expired drugs or expired drugs are found on an ambulance during an inspection, DSHS will require the EMS organization to provide documentation from the manufacturer and the provider’s medical director regarding the shortage of the specific drug(s) before considering an enforcement action. DSHS is recommending that this documentation be present on any ambulance that has expired drugs approved by the medical director. For additional information visit the Texas Medical Board at www.tmb.state.tx.us/news/press/2012/120224.php.

Garland EMT/ firefighter hurt

Garland EMT/firefighter Bobby Brinkley has a fractured skull after being struck by a high-pressure air tank while on a call to rescue a dog in a creek in March. The tank was being used to inflate a raft that would be used in the rescue. The heavy, metal tank came loose from the raft and hit Brinkley in the face. He was taken by Careflite to Parkland, where he remained in intensive care for several days. He is at home now and is expected to fully recover with no neurological deficits.

Accreditation rule goes for public comment in April

EMS Rule §157.32 Emergency Medical Services Education Program and Course Approval, which addresses accreditation of paramedic education programs, was reviewed and discussed by the State Health Service Council on February 22. After hearing public comment, the Council passed the rule unanimously on February 23. Following review by the DSHS Office of General Counsel and the Health and Human Services Commission, the proposed rule will be published in the Texas Register for a 30-day public comment period. The anticipated publication in the Texas Register is late April. We will make an announcement on our website once we receive notification of publication of the proposed rule in the Texas Register. To sign up for email updates on this topic or others, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems and click on “Sign up for email updates” on top right.

Houston EMS Office welcomes new specialist



Robin Duckett

A new EMS specialist has joined the DSHS EMS office in Houston. Robin Duckett, a native of La Porte, began her service in EMS in 2006 with the Deer Park VFD. In October 2007, she started working with the Memorial Hermann System as an emergency room technician where she provided patient care and employee training. She returned to school and is working toward a bachelor’s in psychology with a minor in communications. Her email address is Robin.duckett@dshs.state.tx.us and her phone number is (713) 767-3334.

Updated fingerprint form online

Here’s some good news from L-1 Identity Solutions: The fee has been reduced for the FBI fingerprint criminal history check required for all initial and reciprocity applications. L-1 Identity Solutions (www.L1.com) handles all fingerprint requests. The price is now \$41.45, down about \$3. An updated form is online at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/formsresources.shtm. As a reminder, make sure you access the most recent DSHS form for all your certification needs by going to the “Forms and Resources” area of the website (link is on upper right) and printing a new form each time you need one. Submitting an outdated form can delay processing.



MedStar names new executive director

Douglas Hooten was named executive director of Fort Worth's MedStar in February. He comes to the Fort Worth-based 9-1-1 and non-emergency provider with thirty years of EMS experience, including stints at American Medical Response, Metropolitan Ambulance Service Trust in Kansas City, and Rural/Metro Ambulance in South Carolina, Ohio and Georgia. Hooten started his EMS career as a field paramedic in Conroe. He holds an undergraduate degree in business administration from Sam Houston State University and a master's in business administration from Rockhurst University in Missouri. MedStar responds to 100,000 calls each year in Fort Worth and 14 other Tarrant County cities.

Suicide attempt shuts down ED in Florida

A Florida emergency department near Fort Lauderdale had to be temporarily shut down after a man who attempted suicide vomited up poison, sickening the three paramedics transporting him. The man had tried to kill himself by drinking the pesticide malathion. Paramedics responded and found the man on his front lawn about 1:30 a.m. and transported him. While en route, the man threw up the poison, making the three paramedics dizzy and nauseous. The man was brought into a containment area at a hospital but the emergency department was closed as a precaution. The ambulance was put into quarantine and decontaminated along with the hospital equipment. The man survived and the emergency department reopened the next morning.



Texas nurse sentenced to life for dialysis deaths

It was the paramedics who first reported something amiss at the DaVita Dialysis Clinic in Lufkin in 2008. The medics were making so many calls there – 16 patients in two weeks – that a fire department official wrote an anonymous letter asking DSHS to take a look. At that point, EMS had been called as many as 30 times in a month, and four people had died. Within days, DSHS inspectors showed up at the clinic. While they were there, two more patients became ill and suspicion fell on Kimberly Saenz, LVN, who was suspected of injecting bleach into dialysis tubing. Saenz was sent home, the clinic shut down, and Saenz was then fired. In March, Saenz was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for causing the patient deaths. The clinic reopened about two months after it was closed.

Harbert moves to new job

Jodie Harbert will take the reins as program director of the Blinn College EMS Program in May. Harbert was most recently associate professor of EMS at Collin County Community College. Blinn College received accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Allied Health Education Programs in January of 2011. The program recently relocated to a state-of-the-art facility on the Texas A&M campus in Bryan. Harbert serves as the GETAC Education Committee Chair and represents EMS educators on the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council.



Ready Teddy books being phased out

The budget crunch has finally impacted the Ready Teddy materials available free from DSHS. Ready Teddy coloring books are currently being reprinted, but once that supply is gone they will not be re-stocked. Orders will still be limited to 500 coloring books. However, the coloring books will remain available online in a PDF format, and organizations are free to print their own books from the online file. In addition, the Ready Teddy bear paramedic suits, which have seen much better (and less smelly) days, are being retired. A decision has not been made on the other materials.

On Duty



On Duty

July deadline for Star of Texas nominations

In 2003, the 78th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1937, which created the Star of Texas Awards to honor first responders killed or seriously injured while performing their duties as peace officers, firefighters and emergency medical first responders. The law also designated September 11th of every year as Texas First Responders Day. The first Star of Texas awards were presented in 2004 to three Texas first responders, one for each category of first responder: emergency medical, fire and law enforcement. The Texas Legislature amended the original legislation to require awards for each first responder seriously injured or killed after September 1, 2003. To be eligible for consideration for this year's awards, the critical incident must have occurred between September 1, 2003, and June 30, 2012, and the individual must have not previously received a Star of Texas Award. Nominations for this year's awards may be submitted no later than July 31, 2012. The awards ceremony will be held in the fall of 2012. To nominate an individual for a Star of Texas Award, please fill out the form at http://governor.state.tx.us/cjd/star_awards.

Two ways to honor emergency responders

Besides the awards given at Texas EMS Conference, DSHS honors individuals in EMS in two other ways. For information about either of the following, contact Kelly Harrell at (512) 834-6743 or at kelly.harrell@dshs.state.tx.us.

Texas EMS Hall of Fame

The Texas Department of State Health Services honors individuals who have made significant contributions to emergency medical services in Texas. This honor is intended to remain a permanent part of the EMS history of this state. Nominations are due June 1. For more information on how to nominate someone for Texas EMS Hall of Fame or to see who is in the Hall of Fame, go the website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/emsfam.shtm.

Texas EMS Hall of Honor

The Texas EMS Hall of Honor memorial honors emergency medical service personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty. The plaques hang permanently at the Office of EMS/Trauma Systems Coordination in Austin as a tribute to those individuals who made the ultimate sacrifice for public safety. Each plaque holds engraved names along with certifications and licensure, and date of death. The plaques are also displayed each year at the conference. Find the names of those killed in the line of duty at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/emshon.shtm.



Texas EMS Hall of Honor memorial is on display each year at Texas EMS Conference.

Send in your EMS Awards nominations

Send us your best in EMS and trauma! We're making the process easier than ever this year – all you have to do is go to our website, click on Texas EMS Conference, then scroll down the page until you see Texas EMS and Trauma Awards. That link will take you directly to a page where you fill out the nomination form. No need to save and email to us. Once you've finished, a page will come up that allows you to print the nomination for your records. No need to submit after that – once you close the page, it will be routed to us. Best of all, you will get an email letting you know we received it.

When filling out the nomination, please include written explanations of why this person or organization should win. Please be specific, using examples when possible. Keep in mind that the people who review the nominations most likely won't be as familiar with your nominee as you are. Nominations will be accepted until **September 28, 2012**. These are then given to programs in the Office of EMS and Trauma Systems Coordination and sent to each EMS zone office. Each program and zone ranks the nominations for each category and returns the information to the Office, where scores are tallied. Scores are kept confidential from all except those who tally the scores. Winners are announced at the Awards Luncheon at Texas EMS Conference.

Award Categories 2012

EMS Educator Award
EMS Medical Director Award
EMS Administrator Award
Public Information/Injury Prevention Award
Citizen Award
Private/Public Provider Award
Volunteer Provider Award
First Responder Award
Air Medical Service Award
Outstanding EMS Person of the Year
Telecommunicator of the Year
Regional Advisory Council of the Year
Trauma Facility of the Year

National EMS Memorial Service set for June

The 20th Annual National EMS Memorial Service will take place on June 23, 2012, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The event honors those in EMS who have given their lives in the line of duty. The 20 individuals being honored this year join 581 others previously honored by the National EMS Memorial Service. There are no Texans being added to the rolls this year.

The mission of the National EMS Memorial Service is to honor those in EMS who have given their lives in the line of duty, and to recognize the sacrifice they have made in service to their communities and their fellow citizens. Each year since 1992, hundreds of family members, friends, co-workers, EMS and political leaders, and colleagues from EMS agencies from around the nation gather together for the ceremony. Members of the honorees' families are presented with a medallion, symbolizing eternal memory; a U.S. flag that has flown over the Capitol, symbolizing service to the country; and a white rose, symbolizing undying love. Each honoree's name is engraved on a bronze oak leaf which is added to the National EMS Memorial. For more information go to www.nemsms.org.

On Duty