

EMS Leadership Call

August 6, 2020

Present: Dan Batsie, Dan Wolfson, Ray Walker, Mike O'Keefe, Merrill Pine, Donna Jacob

COVID-19 Update - Low death rate thus far: 2 in 60 days. Also a low hospitalization rate. Strong work to keep this contained. Thanks to all the folks contributing to the team! Keep your guard up and maintain strong PPE use. This virus is still very much present.

Medical Director Update - Echoed what Dan said...keep your guard up. That virus is still lurking. Hope folks are deep into protocol training. Any questions now? 9/30 is the cutoff. Reach out with questions or concerns.

Also, increase in the number of overdoses around the state, so the new naloxone leave-behind program is even more important. Offer it to them...no judgement. Give them out at will. For now, we're just asking you leave the nasal dose. Eventually there will be a more official leave-behind kit.

EMSC Update – Colchester Rescue, Hartford Fire, and Williston Fire have now achieved PedSafe status. Thanks to all the agencies who have submitted applications since the announcement. The EMSC advisory committee will be working on reviewing these at our next meeting. There will be a pediatric High performance CPR train-the-trainer held here at 108 Cherry tomorrow (Friday). We will be working with Keith Hermiz to train more trainers and support them in training Vermont providers. Working on rescheduling pediatric emergency care coordinator orientation. Working on pediatric specific virtual conference topics.

Data Updates - (per Ray) no updates. Dan Batsie asked that folks check out some of the work the data team has been doing on the EMS website regarding COVID 19. RW Chelsea and Tom are working on June/July now.

Licensing Update – Agency license renewal applications went out a couple weeks ago. Let us know asap if you haven't received it.

NR announced yesterday that for EMRs due 09/30/20, they are not extending the deadline, but EMRs can now get all 16 hours online. They will decide soon on the online education limits for EMT, AEMT and Paramedic for 2021. More to come.

EMS Education - Still restrictions on group numbers, PPE, sanitizing equipment, etc., but classes and exams are being approved. Take steps to stay safe and it's okay to move forward.

Conference Update – Work is ongoing and the next meeting of the committee is tomorrow. Right now we have topics and speakers filled for the end of this year and the beginning of next year. Our intent was to have a dozen classes between the end of this year and next year, but it'll be more than that. We're working with the NY State Vital Signs Academy and they're nice enough to give us all of their favorite speakers and topics, so we're hoping to recreate some of those experiences. Announcements should be out next week.

Two Legislative Initiatives: Healthcare stabilization grants through AHS (<https://dvha.vermont.gov/covid-19>) and the Front-Line Employee Hazard Pay Initiative

(<https://humanservices.vermont.gov/>). Just FYI, our office was not consulted about these initiatives. While we do have more details than before. Dan has been fielding a lot of questions.

- Eligibility question about municipalities: This bill was designed not to include them. Hazard pay
- was defined in another legislative act specifically for municipalities. (Dan put info up for
- municipalities who choose to pay hazard pay. Think it's through AHS and Agency of Finance.)
- Volunteer agencies are also not eligible. It was not our intent. Made by the legislature without our consideration.
- What about the small agencies who have a few hours but do things like reimburse....not sure quite where those margins are.

Check out the application if you think it'll work for you. This grant requires you to have payroll services, pay payroll taxes, etc. but we've put the link to AHS on the website along with the application as well.

H965 – The committee that runs CARES funding has set aside \$ for education. We had another good meeting recently and there will be some compromise for us. We should be able to initiate our education plan as the Advisory Committee built it. A voucher system will be created to use for all aspects of EMS education. If a person wants to take a class between now and the end of the year, there will be an app up on our website soon. Funding is limited to folks who are operational on a VT licensed EMS roster. The application would be signed by the candidate's VT head of service, stating the applicant is operational and on the roster. If that's the case, we'd pay their tuition. Caps have been set by the Advisory Committee and are as follows:

EMR Class	\$500
EMT Class	\$1,000
AEMT Class	\$1,500
Paramedic Core Content	\$18,000

Great opportunity except window is limited...must begin the course by 12/31/2020. While it seems likely that Congress will extend this deadline, please spread the word to your services and communities and act quickly. As soon as we get final approval from AHS, we'll get the application process formalized and up and get as many people into programs as we can. Free ride!! As EMS leaders, spread the word!!

- If I live in Bennington, can I go to Albany or Greenfield? Yes, as long as the program is approved by VT EMS....but the normal ones that VTers have used will likely be recognized.

Hybrid EMT – Bennington Rescue has been selected. Bill Camarda has 3 programs slated to start between now and the deadline. Central online program for didactics; then will work with local organizations or regions (cohorts) to do psychomotor skills. Local cohorts will depend on where the candidates are located. A candidate may have to travel as it's not our intention that every agency operate as a cohort, but hope that agencies will choose to support their candidates.

We've heard there is other earmarked EMS money as part of COVID-19 relief but have no details at this point. We've posed questions to AHS and should know more soon. It'll mirror the healthcare stabilization grants that are available.

Funding Assistance – The Agency is entertaining bids from vendors interested in assisting agencies in filling out these funding applications. Thus far, six (6) vendors were identified last week. I believe early next week a vendor will be selected. Likely to be a CPA/accounting firm. This will help you get access to COVID funding. We've also asked for that vendor to have assistance in the form of EMS expertise....either subcontract someone from VAA or some other solution. More to come.

Promotion – Dan formally announced his promotion to the Director of DEPRIP as of August 17. This does not mean he's stepping far as EMS is still under our division, he will remain the interim EMS chief and still involved. Hiring freeze right now but so far human resources has allowed us to fill positions. Hoping to fill that EMS Chief role immediately. If we do, we will aggressively lobby to fill that position. But in the meantime, Dan's not going away, just moving down the row.

Questions:

- Sue Poirier – number of people interested in taking the hybrid course and pounding on my door. How do they sign up? DB trying to be a little cautious...I need to wait til final AHS approval. If you want to skirt around my shyness, send an email to Bill Camarda (bcamarda@brsvt.org) and he can probably give you some details. At least one or 2 of his classes are already approved. Hopefully by early next week...?
- Adam Heuslein – Will Bill hold enough classes for the need? Dan – it is not intended for the hybrid courses to take the place of all of the other courses we do. There is still plenty of room for all of the ordinary places to run classes. This money can be used for any of those classes.
- Adam – Has or can any work be done to make Reportwriter in SIREN more user friendly? Dan asked Adam to send him an email which he would push on to Chelsea.
- Nikki – your job? Dan said he will be on the search committee and will have a say. The committee will likely be comprised of a couple members of the EMS team, and hopefully a couple folks from agencies. DB will have a say in the selection, but so will the Deputy Commissioners. Open to whomever wants to apply. Announcements in trade journals, etc. Get the right person for the job!
- Mariah Whitcomb – Will departments that pay stipends be eligible for the hazard pay funding? Dan indicated he didn't know, and that Mark Podgwaite has been working on that question all morning. Posed that question to AHS. We are aware that there are minimum hourly numbers and minimum pay amounts that may affect those departments. Stipulations on money and time. However, if they can do payroll and pay payroll taxes, would be worth trying.
- Adam – I sent that yesterday in an email...specified the dollar amount as per hours and you have to be able to track it.
- Frank Koss – EMS expirations (other than EMR) were extended to 9/30/20 this year. Will the expirations stay at 9/30 going forward? Dan – not currently. At the end of the next 2-year cycle, the expiration will return to 6/30. Ray – we've been echoing the NR. If they extend next year, we'll likely extend as well. But for now, 6/30 is the planned expiration.
- Adam – Is there a plan to move out ambulance inspections?? Ray – No inspections are planned this year, but we do plan to get back on track with the schedule of every 2 years.
- Nikki – Good opportunity to do work on institutional bias, racism, etc. as well as EMS. Any content? Dan - Recently stood up an Equity Advisor for the HOC and just had a conversation this week about the need to include EMS in that training. I presented the opportunity that our upcoming conference schedule will present... I will lean on her expertise to ask what she thinks is the right process and how best we do it. Don't know what it'll be but if they come and say it needs to be different than the conference, we'll take that advice.

Look out for funding and hybrid EMT announcements soon.

Thanks all. Stay safe.

11:38 a.m.