

**Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board
Regional Collaboration and Preparedness Subcommittee Meeting
June 14, 2022
Hunter's Ambulance Service**

Present: Kevin Ferrarotti – Hunter's Ambulance/HHC, Robert Zeigler- ERM, Judi Reynolds - OEMS, Phil Coco – Westfield Fire, Tom Rozanski – Old Lyme, William Fitzmaurice – SCCEMS Regional Council, Bruce Baxter – New Britain EMS, Laurie DAquila – East Haddam (call in), Don Scranton – East Hampton(call-in)

Call to Order:

Kevin Ferrarotti called the meeting to at 6:33 PM and commented on the lack of attendance and participation being a consistent issue. Introductions were made.

Kevin gave a brief background on why the CEMSAB Collaboration and Preparedness Committee decided to call a meeting of service leadership as a follow up to the meeting held at EMSPRO last year. Concern over smaller services no longer being viable due to lack funding, lack of recognition by their municipalities and staffing issues were the leading factors in calling the meeting. There will be a follow up meeting at the symposium to be held at Hartford Hospital in the Fall. Kevin noted that concerns voiced at the previous meeting are evolving quicker than anticipated. Discussion followed on town leadership having a lack of understanding about budgetary challenges faced by services and the lack of recognition of EMS being an equal partner in the public safety structure.

Bruce Baxter stated the bottom line is funding, in the past funding that was available was focused on training, equipment and technology. Funding for educating town leaders and government officials was not available leaving EMS at a disadvantage. Discussion followed on Medicare, Medicaid and insurance reimbursements not keeping pace with expenses. Bruce Baxter also commented on the loss of staff during Covid compounded by increased wages in other career fields that EMS is unable to match contributing to the current crisis. Bruce noted he feels a regional model that puts the patient first and balances with a reasonable return could be a solution. With dramatically increased costs the current model is not sustainable, the funding base must change, municipal funding must be a factor.

Discussion followed on staffing issues and lack of retention. Phil Coco spoke about Old Lyme soliciting funds in the 1980's for daytime staffing that has been successful and continues to be supported by the town. Funding acquired through billing goes toward equipment and ambulance replacement. This is a unique model built and promoted over time. A certain amount of calls is needed to support staffing and equipment, small services cannot meet that benchmark, outside funding is needed to remain viable. Phil spoke about educating the public.

Tom Rozanski spoke about the availability of education. Classes are not always available or in a location that is optimal for new staff coming in. The difficulties of running classes within the

school systems were discussed. Conducting a class is difficult due to the time commitment for both the students, class coordinators, instructors and overall costs. Students are attending classes, but they have no intention of practicing within the EMS system. Question was asked if there was a way to determine how many providers are actively taking calls as opposed to the number of providers that are certified or licensed. Judi will speak with Mike Zacchera and ask if he can pull those numbers.

The use of 9-1-1 for non-emergency calls and the stressors that puts on ambulance services, hot versus cold response, overuse of paramedics for non-emergent calls and development of alternative methods of caring for non-emergent patients were discussed.

Discussion followed on the State EMS Plan, Town Local EMS Plans, promoting services, highlighting accomplishments, recognizing team members and cultivating relationships with the press. Bruce Baxter suggested developing a presentation that can be taken "on the road" to educate the public and raise awareness.

Possible options for sharing resources, possible regionalization and better utilization of ALS were discussed.

How to solicit funding assistance from the municipalities and educate them concerning the current status and needs of the EMS system were discussed at length. Bob Zeigler suggested a presentation at CCM would be an opportunity to reach municipal leaders.

Kevin Ferrarotti suggested an anonymous survey to determine service needs and status.

Another meeting will be planned to coincide with the HHC EMS Symposium in the Fall.

Discussion EMS Leadership Guide:

The status of the Leadership Guide was not discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judi Reynolds

Judi Reynolds for
CEMSAB Collaboration Committee Chair