ALABAMA
Emergency Medical Services and Trauma

EMS UPDATE
News from the Office of EMS and Trauma

IN an effort to promote better communication within the EMS community, the Office of EMS and Trauma will begin publishing this web-based newsletter on a bimonthly basis. The success of this endeavor will depend largely on you, the EMS Community.

In order to be effective, we need your input and suggestions on topics of interest and use to you as an EMS provider. Let us know what you'd like to see included in this newsletter by e-mailing us at emsnews@adph.state.al.us.

You can also use this e-mail address to send us information regarding upcoming training events or to add your personal e-mail address to our mailing list. If, for any reason, the e-mail address that you put on your individual EMT license application has changed, please let us know. Until then, don't forget to tell your co-workers about this newsletter and check out our website www.adph.org/ems. We'll keep you updated!

MEETINGS & EVENTS

June 5—State Emergency Medical Control Committee
Alabama Power—Clanton, AL

Check out the Center for Emergency Preparedness website adph.org/cep for upcoming training opportunities on Explosion and Blast Injuries.

DIRECTOR'S WORDS

The past eight months have been quite a learning experience. I have come to understand quickly that you, the EMS community, are a diverse and passionate group. I hope that you will come to appreciate the fact that my goal, like yours, is to provide a better EMS system for the people of Alabama. I know that we can, working together, accomplish this common goal.

One of the top initiatives of the Office of EMS & Trauma is to explore the potential resources available for equipment and training for the EMS community. We are using funds from our federal EMSC grant to add $5,000 to each of the Regional EMS agencies' contracts in order for them to provide Pediatric Education for Prehospital Personnel (PEPP) for you (the providers). We have also committed approximately $73,000 to the Regions in order for them to re-supply and update AEDs in the HRSA-designated counties. Contact your regional agency if you think that you or your service can benefit from either the PEPP training or the AED updates!

The drafted EMS legislation is still on hold. Providers are working on drafting suggested revisions. After those suggestions are submitted to us for consideration, we'll revise the draft legislation for your review.

An emergency rule was implemented this past week regarding the issuance of Fluid and Drug Authorization to air ambulances which utilize Alabama licensed EMT-Paramedics. A permanent rule will be adopted the near future. The comment period is open through May 7. The public hearing is scheduled for April 24 at 10 a.m. at the RSA Tower, 15th floor, Room 1586.

Beginning with this newsletter, I hope that we can improve communications from our office to you, the EMS provider. Please feel free to contact me or any of my staff if you have questions or need clarification on issues. Just remember that this newsletter is a work in progress, and we'll be making changes as we get feedback from you on how to improve. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dennis Blair, Director
Office of EMS & Trauma

NEED A CAREER CHANGE?

Want to apply for a job with the Office of EMS & Trauma? We've been working closely with State Personnel to change the requirements for our entry level EMS personnel. The new classification, Emergency Medical Services Specialist- 40721, will be opened in the very near future. The requirements have been changed to allow work experience to be substituted for educational requirements (a college degree). Pay range- $29,392.80-$50,404.80.

We have three EMS Specialist positions available. Go online at www.personnel.state.al.us to watch for the job announcement and to see how to apply. Call us if you're interested or have questions. We'll post on our website when we have confirmation that the register is open and you can submit your application. Don't delay, get your application completed and ready to submit!

We also have an opening for an Emergency Medical Services Coordinator- 40723. We're looking for an AL licensed Paramedic with QA/QI and EMS data experience to oversee our

EMS Data System. Pay range - $36,676.80-$55,560.00. This classification will be opening soon. Call us for more information or go to www.person-nel.state.al.us to watch for the announcement and to see how to apply.

AIMS UPDATE

You may have noticed the recent e-mail that I sent to providers regarding the AIMS System. The devastating tornadoes in Enterprise and Wilcox County caused the first real "Stand-Up" of the AIMS System. Again, thanks to all that responded. If you did not respond because your current e-mail address was not being monitored, please consider changing your AIMS notification to another, more closely monitored e-mail address. Keep in mind that potential reimbursement for response will be tied to the number given to you by EMA via the AIMS System. Hurricane season is quickly approaching!

IMPAIRMENT: AN EMS CRISIS?

Just since August of 2006, 22 Alabama licensed EMTs have been identified as "impaired" and the number seems to be on the rise. According to one licensed healthcare professional advocate who works closely with OEMST, approximately 10% of each healthcare profession group (doctors, nurses, EMTs) is treated at some time in his/her career for impairment. If this is true, as many as 1,200 of Alabama's EMTs are dealing with or have dealt with impairment issues.

An impaired EMT is a potential danger to patient care. It's the EMS service's responsibility to report suspected impairment to OEMST. A licensed EMT who becomes impaired due to drug or alcohol use, addiction, or mental illness may avoid disciplinary action if he or she seeks help at an OEMST approved treatment facility. If you think that you or a member of your service has an impairment issue, please notify Mark Jackson of the Office of EMS & Trauma IMMEDIATELY. Help is available to those who ask for it!

PILOT NEMSIS PROJECT UNDERWAY

We learned some valuable lessons from past EMS data collection experiences. Primarily, EMS service participation and training are the keys to success. In order to encourage participation, there will be three ways to submit data through the new AL e-pcr system. Individual EMS provider services will determine which method of data submission works best for them. Each method will be piloted and implemented in phases:

Phase I – Third Party Vendors

The pilot project is currently underway with seven third-party vendors being tested for NEMSIS compliance and AL e-pcr validation. When the pilot is completed, we'll post the list of third party vendors who meet the criteria and are deemed "approved." Services may then begin submitting data using the "approved" third party vendors.

Phase II – E-PCR Software Installation on Personal Computers

A pilot project will begin June 1, 2007. Participating pilot services will be provided FREE software and training. Upon pilot completion, we'll make the software available (FREE) to those services who want to submit EMS data using this methodology.

Phase III – Web Application

A pilot project will be initiated in mid-April for providers who plan to submit their EMS data directly online using a web version of the pcr. We hope to have around 10 provider services participate in this pilot project. Once the pilot is completed and the "bugs are worked out," we'll turn this version on for statewide use and notify service providers that it is available.

PROJECT GOAL:
STATEWIDE EMS DATA SUBMISSION BY OCTOBER 1, 2007

HAS YOUR EMS SERVICE SUBMITTED A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE PLAN?

Even if your service doesn't carry Morphine, a plan must be submitted to OEMST. (This is applicable to ALS I.V. Fluid/Drug Services only.

ONLINE EMT LICENSE RENEWAL

● As of March 15, 2007, 1300 online renewals have been processed.

● EMT and Driver Con-ed must be completed by January 31 of the year that your license expires!

● A $50 late fee will be charged for applications postmarked after March 31, 2007.

● The online EMT license renewal link will be disabled at midnight March 31, 2007.

Special thanks to Mobile, Mountainbrook, and Tuscaloosa Fire Departments for their timely and efficient submission of individual EMT license applications!

UPCOMING TOPICS OF INTEREST

We've applied for federal funds to provide pediatric equipment to you, the licensed providers. We'll let you know if we're successful in getting the funds.

● Status of the EMS legislation
● Status of Trauma System legislation
● Status of the NEMSIS project

We've been working to get funds from Homeland Security to provide funds for Disaster Preparedness training. We know that we've gotten the funds to provide three one-day "Emergency Awareness" training programs for you, the providers. We're in the early stages of planning, so we'll keep you updated.

NATIONAL REGISTRY NEWS AND NOTES

On January 1, 2007, National Registry transitioned all pencil-and-paper exams to computer based testing. Why did National Registry make the move to computer based testing?

- Rapid turnaround of test results,
- Increased testing flexibility,
- More accurate evaluation,
- Increased security, and
- Easier registration and scheduling.

Test centers are located in the following Alabama cities:

- Birmingham
- Decatur
- Dothan
- Mobile
- Montgomery

Nationwide, 6,360 EMT-Basics and 1,396 EMT-Paramedics have completed CBT.

- 64% of examinees have scheduled their examination via the internet,
- 94% of examinees were able to test at their preferred test center,
- 90% of examinees were able to test on their preferred day, and
- 74% of EMTs said the exam accurately or very accurately reflects what you need to know to safely and effectively practice.

Registration and exam fees effective January 1, 2007, for Computer Based Testing:

- $70.00 for EMT-Basic
- $110.00 for Paramedic

For more information regarding Computer Based Testing, go to www.nremt.org