

**NYS DOH Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services**  
**Weekly COVID-19 Webex Update for EMS Agency Leadership**  
**Wednesday 5/6/20, 3:00 PM to 3:48 PM**

Unofficial Notes

436 joined call

**NYS DOH BEMS&TS Panelists:**

Steven Dziura, Deputy Director, BEMS&TS  
Jean Taylor, Deputy Chief, Education Branch  
Peter Brodie, Deputy Chief, Informatics  
Daniel Clayton, Section Chief, Operations Branch  
Lynn Farruggia, Section Chief, Administration  
Valerie Ozga, Program Manager, Vital Signs Academy  
Edward Mager, Deputy Chief, Buffalo, Western Region  
Donald Trepacz, District Chief/Investigator, Buffalo, Western Region  
Jason Haag, Secretary, Finger Lakes REMSCO and member of SEMSCO

**Steven Dziura** [steven.dziura@health.ny.gov](mailto:steven.dziura@health.ny.gov)

- Joined in on call from Fort Totten, Queens and provided a short video look at the location.
- Requested a moment of silence be observed for providers lost in pandemic both in and out of New York State.
- Today is Nurses Appreciation Day.
- FEMA National Ambulance Contract units responded to over 27,000 calls for assistance in NYC including 911 & transport calls.
- Javits Convention Center temporary hospital in Manhattan discharged its last patient last week and will now be in a temporary shutdown for the time being.
- USNS Comfort hospital ship returned to Virginia last week.
- With some improvement being seen now is the time to evaluate policies and procedures put into place for the event. Working with SEMAC on what needs to stay and what needs to be rescinded. Look for guidance from department.
- Reinstatement of expired EMS certifications stopped last Friday. Over 2,000 providers applied for reinstatement. [Ed note: see screen shot below]
- Written EMS certification exams are cancelled for May 2020.
- Working with PSI as there have been Computer Based Testing issues including provider arriving at a testing sited and finding the site is closed.
- State EMS Council (SEMSCO) & State Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (SEMAC) meetings scheduled for June will not be in person. They are setting up virtual meetings.
- Yesterday several BEMS&TS staff were out to hospitals speaking to providers and asking about mental wellbeing and taking care of each other.
- Starting to see complacency on PPE and decon of equipment. Providers should follow standard precautions and CDC guidelines concerning use of PPE such as googles, face shields, gowns and masks and N95s on providers for patients with suspected or positive COVID.
- Decon using aerosolized sprays and UV light are great secondary procedures but nothing beats elbow grease and wipe downs and letting the rig air out. There is a need to do a thorough cleaning or we may be contributing to the spread of infection.
- BEMS&TS is compiling a list of EMS agencies with upcoming recertifications and will reach out to them and also issue policy guidance on how we are going to do this going forward. BEMS&TS personnel are working from home or other locations and will not be knocking on EMS agency doors to do inspections.
- Bureau of Narcotics is working through some licensing issues and will issue guidance.
- Health Commerce System (HCS) underwent some updates and a new version should be out. Provider's home address was removed from the screen leaving name, #, level, expiration date, state & county.

- Agencies can reach out to Regional Program Agencies for access to the Health Commerce System. In the future as Bureau goes increasingly electronic it may be used more of a tool to push out information.
- 4 year certification period change was approved by SEMSCO and is in regulatory change process but this type of work is on hold due to pandemic.
- Some discrepancies have appeared in certification reinstatement dates.
- Use Health Commerce System for verifications for voucher purposes. Provider certification cards are a couple of months down the road.
- Question about health care provider Return-to-Duty guidance. CDC states 10 days from onset. Is state going to change its recommendations for symptomatic providers or is it staying with isolation for at least 7 days and 3 days fever-free and other symptoms improving? Answer was that DOH guidance [[Policy Statement 20-04](#)] is on web site. Policies are being reevaluated. Other healthcare industries have changed guidance and EMS is undertaking same process of reevaluation.
- Question was asked about obtaining BVMs with HEPA filter. Answer was to contact suppliers. During call the following possible sources for HEPA filters and adaptors were mentioned: CPAP.com, Henry Schein Company and CPAPSupply.com. It was pointed out that BEMS&TS does recommend any specific company.
- Question about an EMS agency's 5/31/20 renewal sent to Buffalo office but no response has been received. Answer was that State Administrative Procedures Act (SAPA) covers situation if materials were sent in timely. Some Buffalo staff is operating in other locations across the state. One is at Fort Totten, Queens working on the FEMA National Ambulance Contract and another is in Albany running the hospital and nursing home capacity coordination center. If expedited processing is needed such as in a one-off problem where Medicare or Medicaid revalidation is dependent on renewal agencies can reach out to Daniel Clayton.
- Reach out to BEMS&TS District Chief if EMS agency certification renewal package is not received. If e-mail for District Chief is unknown agency can send e-mail to BEMS&TS at [opsems@health.ny.gov](mailto:opsems@health.ny.gov) or [EMSMail@health.ny.gov](mailto:EMSMail@health.ny.gov). The second one is the better one. Regional EMS Program Agencies are actually the administrators for all local EMS agencies and should be involved.
- Question about hearing a lot about NYC but are upstate counties working and planning with BEMS&TS on a regular basis for guidance and recommendations and are those recommendations different between NYC and upstate? Answer was that they do focus on NYC because that is the biggest issue at the moment and that is where resources are. They are holding phone calls with other regions. On Tuesday every week there is a phone call for Regional Program Agencies similar to this call. There are also calls with county Emergency Management and county EMS Coordinators. Also working with State Emergency Medical Advisory Committee on policies and guidance and this body has representatives from across the state.
- Guidance was sent out on 1<sup>st</sup> Responder COVID-19 testing. [Click [HERE](#)]
- Question about COVID-19 antibody testing. Answer was that they are working with Wadsworth on testing. Targeted antibody testing of 1st Responders is being done by DOH. 2,000 tested in NYC last week covering FDNY (fire & EMS) & NYPD. 20% tested positive for antibodies.
- Question about EMTs and paramedics providing COVID-19 testing for company employees and is there a certification or license requirement? Answer was that they were trying to weigh pros and cons of what that means. One of the things they were talking through was that if EMS agencies do testing would it increase call volume if people thought they could call 911 for an ambulance to come and test them. Working with department's epidemiologist and what requirements would be.
- Question about *Infomational Handout for Patients Not Transported by EMS* being printed in other languages. Answer was that it was done and will get it posted.
- Question about CAPC company's on-line program meeting requirements for NYS CME recertification. Answer was all on-line programs need to be approved by BEMS&TS and to contact Gene Myer for guidance in evaluating CAPC's program.
- Call attendee reported call volume down 40 top 50% down outside of Rochester, NY.
- NYC and surrounding call volume also down 40 to 50%. Recent reports indicate call volume rising again and its not COVID-19. Cardiac, respiratory and stroke patients seem more comfortable about seeking hospital treatment. Also, areas may be opening for elective procedures. Seeing higher acuity and sicker patients when they do call. This may be new normal for a while.
- Question was asked how BEMS&TS staff were doing and answer was that is has been a roller coaster but they are holding up.

- There may be a time change for next week's BEMS&TS' Weekly COVID Webex Update for EMS Agency Leadership. Will try to get that information out early.

**Daniel Clayton** [daniel.clayton@health.ny.gov](mailto:daniel.clayton@health.ny.gov)

- Contact information for Regional EMS Program Agencies is listed on the DOH web site at <https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/ems/charta.htm>

**Jean Taylor** [jean.taylor@health.ny.gov](mailto:jean.taylor@health.ny.gov)

- Voucher submissions can include a copy of Health Commerce System printout confirming provider successfully passed course. Cards are not currently being printed. Copy of HCS printout can be given to provider to confirm certification.
- New certifications being issued at this time will be for 3 years.
- E-mails were sent to providers to confirm their certification reinstatement. Some may have not gotten an e-mail due to an incorrect e-mail address on file or it may have gone into a person's SPAM file.
- Health Commerce Systems shows reinstatement information.
- Question about CMEs at Vital Signs Conference satisfying requirements for CME refresher program. Answer was that provider, their agency and Course Sponsor all need to review forms and analyze and compare to the requirements currently in place. June 30 is cutoff for submission of old vs. new forms.

**Peter Brodie** [peter.brodie@health.ny.gov](mailto:peter.brodie@health.ny.gov)

- ESO company's ePCR software has some issues and BEMT&TS is working directly with the company. Problems are specifically focused on handling of who called and ALS intercepts and how those were documented.

**Valerie Ozga** [valerie.ozga@health.ny.gov](mailto:valerie.ozga@health.ny.gov)

- Now a month into Webexs on Vital Signs Academy.
- This week program expanded to 3 nights a week.
- Tonight's presentation is on *When Your Patient Reacts - The Breaking Point* with Chris Ebright and tomorrow on Crashing Asthma.
- May go to more than 3 presentations a week.
- Participants need to preregister.
- Taking 3 to 4 weeks to get attendance certifications out.
- Presentations are recorded and will become part of the course catalog in the near future.

**Jason Haag** [jdhaag@gmail.com](mailto:jdhaag@gmail.com)

- Discussed documentation needs during COVID-91 pandemic.
- Documentation is key in EMS. COVID-19 patients need to be documented in specific categories, confirmed, presumptive or suspected patients, using the dropdown and/or click boxes in ePCR software.
- Documentation is needed for expenditure reimbursement and clinical care and some of the rules, terms and conditions are still changing. Agencies are buying more gowns and masks than usual and may need the documentation. Some agencies are putting COVID-19 funding in a specific account and documenting expenditures from that account.
- CMS relaxed signature requirements due to concerns virus may live on paper for 4 to 6 hours. Patients can give verbal consent for signing for themselves.
- Physician certification statements for Inter Facility Transfers were an issue and there are relaxed requirements. At times it was not possible in NYC metropolitan area during surge period. CMS will not audit absent evidence of fraud or abuse.
- Relaxed signature requirements are in effect from 1/27/20 through end of pandemic crisis.
- Need to spend time now to look at what EMS 2.0 will look like. Documentation and good data collection will be needed when looking at regulation changes and sustaining clinical care.



### Expired verification



*Thank You for your interest in having your NYS EMT certification reinstated. At this time we have reached our goal for applications, and will not be accepting anymore at this time. If you would like to have your EMT certification renewed please attend a NYS EMT recertification course.*

**THANK YOU**  
**NYS BEMSATS**  
**Education Division**