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MEETING MINUTES 8/11/2006

Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC)

Friday, August 11, 2006, 9:13 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Call to Order: Chair Edward M. Racht, MD called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. Members present include: Edward M. Racht, MD; Pete Wolf, EMT-P, Vice Chair; Mike Click, RN; Luis G. Fernandez, MD, FACS; Jodie Harbert III, LP; Vance L. Riley, MPA, LP; Shirley Scholz, RN, CCRN, EMT-P; and Tivy L. Whitlock. Members absent: Gary Cheek, RN, EMT; Fredrick N. Hagedorn, MD; Hector Longoria; F.E. Shaheen III, EMT-P; Joan Shook, MD; Ronald Stewart, MD; and Marti VanRavenswaay.

Approval of Minutes: *A motion was made by Mike Click, and seconded by Jodie Harbert III, to approve the meeting minutes from February 3, 2006 as well as May 19, 2006. All council members were in favor; the motion passed.*

Chair Report: Dr. Racht welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with the introduction of the newly- appointed Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) members by Governor Rick Perry. These members included: Tivy L. Whitlock; Luis G. Fernandez, MD; and Jodie Harbert III, LP. Dr. Racht also announced the re-appointments to GETAC of Pete Wolf, Vice Chair; and Shirley Scholz, and himself.

Dr. Racht then congratulated Maxie Bishop, LP, on being hired as state EMS director and also congratulated Donald Gordon, MD, PhD, for being honored as the American Red Cross Health and Safety Volunteer of the Year.

Dr. Racht reported that the next step for the EMS National Scope of Practice is not entirely clear, but that the document must be evaluated by each of the states in the near future. He suggested that the suggested that the Education Committee should be the first committee to discuss this in the next six months.

Dr. Racht then spoke about the current committee structure of GETAC, which includes eight standing committees and several task force groups. He stated his intention is to ensure that the structure is effective and that the topic would be discussed at the next GETAC meeting in November, which will be in Dallas.

Dr. Racht reminded everyone that it is necessary for all committee and council members to complete the Texas Open Records and Open Meetings training videos before December 31, 2006. Failure to complete both training programs may result in suspension of the member from the committees and/or Council.

There was no representative in attendance to speak about the EMS Donor Referral Program at this meeting.

Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Staff Reports: Kathryn C. Perkins, Interim Assistant Commissioner and Director for Health Care Quality Section (HCQS), began her report by announcing the upcoming retirement of Eduardo Sanchez MD, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Commissioner, on October 1, 2006. There will be a nationwide search for his replacement.

Ms. Perkins informed the Council that she has been attending several legislative sessions concerning the Legislative Appropriation Requests (LAR) and was informed that all state agencies must submit a draft budget plan that includes a potential ten percent (10%) budget cut for the coming fiscal year 2007. Ms. Perkins stated that she has determined that potential EMS\trauma system budget cuts would be coming from "3588" monies to meet this requirement. Ms. Perkins expressed that the agency would not be amenable to eliminating positions nor reducing funding for the programs that benefit the agency.

Ms. Perkins continued with her report by stating that Medicare rates have become an issue and needs attention. She requested discussion and recommendations from relevant committees

Ms. Perkins then spoke about disaster planning for medical special needs program, and she noted it has been revised and recommended for approval. The GTAC Emergency/Disaster Task Force provided great assistance in the development and revision of this plan, and hospital stakeholders have been mailed a copy of the guidelines.

Ms. Perkins informed everyone that, after discussion with the Governor's Division of Emergency Management, there will be a revised and updated Memorandum of Agreement for Mutual Aid in Disaster ground ambulance contract available possibly by next week. All EMS providers that have already signed a contract will be allowed to complete the revised version.

Ms. Perkins commented that EMS provider reimbursement issues relating to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have are ongoing and that DSHS is still working with the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to achieve resolution.

Ms. Perkins then informed everyone there will be three new EMS compliance positions available in the Houston area to alleviate some of the workload pressures in that region. These positions include an EMS compliance manager and two field staff employees.

Ms. Perkins concluded her report by announcing the August 1, 2006 retirement of Rick Bays, former Assistant Commissioner for the DSHS Division of Regulatory Services.

Steve Janda, Director of the Office of EMS and Trauma Systems Coordination gave an update of the State EMS and Trauma Systems funding program. Mr. Janda noted that 248 Texas hospitals had currently achieved trauma designation status: Level I – 13; Level II – 10; Level III – 42; Level IV – 182; and there are approximately 10 hospitals in active pursuit of designation. Mr. Janda reminded everyone of the Texas EMS Conference being held in Dallas in November. Maxie Bishop, Jr., State EMS Director briefly discussed news from the National Registry of EMTs (NR), informing the Council that computerized testing will comense in 2007 and students will begin applying online as well as paying online. The registering student's scheduled testing date will not be confirmed until all information has been received and verified by NR. The student will be informed of his/her results twenty four hours after completion. NR is also looking for other cities as testing sites throughout Texas and has suggested they may begin testing on the weekends if necessary.

Linda Jones, Program Manager of the Environmental Epidemiology and Injury Surveillance Group, reported that Texas EMS/Trauma Registry staff salaries are covered for another year with conditions. Because some of her staff members will be funded by other sources at DSHS, some requests for information and data processing may be delayed but her unit will work diligently to mitigate any delays.

STANDING COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE REPORTS:

Combined EMS Committee and Air Medical Committee – Chair Pete Wolf, representing the EMS Committee and Shirley Scholz, representing the Air Medical Committee reported that the committees discussed EMS subscription plans, focusing on the draft rule language proposal. He also reported that an insurance workgroup would be formed. Ms. Scholz reported the committees felt the advertising aspect of the subscription plans needed some attention as well and suggested proposing developing a plan for advertising agencies to seek approval from the commissioner with regards to where they advertise and also to inform the local 911 emergency officials of their services.

Combined Medical Directors and Pediatric Committees – In the absence of Pediatric Committee Chair Joan Shook, MD and Medical Directors Committee Chair Steve Ellerbe, DO, Dr. Racht reported that the committees addressed issues concerning the draft changes to the DSHS rules in Chapter 157.11, *EMS Provider Licensing* (pediatric-specific equipment). The Pediatric Committee discussed making it mandatory for emergency vehicles to carry pediatric equipment. Both committees agreed that a best practice document draft and protocol document drafts should be developed in order to better evaluate the concerns of both committees.

Air Medical Committee– Chair Shirley Scholz reported that the committee continued the discussion from the previous meeting with the EMS Committee concerning the EMS subscription plans. Ms. Scholz also reported that the committee discussed developing a task force that would collect data and information to report to the state concerning safety records in order to keep track of the statistics for comparisons. Ms. Scholz said there was no discussion on the draft rules at this meeting because the previous questions have not been answered and the discussion of this topic would raise even more concerns and questions. Until the current topics and concerns are taken care of, the committee will not move forward with their recommendations.

EMS Committee – Chair Pete Wolf reported that the committee will be able to move forward with recommendations for patient destination issues. Mr. Wolf also said that he will be having a meeting with DSHS staff for clarification of the so-called “gurney car” bills (HB 1126, SB 521). Mr. Wolf also reported the committee decided to send a letter to the Legislature concerning the ambulance services reimbursement.

Education Committee – Chair Jodie Harbert III reported the committee discussed the process of prescreening candidates for testing and needed to be reevaluated. Mr. Harbert informed the committee the Texas Fire Commission had a screening procedure they follow and would like to evaluate it for the possibility of mirroring its guidelines for the prescreening process. The committee looked at the 2003 National Instructor Guidelines and voted on replacing the 1986 guidelines with the 2003 guidelines. The committee discussed the HIPAA Compliance Update for EMS Educators Programs agenda and reported that they were able to find a vendor to produce the suggested video for new student orientation that will satisfy the necessary requirements with the possibility of having it ready by November. The committee also expressed concerns with the current requirements for students on the topic of Hepatitis B immunizations and expressed the idea of updating the necessary standard from the six months deadline to possibly of a four month deadline and may even want to lower the deadline to one month.

Injury Prevention – Chair Gary Kesling, PhD reported the committee discussed the importance of identifying existing data and to figure out a way to improve the process of collecting data and its interpretation. The committee felt it was important to make the data understandable for the public to view and be informed.

Medical Directors – Chair Steve Ellerbe, DO was not present to provide the committee report. Acting in his stead,

Committee member Mitchell R. Moriber, DO, reported that the committee discussed the Comprehensive Clinical Management Program (CCMP) draft. The program is nearing completion. All agencies interested in pursuing CCMP status in the future were encouraged to attend the educational session scheduled during Texas EMS Conference in Dallas.

Pediatric Committee – Chair Joan Shook, MD was not present to provide the committee report. Acting in her stead, Todd Maxson, MD, reported that there was a presentation about disaster planning for pediatric special needs patients. A legal opinion from Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) regarding pediatric trauma facility designation and receiving disproportionate share hospital (DSH) funding has been rendered in the affirmative. HHSC will begin working on rule language.

Stroke Committee – Chair Neal Rutledge, MD, reported that the committee discussed the training requirements for recognition and treatment of stroke, and it would be using the ACLS Case 10 model with modifications. Also discussed were early treatment protocols for rapid transport; and plans for coordination with other agencies and committees on the criteria for stroke facilities. It was suggested through public comment that the Pediatrics Committee and Education Committee also should be involved in this development.

Trauma Systems Committee – Chair Ronny Stewart, MD was not present to provide the committee report. Acting in his stead, Vice Chair Jorie Klein, RN, reported that the committee reviewed the public comments and letters that were sent to the Office of EMS and Trauma Systems Coordination in regards to proposed rules 157.125 – Requirements for Trauma Facility Designation and 157.128 – Denial, Suspension, and Revocation of Trauma Facility Designation. The committee decided to continue to endorse the proposed rules with changes. The committee also discussed the HB3588 distribution and whether the distribution formula could be used to partially solve inadequate staffing and other problems hospitals may be encountering. Ms. Klein also expressed concern that new trauma verification criteria to be released soon by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the proposed state designation criteria could potentially differ, which could lead to disparities in the future.

Comprehensive Clinical Management Program (CCMP) Strike Force – Co-chair Leigh Anne Bedrich reported that a draft rule has been completed and an invitation has been extended for a meeting with the Medical Directors Committee for any further input or suggestions. The final rule should be ready for review in November 2006.

EMS and Trauma Regulatory Task Force – Co-chair Dudley Wait, EMT-P, reported that the committee chairs decided to meet August 30 to discuss the task force's three-fold charge that was set in the May meeting.

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness – Co-chair Eric Epley, EMT-P, reported that the task force had its first official meeting. In this meeting, the three chairs discussed the structure of the task force; ambulance criteria relevant to the task force; and its charges, including addressing topics such as appropriate transportation and statewide deployment. Mr. Epley also introduced the 18 newly appointed members of the task force. This task force was tentatively scheduled to meet August 22.

Other Reports/Public Comment on Action Items:

DSHS Preparedness Coordination Council – GETAC liaison Leon Charpentier reported that this council meets quarterly and that the emergency system for the advanced registration of volunteer health professionals' workgroup should have recommendations finalized within the month.

Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council –GETAC liaison Todd Maxson, MD, reported this council will be meeting on Friday, August 18, 2006 with the Texas EMS/Trauma Registry and discussing the advocacy strategy concerning the neurological resources.

DSHS Hospital Licensing Rules Review Workgroup – GETAC liaison Jim Parisi reported that so-called “niche” hospitals are being studied to determine what these hospitals have available for emergency care; the requirements for hospitals to have RNs scheduled at all times; and a new job category “anesthesia assistants” who are not licensed in Texas.

Texas Foundation for EMS/Trauma Care –Jorie Klein, RN, the newly elected president of the Texas Foundation for EMS/Trauma Care, said the foundation has elected officers and will be scheduling meetings soon.

General Public Comment:

Public comment was heard on a number of issues, including the request for DSHS to post schedules for other meetings that take place during the week of GETAC meetings and having some members of the public meet with legislators about the “gurney car” bills (79th Texas Legislature: HB 1126, SB 521). Dr. Racht asked the Council and stakeholders for suggestions for meeting dates for 2007 GETAC meetings. The only decisions made for these meeting dates were for February 21-23, and November 17-19, which will be in conjunction with the Texas EMS Conference in Houston. DSHS staff will search for available dates at hotels in May and August.

Action Items:

Action Items: A motion was made by Mike Click and seconded by Mr. Harbert to approve the February 3, 2006, and May 19, 2006 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Dates for 2006: November 18-20 in conjunction with the 2006 Texas EMS Conference in Dallas.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.