

BUCKS COUNTY EMS NEWSLETTER-FEBRUARY 2006

(PUBLISHED EVERY OTHER MONTH AND DISTRIBUTED TO PROVIDERS)

FROM THE DIRECTOR

ID Cards - ID cards are coming to Bucks County! Yes, yes, they are! We have been talking about it for years; however, I can tell you that we are now ready to go. The cards will be just like a credit card with your picture on one side and your certification on the other side. We will be setting up "picture time" appointments in our office and then we hope to take this on the road for your convenience. We would like to thank Eastern PA EMS Council for their hard work and dedication. Without them we would not be able to start or complete this project.

Picture times we have scheduled at this time are:

Tuesday, March 14th from 10am-3pm.

Wednesday, March 22nd from 10am-3pm

Both dates are here in our office. You should call ahead just to confirm and you need to bring with you your driver's license. We cannot take your picture without your driver's license. Also, we can only take your picture and issue you an ID if you are registered in Bucks County. You can verify and check the region where you are registered on the State's con-ed website at

www.health.state.pa.us/emso.

Con-Ed - Con-ed is now easier than it have ever been. You can do them on-line (LMS), attend "Grand Rounds" or con-ed classes at some of the area hospitals, go to an EMT class (after registering with the instructor), or attend a squad sponsored con-ed class. Please realize that it takes time to get these classes posted to your certification. **DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!!** LMS takes 3-4 weeks to post and the regular con-ed classes take several weeks also. I would like to see paramedics already having their required 18 credits completed by October. EMTs (24 credits every 3 years) and First Responders (16 credits every 3

years) should have theirs completed 2-3 months prior to their expiration. Don't forget to email, fax, or mail a copy of your CPR card prior to your certification expiring. I am asking everyone with a PA State EMS Certification in the Bucks County Region to try to work out a way to complete their requirements before the deadline. I thank those of you who do more than the required credits in a very timely fashion; you make our work a whole lot easier!

SMART TAG Triage - SMART TAG Triage is coming to Bucks County. The PA Southeast Regional Counter-Terrorism Task Force, which encompasses Bucks, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Chester and Delaware Counties, has purchased complete set-ups for all 911 ambulances and initial kits for all QRS services within the five (5) counties. This is an effort to make all five (5) counties compatible during a large scale event.

SMART TAG triage has Purchase/Training requirements prior to delivery of the products to the organizations. Each Squad/QRS unit must send a training representative to a Train the Trainer class. This class will be taught by Colin Smart of SMART TAG. I ask that we have a good showing. Colin is traveling from London to teach these classes around the region.

The SMART TAG system is usable in all conditions and provides a permanent record of treatment and patient details that will survive the decontamination process. The triage tags have standard bar codes for tracking patients and is resistant to water, chemicals, and body fluid.

The training is scheduled for Tuesday, March 28, 2006, 9am-11 am or 1pm-3pm, at the Fire School.

CISM – Please join us in welcoming 27 new CISM members for our CISD team. We thank the new members for their dedication and interest in supporting the Bucks County Emergency Services system. We currently researching the possibility of scheduling another course in the near future.

Thank you to my staff for all the work that went into Bucks County's 1st EMS Graduation. You guys and gals are the best!

CPI

Medical Command Authorization - I have spent a majority of the month of January processing 187 Medical Command Authorization Forms. You have to wonder why does it take so long to process these forms? These are the same forms paramedics have been completing for years. Providers have been doing con-ed since the mid-1990's and paramedic con-ed is due the same time every year (kind of like New Year's Day is celebrated on the 1st of January every year). The amount of con-ed has never really changed since the beginning. Things that make you say hmmm?

Well, I would like to welcome you to my world. Con-ed seems to be the biggest problem with Medical Command Re-Authorization. The QA motto: How can we make it better? Is this a system problem or an individual problem?

When con-ed started, everyone scrambled for classes to get their credits done. Providers would even pay money for classes to get their credits done by December. The, computerized con-ed became more accessible, but for a fee. Now, we can do con-ed, for FREE, anywhere, anytime, with internet access. The Department of Health recognized that EMS providers do not make a lot of money, so they created this FREE on-line con-ed system. What more could you ask for? I am still not sure of a solution to help providers completed their con-ed in a timely manner. I will let you decide. Here are the top ten (10) reasons why providers did not have their con-ed completed:

10. "I did not know I needed con-ed."
9. "My computer crashed."
8. "I was looking for the squad's TV remote."
7. "I didn't know I had to fill out a con-ed dot card."

6. "They did not give me a con-ed dot card and I did not ask for one."
5. "I was at the class, ask my friends."
4. "I had a lot on my plate last year."
3. "I got married (I guess 365 times)."
2. "I can't get into LMS. I've tried since December 1st, I know it's December 30th, but I need 18 ceu's by tomorrow."

1. "Larry, I am a procrastinator; I can't help it. I do everything last minute."

Just remember, this is YOUR Medical Command, not ours.

Also, paramedics are required to submit a current CPR card to our office. This should be done before the end of the year.

Reminder: **START YOUR CON-ED TODAY!** It will be due the same time this year as it was last year. When you start hearing winter holiday music in department stores, be sure you have enough con-ed. Learn something new.

Drug Boxes - Over the past few months, there have been some changes with the County drug boxes. Some hospitals have chosen not to exchange drug boxes for every patient who receives a medication from the box. Instead, hospitals are exchanging medications "one for one" from their electronic medication distribution system. This will require services and their ALS providers to be sure they do not have expired medications in their vehicles and appropriate par amounts. Services that have vehicles out-of-service for an extended period of time must also check the dates of those medications not in the rotation. Hospitals have been exchanging expired medications one-for-one within reason. If you have numerous medications that have been expired for several months, they may not exchange them and the service will be responsible for the medications.

As always, if there are any questions or concerns, please contact me.

TRAINING/CON-ED

CPR Cards – It is not necessary to submit a current CPR card to our office unless the FR/EMT is within ninety (90) days of renewal. Although all providers are required to maintain a current Healthcare Provider or equivalent certification, it is the employer's responsibility to insure that a current certification is maintained. The only time our office needs proof of certification is at renewal time.

PEPP Course – We have a PEPP course scheduled for May. PEPP is Pediatric Education for Pre-Hospital Providers. This course is free with a refundable deposit. Please check our website for details and a pre-enrollment form.

Continuing Education Classes – Continuing education classes are registered on the State's website. Please refer to the website, at www.health.state.pa.us/emso to search around for classes.

Change of Address – It is your responsibility to notify the Regional Office when you move. Individuals are required to be registered in the region where they live, so if you move out-of-County, your registration will be transferred to that region.

Continuing Education Reports – You may check the status of your con-ed credits on the State's website at www.health.state.pa.us/emso. Please remember that it takes approximately 4 weeks from the time the Region scans the cards until the credits appear on your report. Con-ed Sponsors are required to submit the con-ed cards within ten (10) business days after the completion of the course. If you completed a course and it does not show on your report, contact the sponsor first to find out if they submitted the cards to the Regional office. The other reason a course may not appear on your report is if the con-ed card was completed incorrectly, spaces were completed at all, or if spaces had an X over them and another space in that same column was shaded in. Incomplete or incorrect cards will not scan and credit will not be given. Incomplete con-ed cards will be returned to the sponsor for correction.

Registering con-ed classes – Beginning January 1st, we will not be accepting copies of cards from classes that are PA approved con-ed courses. All courses must be registered by the sponsor through the State's on-line electronic registration process. If the course is not PA approved for con-ed, you need to submit the Con-ed by Endorsement application and the requirements listed.

Learning Management System (LMS) – This is the State's website where you can complete con-ed courses and obtain all your con-ed credits. You can subscribe to it through our website. There is a link on the website called LMS. After you complete the registration form, you will receive a confirmation email from the State in 5-7 business days. After you complete a course, it will automatically be transferred to your con-ed report in 3-4 weeks – do not send the certificates to our office. Do not wait until the expiration date of your certification to do this – the credits may not transfer before you expire.

Captain Al Haynes Seminar - Bucks County Emergency Management, along with the PA Southeast Regional Counter-Terrorism Task Force is sponsoring this exciting seminar featuring Sioux City Pilot Captain Al Haynes. He will speak about his life experience concerning the air crash that he survived on July 19, 1989 in Sioux City, Iowa. Captain Haynes was piloting United DC flight 232 enroute to Denver with 296 people on board when suddenly engine #2 suffered an uncontained catastrophic failure, causing a loss of three (3) of the airplanes hydraulic systems. Experts have stated there was no way anyone could control the airplane with this kind of damage. Under extraordinary circumstances, Captain Haynes remained calm and collected and managed to land the airplane. He is credited with saving the lives of 184 people. There are many lessons to be learned from Captain Haynes' experiences. We will be focusing on the importance of post traumatic stress debriefing, teamwork during a disaster, and unified command. Mr. Scott Forster, EOC Supervisor for PEMA will also speak about NIMS (National Incident Management System). This system provides a consistent nationwide template to enable Federal, State, Local, Tribal governments, private sector, and non-governmental organizations to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity, including

acts of catastrophic terrorism. Regardless if your incident is a natural disaster, accident, or an act of terrorism, you will handle it the same way, with teamwork and unified command. You will learn many lessons from this seminar. The seminar is scheduled for Saturday, March 25, 2006 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, at the Council Rock High School, 2002 Rock Way Road, Holland, PA. The target audience is police, EMS, fire, EMA, Public Works, and elected officials. For more information or to register, please call Harry Crohe, Bucks County EMA Office, at 215-340-8700.

Employer's Liability Program – Tri-Hampton Rescue Squad and Trevoise Fire Company will be hosting an Employer's Liability Program from Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Emergency Services Education and Consulting Group. It will be held on Monday, March 20, 2006, at 8:00 pm, at Twining Hall, Trevoise Fire Company, 4900 Street Road, Trevoise, PA. The principal speaker will be Dr. William Jenaway. The program will describe the various types of liability exposures most commonly faced by emergency service organization as well as administrative and operational methods to reduce or eliminate them. Dr. Jenaway will use case studies to illustrate the types of problems faced and how to manage them. Resources will be identified to help develop resolutions to particular problems. Local VFIS brokers will be on-hand to answer any questions about coverage and services VFIS can offer. There is no cost for this program and PA DOH CEU's have been applied for. For more information or to register, contact John Costello at exch114@aol.com or jcostello@tri-hampton.org.

Email Group – If you wish to be added to our email group, please send an email to Jason at jsdiefenderfer@co.bucks.pa.us. In your email, please include your first name, last name, and level of certification.

FROM THE REGIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Medical Decision Making Capability and Refusal of Prehospital Care
Gerald Wydro, MD
Regional Medical Director

The determination of whether a patient can refuse prehospital treatment and or transport is extremely

complex and involves both legal and medical components. We often speak of competency to refuse care. However, a more appropriate term is whether the patient has the Medical Decision Making Capability to refuse treatment or transport.

Competency is a legal term that addresses a person's ability to adequately and safely handle their affairs. This is different than the clinical concept of Medical Decision Making Capability (MDMC), in which a medical professional must assess a patient's ability to understand the nature and consequences of their decisions and to communicate their decisions in their own words based on this understanding. I think most of us in prehospital care have little trouble discerning that the intoxicated-head injured-combative patient has little MDMC and can likely not refuse care. But what about the mildly demented patient still living at home who does not want to go to the hospital?

In prehospital care, we are often called upon to determine someone's MDMC in difficult and stressful situations and under some of the most austere environments possible. This makes the determination of MDMC much more difficult and fraught with medical and legal consequences for the EMS provider. When a patient refuses medical care, treatment, intervention, or transport; the EMS provider must make a judgment of MDMC to assure the patient is able to refuse the treatment and or transport recommended.

The essence of MDMC is that a patient understands their medical condition and all of the options for the medical care of this condition. The medical professional must provide an overview of all possible treatment plans including the risks and benefits of those options. With this information, the patient is able to determine the course of action best for them. In EMS this includes something as basic as the decision to be transported via ambulance or private auto. The patient must have the capacity to understand the condition requiring transportation and the risks and benefits of the various modes of transportation.

Key indicators of a lack of MDMC include;

- 1) Altered Mental Status or Disorientation
- 2) Refusal of recommended treatment without adequate reasoning

- 3) Known history or evidence of recent impaired decision making

To help in the assessment of a patient as you determine their MDMC, assess each of the following questions in regard to the patient and their medical condition;

- 1) Does the patient understand their medical condition and the required treatment?
- 2) Can the patient reasonably apply the information to their medical condition?
- 3) Is the patient's reasoning consistent with the medical facts of their condition?
- 4) Can the patient clearly communicate their choices?

By using these four questions, the medical professional quickly gains insight into the MDMC of the patient. As you apply these key indicators to the patient, it becomes apparent whether or not the patient has the "right stuff" to refuse treatment and or transport by EMS. Some decisions of MDMC are very clear cut. Others are much more difficult and will require the resources of an EMS supervisor, family and friends, police officer, or the medical command physician.

As EMS providers we must become experts in determining MDMC for patients who are refusing prehospital treatment and or transport. A multitude of resources exist to assist in this determination, and we EMS owe it to our patients to make sure we know the in and outs of MDMC and refusal of care.

Next issue we will discuss the emerging role of intra-osseous access devices in EMS.

OUR WEBSITE – Our website address will be changing in the next few weeks. Our new website address will be www.bcehs.com. You can still access our current website and it will re-direct you when the change actually occurs.

WEBSITES

Please refer to the following websites for additional information:

The PA Department of Health, Bureau of EMS website for con-ed is: www.health.state.pa.us/emso

The PA Emergency Health Services Council website is: www.pehsc.org/research.htm.

HOW TO CONTACT US

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