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MEETING MINUTES

Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC)

Friday, February 8, 2008, 9:10 a.m. – 12:57 p.m.

Call to Order: Chair Edward M. Racht, MD, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Members present included: Edward M. Racht, MD, Chair; Pete Wolf, 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; F.E. Shaheen III, EMT-P; Joan Shook MD; and Ronald Stewart, MD; Marti VanRavenswaay; and Tivy L. Whitlock. Members absent: Fredrick N. Hagedorn, MD; and Hector Longoria.

Approval of Minutes: *A motion was made by Luis G. Fernandez, MD, and seconded by Jodie Harbert, to approve the meeting minutes from November 19, 2007. All council members were in favor; the motion passed.*

Chair Report: Chair Edward Racht, MD, welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested a moment of silence be reserved for those members from Valley AirCare that were involved in a life-ending tragedy earlier in the week while performing their job duties. Dr. Racht also mentioned that everyone was invited to provide words of comfort for their colleagues at Valley AirCare for their loss on notes that would be circling throughout the meeting.

Dr. Racht summarized the discussions and ideas that resulted from the January 25-27, 2008 GETAC retreat held at the Y.O. Ranch in Kerrville, Texas. Discussions included refocusing on the strategic plan for the Texas EMS and Trauma Systems; reviewing the survey report conducted by the EMS and Trauma Regulatory Structure Task Force; and a possible outline for restructuring the GETAC formation which would be presented at this meeting for stakeholders to view, comment, and suggest improvements.

In conclusion, Dr. Racht informed the stakeholders of the next GETAC meeting, May 7-9, 2008, which will take place at the Austin Hilton Airport Hotel in Austin, Texas.

Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Staff Reports:

Kathryn C. Perkins, Assistant Commissioner for the Division for Regulatory Services, informed stakeholders that the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has begun working on its strategic initiatives and exceptional items requests for the next legislative session and is continuing to identify topics that will be a priority for the agency. DSHS is also working on creating a more comprehensive plan for the next legislative session which will commence in November.

Ms. Perkins discussed the difficulty that DSHS has in recruiting and retaining qualified professionals across the agency, such as architects and sanitarians. Ms. Perkins advised with continued the continued growth in population throughout the state, we have seen more hospitals constructed as well as new EMS providers forming but not equivalent growth in state regulatory personnel to accommodate our needs in rural and urban areas. With budget and funding cuts also impacting the agency, it is now up to the stakeholders and their active participation to assist us in accomplishing the proposed strategic initiatives for the regulatory services division.

Ms. Perkins also introduced the newest addition to the agency: Adolfo Valadez, M.D., M.P.H for the Division of Prevention and Preparedness Services, formerly a position filled by Debra Stabeno. Dr. Valadez was not able to attend this meeting, but plans to attend in the future.

Other concerns that Ms. Perkins discussed in her report are the excessive amount of emergency preparedness advisory groups that have formed since the events of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. DSHS has a primary council that advises the department about preparedness issues, and this is the Preparedness Coordination Council. Dr. David Lakey, Dr. Adolfo Valadez, and Ms. Kathy Perkins have been discussing how to ensure all these groups are coordinating properly and effectively in accomplishing their mutual goals of prevention and preparedness.

To conclude the Assistant Commissioner's report, Ms. Perkins gave a status update on rule implementation impacting EMS and Trauma as a result of legislation passed during the last session. Ms. Perkins reiterated that there were no monies appropriated for funds that are collected as a result of the red light camera bill, but the draft rule will be taken to the DSHS Council in April 2008, if GETAC approves the rules at this meeting. In other legislative updates, the Gurney Car Bill which was included in Senate Bill (SB) 10 and the Epi Pen rule which was in House Bill (HB) 2827 were submitted to the DSHS Council last week. Other rules that were reviewed were 157.11, 157.38, and 157.44.

All of these rules were endorsed by the DSHS Advisory Council and will be going out to Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) for further review.

Steve Janda, Director of the Office of EMS and Trauma Systems Coordination, reported there will be 3588 monies dispersed in late March for the anticipated amount of \$51.7M. Mr. Janda concluded his report with an explanation that discussion and possible action by the Council on DSHS rule at Title 25 of the Texas Administration Code, 157.133-Requirements for a Stroke Facility Designation would be postponed until the May 9, 2008 meeting at the request of the Stroke Committee.

Casey Blass, Director of Disease Prevention & Intervention Section, reported that he has been working with stakeholders on the issues concerning the Texas EMS-Trauma Registry. Since the last GETAC meeting, there have been two workgroup meetings conducted to discuss possible solutions to the issues with the Trauma Registry. Several themes that arose from these discussions were: DSHS constraints and problems in operating the registry; DSHS openness to any and all options, including outsourcing;

falling short on stakeholder involvement; and identifying funding from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in order to move forward. Progress reports that resulted from these discussions are: securing funds from TxDOT; working on a larger application fund for the following year with TxDOT; funds for this year (contracting with Texas EMS, Trauma, and Acute Care Foundation (TETAF)); work with TETAF and the information gathered from stakeholders concerning the user requirements on how the new Trauma Registry should look and how it will serve all users of the registry in Texas. Based on stakeholder feedback, he reported that it is best to say that a new registry should emerge instead of trying to make adjustments to the current one. He stated that all discussion and planning regarding the registry should take place in coordination with stakeholders and ensure their input and involvement to prevent this type of situation from reoccurring.

He also reported other items involving the Texas EMS Trauma Registry include the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council meeting several weeks ago and that it has finalized its legislative agenda which will be ready to submit for the next legislative session. The council has made the Texas EMS-Trauma Registry its top priority and has created a “legislative action team”, which is being headed by Paula Yuma from the Dell Children’s Medical Center of Central Texas.

Standing Committee/Task Force Reports:

Air Medical Committee – Chair Shirley Scholz, RN, reported the committee continues to work on rules pertaining to air medical programs. The committee partially reviewed the draft document concerning the alternative state survey process program criteria which would serve as a substitute for Commission on Accreditation of Air Medical Services (CAMTS) standards for air ambulance licensing and will continue to review it during the next meeting.

EMS Committee – Chair Pete Wolf, EMT-P was not able to attend, and in his place Vice-Chair Dudley Wait, EMT-P presided over the meeting. There were not enough committee members present at this meeting for a quorum. The committee had an extensive discussion on the issue of EMS as an essential service in reference to the event that occurred in the Houston/Galveston area and their workforce commission. EMS was being removed from the list of highly skilled professions resulting in cuts to EMS scholarship programs. Other topics brought up for discussion included: exposure concerns to meningitis and a suggestion to conduct a comprehensive examination of overall exposure to infectious diseases; a summary of the January 11, 2008 Education Committee workgroup held in Austin, Texas led by Chair Jodie Harbert; information on TxDOT grants for Rural EMS to reimburse costs for classes; and Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) Leadership Academy program that creates standard training and recognition process through tactical, tasks, and strategic levels of the program.

Education Committee – Chair Jodie Harbert, LP, reported the committee met in Austin, Texas on January 11, 2008, where several topics were discussed including the Stroke System of Care study that awards Continuing Education (CE) credits. Committee

member Scotty Bolleter, EMT-P presented information on simulation training in lieu of clinicals, and stated many textbooks and programs are available for simulation training. The concern on criminal background checks was discussed in this meeting and a letter was drafted to be reviewed by Assistant Commission Kathryn C. Perkins. The letter requests that background checks be performed for applicants in search of reciprocity as well as all applicants in general. Another letter was drafted by the committee to be sent to the Houston/Galveston Area Council (HGAC) Work Commission to address the current event of cutting scholarships from all EMS programs. Three members of the Education Committee, Lance Villers, Lorie LeFevers, and James Shiplet, developed a survey for EMS educators to be distributed in May 2008 in reference to education. The committee is planning on having national accreditation of programs by 2013, but funding continues to be an issue and many programs would need to upgrade from an associate to a bachelor's degree level in order to be in compliance for this plan. In conclusion, the committee is tentatively planning to conduct a workgroup meeting again either April 4th or April 11th in Dallas, Texas. Information on this meeting will be dispersed to stakeholders when plans are finalized.

Injury Prevention Committee – In the absence of chair Gary Kesling, committee member Rick Moore reported that the committee discussed the idea of having an Injury Prevention booth at the upcoming EMS Conference being held in Fort Worth, Texas in November. The committee was reminded that articles for the Texas EMS magazine should be sent in soon and to make sure to indicate that the editorial board was ready to review them. The discussion about indexing the Texas EMS Magazine for research articles also came up in the meeting. John Villanacci of the Texas EMS-Trauma Registry reported to the committee on the progress of possible solutions to the Registry and mentioned the use of Texas EMS, Trauma, and Acute Care Foundation (TETAF) as a resource for stakeholder input on this issue. A presentation was made by Sean Carter and Jenny Carter (son and mother) during the general public comment portion of the meeting which included their experience about Sean being a traumatic brain injury survivor after being in a car accident involving an intoxicated driver. The committee would like to ask the EMS-Trauma Registry to provide data concerning the top five traumatic causes of death, disability, and most costly occurrences; this data will be utilized in developing future statewide prevention projects. Discussions concerning the DSHS rule at Title 25 of the Texas Administration Code, 157.132-Regional Trauma Account, regarding fund disbursement from traffic signal enforcement took place and the committee would like to support the rule as written by the Trauma Systems Committee. The Data Informatics and Research Task Force (DIRT) did not meet.

Medical Directors Committee – Chair Steve Ellerbe, DO reported that the committee was given a presentation on alterations of standards of care by the medical directors disaster working group. Concerns with liability exposure in a disaster situation, how to staff bus ambulances, what steps should be initiated and when the appropriate time would call for these steps were discussed in detail at this meeting. He reported it would be beneficial to come up with a checklist or outline with these answers if at some point in time Texas is receiving assistance from personnel outside the state and everyone can follow a general outline. A suggestion to create some sort of memorandum of agreement

for this issue was suggested but discussions were not finalized. What the committee is looking for is something that could be handed out to the providers; then forwarded over to the agency to be reviewed by the appropriate and selected group of people for verification purposes; and possibly forwarded to the Governor's Office for approval and endorsement. The last item discussed was the topic of infectious disease exposure and the lack of an existing system to address these issues in a uniformed manner, which the committee is in favor of making a recommendation to develop for the protection of public safety personnel.

Pediatric Committee – Chair Joan Shook, MD, reported the committee discussed the issues concerning the Trauma Registry and strongly suggested that the agency should consider the idea of purchasing a commercialized product that is available for the Trauma Registry's needs as well as being compatible with the programs used by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) in hospitals to serve a more efficient purpose. The Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) National Resource Center survey results could be of assistance to the Trauma Registry staff when weighing out options for the anticipated changes to the Trauma Registry. There was also a great deal of concern about the prerequisites set by EMSC projects in regards to grant funding which the Trauma Registry receives assistance from and the renewal period. The committee will transition the work over to a sub-committee and to the Texas Pediatrics Society to address these issues and requirements. The committee identified an emergency preparedness product that is deemed appropriate for school that will facilitate care, and it will promote interface between EMS and school districts.

Stroke Committee – In the absence of chair Neal Rutledge, MD, GETAC Liaison Mike Click, RN, reported that the committee reviewed the draft DSHS rule at Title 25 of the Texas Administration Code, 157.133-Requirements for a Stroke Facility Designation. The committee also discussed the differences between rules and guidelines pertaining to this draft; and how these rules and guidelines interact as well as effect provided care. Specifically, the concerns about assuring the recommended transportation plans and alternate facility designations and performances were talked about in this committee meeting. After detailed discussion, it was recommended that the recommendations about the draft rule be deferred until the EMS training program subcommittee, DSHS stroke facility subcommittee, and transport plan subcommittee review the document and provide needed input. The tentatively scheduled workgroup meeting to modify this draft will take place April 12, 2008. The committee has recommended that that draft rule be removed from the possible action items itinerary on the GETAC agenda until further notice. The committee voted to remove item "(H) regional medical control"; from item (3) *the following components have been addressed; under (n) DSHS may review the plan to assure that:*.

Trauma Systems Committee – Chair Ronald Stewart, MD, reported that the committee discussed the DSHS rule at Title 25 of the Texas Administration Code, 157.132-Regional Trauma Account, regarding fund disbursement form traffic signal enforcement and approved the draft language as presented to the committee with the exception of eliminating section (d) *Calculation Methods*; (1) *Hospital Allocations*; (E) *For purposes*

of paragraph (1) “of this subsection, the department may approve the use of an alternate hospital allocation formula...”. The committee also discussed the Comprehensive Advance Life Support (CALS) program in lieu of the Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC) given to nurses in trauma centers; and was not in favor of this proposed change. The committee would like to further discuss possible recommendations for changes at the next meeting.

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness Task Force—Eric Epley, EMT-P, reported that the task force will be having its next meeting on March 25, 2008 from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. and on March 26, 2008 from 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. at the Texas Hospitals Association (THA) building in Austin. Mr. Epley met with TPAC in San Antonio to ensure that both groups were headed in the same direction and trying to accomplish similar goals. Both task force groups realize there are many issues concerning preparedness plans, but it was concluded that each task force should remain focused on individual issues and still hold joint meetings periodically for updates and information. A group of people from around the state has been assembled to work alongside the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) in developing a curriculum for an Ambulance Strike Team Force Leadership courses. The developing task force will be reviewed on February 29, 2008; and, planning that the results of this review are in favor of this task force, should be revealed sometime late March. There has been \$30,000 set aside by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) for the needed training in developing this task force. Other topics that were discussed at this meeting were: the Pediatrics Committee “white paper”; plans to consolidate the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for disaster response contracts; the State Clinical Advisory Board; and liability relief for altered standards of care.

DSHS Preparedness Coordination Council – No report was made available.

Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council – Todd Maxson, MD reported that the council is seeking permanent funding for the Texas EMS-Trauma Registry as well as for the Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation program. A DVD was produced to benefit patients, family members, and survivors of traumatic brain injuries, which provides educational information and valid resources. This DVD is free of charge and available throughout the state. There was also discussion pertaining to specific needs of children’s hospitals that will be continued and presented to GETAC at a later time. The council would like to create a position paper on pediatric hospitals that are not associated with medical centers suggesting that if these centers met the ACS rules for Level I criteria, the state could possibly consider designating them as well. The benefit of this would be to motivate hospitals to pursue Level I designations.

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

Texas EMS, Trauma, and Acute Care Foundation (TETAF)— Jorie Klein, RN, reported that the foundation will meet February 26, 2008 at the Embassy Suites in Dallas, Texas to look at the following initiatives: hiring of staff, reviewing bylaws, and to come up with a strategic plan for problems associated with the Trauma Registry. Ms. Klein would like to create a workgroup with Linda Jones, Program Manager, Environmental

Epidemiology and Injury Surveillance Group, to come up with questions and suggestions from the stakeholders to address their concerns and needs from the Trauma Registry. The foundation would like to send a survey to health care entities in order to obtain feedback on solutions for the Trauma Registry. The foundation informed the stakeholders of two new divisions that were added to the foundation: Pediatrics Division and a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Division. The foundation has finalized a trauma designation process including surveyors, forms, and other necessary tools to move forward within the next two weeks. Representatives from several of the foundation's divisions provided a brief report about the progression of their projects. Information shared from these representatives included: updates on the Comprehensive Clinical Management Program (CCMP); rules of division for the task force and trying to standardize criteria that the state will accept; stroke criteria; and the need for more physician participation.

General Public Comment:

Public comments were provided by several stakeholders that mainly focused on the PowerPoint presentation made by Dr. Racht concerning the possible reconstruction of GETAC. The purpose of this restructuring is to improve the council by: providing more freedom to combine meetings when necessary; allot more public comment time as well as committee discussion; provide better representation in each of the committees and subcommittees; and ease travel arrangements for impacted members and stakeholders. A comment was made to reduce the number of reports coming from the Office of EMS/Trauma Systems; stakeholders were very receptive to this idea. A suggestion was made to change the name of the segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) subcommittee to one that is more inclusive of other cardiac care professions. Another suggestion was to possibly contract with TETAF to help with the administrative duties of subcommittees. Details of the GETAC retreat held in January, including the restructuring plans, were not shared until this meeting in order to ensure equitable input from all stakeholders and committee members. It was suggested to continue conversations and to delay voting on the restructuring of GETAC until the meeting in May so stakeholders would have a chance to review and share the plan with members of their community and/or employment. The final public comment made was by F.E. Shaheen, III, EMT-P, and he announced his resignation from GETAC. Mr. Shaheen informed the stakeholders that he is working with TAA for assistance and input on a possible replacement.

Action Items:

A motion was made by Jodie Harbert for the recommendation of a letter to Kathryn C. Perkins, RN, to request background checks on all EMS applicants. A friendly amendment was made by Jodie Harbert to specifically ask for federal background checks and to specify types of applicants that this should apply to. This revised motion was made by Jodie Harbert and seconded by Luis Fernandez, MD, to recommend a letter to Kathryn C. Perkins, RN to request federal background checks on all

recertifications; all reciprocity certification licensure; and all EMS applicants. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Ronald Stewart, MD and seconded by Mike Click, RN to approve and move forward with draft DSHS rule: Section 157.132-Regional Trauma Account, regarding funds disbursement from traffic signal enforcement; as amended in Section (d) Calculation Methods, (I)Hospital Allocation, (E); by the Trauma Systems Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Jodie Harbert and seconded by Tivy Whitlock to approve a letter to be sent to Barbara Murphy, who is the coordinator for Planning and Evaluation for the Houston/Galveston Area Work Commission in support of EMS and in support of meeting with the group to help them make a more informed decision on the funding of EMS education. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Racht asked for the permission of the council to call Ms. Murphy to discuss the issue from the previous motion on behalf of the Governors EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) and all stakeholders. Mr. Harbert suggested a conference call with Ms. Murphy that should include members of the EMS Committee and Education Committee. The council accepted the suggestion and accepted the request.

A motion was made by Luis Fernandez, MD and seconded by Mike Click, RN to develop an infectious disease exposure response workgroup for First Responders as recommended by the Medical Directors Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Luis Fernandez, MD and seconded by Ronald Stewart, MD for the GETAC chair to draft a letter to be sent to the Governor's Office and to the Commissioner of the Department of State Health Services that would reflect the recommendation of the Trauma Regulatory Structure Task Force Report to improve the function of EMS and Trauma Systems inside the Department of State Health Services. The motion passed unanimously.

Future meeting dates in 2008: May 7-9, 2008; August 13-15, 2008; and November 22-24 in Fort Worth, Texas in conjunction with the 2008 EMS Conference.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 p.m.