Question: MacMillan presented several questions that had come in about the voucher process, payments and status of the funding. He indicated some come in almost weekly.

Answer: Farruggia advised vouchers are coming into BEMS&TS, are being reviewed on a timely basis as received and submitters get either feedback or questions or they are approved. They are not being entered into SFS (Statewide Financial System) at this time, it is beyond our control, we do not have funding to enter the vouchers. If you go into SFS to see if the voucher was entered or when payment is going to be made that is something we are not able to do at this time.

Question: How often should Courses Sponsors submit their reimbursements if they are looking to download results weekly.
Answer: Farruggia replied that if they are looking to download pass/fail results weekly they should submit vouchers weekly as they see the grades appear. It makes it easier for Course Sponsors and BEMS&TS in reviewing them and keeping the queue in order. We handle the volume on a weekly basis because each and every student has to be verified on an individual basis.

Question: When can Course Sponsors get reimbursements for practical skill exams? Cost reimbursement per student is woefully inadequate across the board.
Answer: Farruggia adviser there is a yearly plea made through the SEMSCO Finance Committee to ask the Executive Government for more funding but we have not seen an increase in years. There is data on how much it costs to facilitate training but because of where the state is now it not expected to see an increase in funding but you never know. We are an essential service and we keep advocating we are an essential service and people are becoming aware of that.

Question: Will classes ever go back to taking their initial test attempt on a scheduled date or month? Junior College students and their associated reimbursements are time consuming and have a strong budget impact.
Answer: Taylor said at this point no, as this would require us to go back to paper and pencil and that is not an option at this point. Greenberg added that although they would not be going back to a single date they are working with PSI to determine if there is an easier way for Course Sponsors to be able to tell which students have registered for an exam, who passed and who failed – whether they can do a report with that information. That is something in discussions, not in the immediate future but is related to Course Sponsor concerns about who tested and who didn’t test and to eliminate some of the complexity.

Question: Funding, moving levels of funding, changing amounts of reimbursement across the board for funding of courses and funding of PSEs in the future?
Answer: Greenberg advised there are no immediate signs of that changing. One of the things that is being looked at is the initial enrollment fee which is currently $100.00. It can be changed and is being evaluated although that would be an expense on either the agency or the students themselves. It was being looked at prior to the current time as a lot of feedback is that one of the bigger problems was that people do not show up for the 1st day of class or don’t commit for the class once they are in it because there is no skin in it or buy in. Allowing Course Sponsors to put some commitment on student and/or the agency. If the agency signs off on paperwork and student does not show or pass the agency does not feel a hit. The goal of the enrollment fee and a slightly higher enrollment fee for the financial support for the Course Sponsors is a financial commitment from agency and student and not just a signed piece of paper for someone starting a course for the 3rd or 4th time. Course Sponsors are starting classes based on a certain number of students being in a course. He welcomed feedback on the enrollment fee – send him or Taylor an e-mail. In next couple weeks they would be seeing what options are for the enrollment fee and where that number might be. It would not be a requirement but an option for Course Sponsors to choose.

Comment submitted from attendee: They have stopped using state funds for courses and are running a 100% student funded course and have not seen a loss or dip in student enrollment. Greenberg commented that a number of Course Sponsors are...
doing that but they are more challenging and time consuming and are deferring it off to agencies to reimburse.

Question: Will state release the 20% withheld from vouchers on its own or is there a need to re-voucher?
Answer: Greenberg indicated there is no need to re-voucher. If it changes at any point Course Sponsors will be notified.

Question: Since vouchers are not being entered into the NYS system is there a way to receive feedback that the voucher was approved?
Answer: Farruggia indicated they will see if BEMS&TS can send an e-mail. Greenberg indicated there is an ability to send an automated reply to confirm receipt but it would not confirm the voucher was complete or correct. A Google form could list the names submitted. Farruggia advised it would not work for some submissions that come in through the mail. She will be working with Peter Brodie on the Course Sponsor portal.

Question: PSI posting course number vs. course date - is there any way to elaborate any more on the report they are working on?
Answer: Taylor answered that once they get the new report completed it will show all the students in a course, who tested and who hasn’t tested and who passed or failed. At that point sponsors can go in and access that course number and see the status of their students at that time. That is in development. In answer to follow-up question on when it would be finalized Greenberg said he has learned not to give timelines on technology.

Question: Can you review how sponsors lookup test scores at it currently stands?
Answer: Taylor advised they need to go to sponsor portal and look them up on a weekly basis. Results get posted by week. If no one took test during week there would not be anything there. If 5 tested last week they should be there.

Taylor brought up “Pandora’s Box” and asked if there were any questions on Policy Statement 20-07 Interim Guidance for EMS Education Courses?

Greenberg spoke about paramedic exams and the ALS and BLS practical skills exams. He spoke of having a secondary method of performing the skill sets and BLS skill stations do not need to be performed on the same day as the ALS skills. Moving forward they could evaluate BLS skills at almost any point in the course. People have already been asking about when the new skill sheets will be completed and that is being worked on now. If for some reason they are not completed in time additional communications would be put out ahead of time. For refresher courses ready to test and looking for the new skill stations contact Taylor. Most likely the old forms would be used because the students have not been trained in that type of scenario environment.

Question: Can you clarify the BLS clinical observation time requirement - time vs. patient contact required hours, etc. for original and refresher students?
Answer: Taylor advised for refresher students there is no clinical component and but for basic students it is 10 hours. That traditionally was allowed to be broken down between ER or ambulance time, one or the other or a combination. We never said you had to
have X number of patient contacts because it is only about observation. It is different for paramedics who have to perform skills. If in the ER the nurse allows student to do vital signs that is fine but as far as doing any real skills at the BLS level it is observation time. During COVID-19 because you couldn’t get into hospitals or on ambulances they are allowing the BLS scenarios to be used in lieu of observation time and asking to spend up to 10 hours doing those so students were comfortable putting all the skills they learned together to make them a competent EMT once they got in the field. As ERs are opening again a little bit more and ambulance companies are more willing to take people it will be really dependent on what sponsors are able to do with the students.

Greenberg spoke of alternative options and scenarios for BLS side of things and patient contacts. It doesn’t necessarily talk about specific time to do those. He indicated it should be able to do 10 out-of-hospital scenarios in an hour, particularly if doing those as a learning experience and going through every motion of it as well as being sure they are getting feedback and talking about it and doing things.

Question: When grading a station and a substation included – how is that graded?
Answer: Greenberg indicated it goes back to the out-of-hospital scenarios, please bear with them and wait for the forms to come out. It is not using separate sheets so those additional skills will be evaluated in the out-of-hospital scenario evaluation process. MacMillan referred to Appendix A of Policy Statement 20-07 and indicated it lists it differently for that requirement and is different from what was just spoken. Taylor read from the interim alternatives EMT section “Documentation of successful completion of ten, instructor or preceptor evaluated ‘BLS Out of Hospital’ simulation exercises. Each evaluation must be at least 20 minutes long”. For the standard clinical experience Taylor read the requirement “Students must perform ten patient assessments in: an emergency department; ambulance; clinic; nursing home; doctor’s office or on standardized patients if clinical settings are not available”. MacMillan indicated a student could sit for 10 hours in a corner of an ED, in the back of an ambulance or day room of a squad and do nothing and Course Sponsors need to re-evaluate program and maybe add a component of patient contacts with the hours. That is entirely up to the Course Sponsor.

Question: Does the EMT have to lead 10 scenarios or participate in 10 scenarios to meet the requirements of 20-07?
Answer: Taylor repeated the interim alternative and said the student had to do 10. Greenberg added that all 10 do not have to be done at the end of class but could be done as the class moves along. Taylor indicated one skill is building on the previous skill and knowledge just learned so it is progressive.

Question: When can a rough draft of the new PSE manual be expected? Will it be the same time as getting the scenarios?
Answer: Greenberg advised the BLS scenarios will be out prior to the new Course Sponsor Manual. Manual will most likely come out towards the end of the year. There will be instructions to accompany the scenarios. If there is something or page in the Course Administration Manual that was really difficult now is the time to speak up and get it over to Taylor. We will listen to anything and appreciate the feedback.
Question: The requirement is to send in end of course paperwork 14 days prior to the state exam. Can the date be moved to the end of the month or the due date to the end of the month?
Answer: Greenberg advised they are looking to essentially have 2 dates a month – the 1st and 15th. If the test date is on the 15th the paperwork is due on the 1st, if on the 15th the paperwork is due by the 1st. They are looking to make it easier to remember and put together a schedule. That has not been completed yet. Greenberg, Taylor and MacMillan will work on it - the 1st and 15th regardless what day of the week it falls on.

Question: Student received no e-mail from PSI and when attempted to contact PSI to resolve the issue there is no guidance from anybody there.
Answer: Greenberg advised the guidance is to send an e-mail to BEMS&TS, advising what happened and which student is having a problem. Problems with PSI are being addressed as they come in. Students should not be calling or e-mailing until after a certain date to allow time for BEMS&TS to receive and process course paperwork. E-mails are put into a tracker system. Taylor advised that for classes ending on a given date that has been designated – currently the 3rd Thursday of every month – all the course paperwork should be in the BEMS&TS system. On the following Monday they upload all the classes. Depending on the number of students enrolled it can take 24 to 72 hours for students to get their e-mail from PSI. Once they get that e-mail they can start the process to schedule their exam. The directions are to go to the AMP portal and create an account. They can schedule on-line or call and schedule. For students who did not test or didn't finish their class by the end date or for some reason the end of course paperwork did not get to us, we would not know that and those students will have to send in a test registration form [DOH-4245 Registration for EMT Exam Test Scheduling Request] to make them eligible with PSI. That is done on a weekly basis. Students would then get an e-mail from PSI 24 hours after BEMS&TS uploads their information. Currently, any student that fails an exam needs to send in a test registration request to make them eligible for a 2nd attempt. Anyone who does not test with their class would have to send in a test registration form to make them eligible. Greenberg added the process will be changing so that if someone fails a test they can go back to PSI and schedule another test. If someone believes their e-mail address was wrong can go to the web site and enter NYE and their student number and they should be able to register. There is also a change in getting results to students in that for Remote Proctoring by the December to March period the results will be sent by e-mail but it will not be a temporary certification but it will at least be a result.
Taylor asked Course Sponsors and instructors to advise students that the e-mail telling students to register for their exam comes from AMP, a company related to PSI and not from PSI or NYS DOH. A lot of issues and misinformation is coming from instructors but it is getting better. The issues with PSI are getting better. She described students going to exam sites and could not access the on-line exam or the site was suddenly closed because a person called in sick and there was no time to get a fill-in. If these things happen to a student the BEMS&TS needs to know the student’s name, ID number and when/where they were scheduled to test so PSI can be notified to straighten it out – they have been very responsive to those types of issues.
Donnelly added that if student did not get e-mail then do not have student call PSI to find out as PSI system did not get the info to allow registration. Calling numerous times with different numbers to register have resulted in people locked out from PSI system.
which causes more problems. If student does not get the e-mail contact or got an e-mail and can’t schedule test contact Taylor and/or Donnelly.

Question: Has there been any feedback on the Remote Proctoring?
Answer: Taylor advised that students do not like that they don’t see a score at the end and on occasion they miss the pass/fail notice at the end. Not sure if student was not paying attention or it did not come up. In those situations student has to wait for Taylor to get the exam results and upload the information to the Health Commerce System. That, however, would not show a score report.

Question: Can students create an account with AMP prior to information being uploaded to PSI?
Answer: Greenberg replied no. Can’t create an account until PSI has an upload.

Question: Can BEMS&TS put together a 1 pager for students?
Answer: Greenberg answered yes but would need to know what is being looked for such as PSI or which part. A PSI step-by-step guide was sent out – if have not gotten it contact BEMS&TS. There have been some conversations about something the Course Sponsors could give out at the end of class on the date of the PSE or sometime close to it. This could include the e-mail addresses the information comes from and the time periods involved.

Question: Have received questions from students and or their mother/father calling saying class finished 3 weeks ago but no e-mail received. Why not?
Answer: Taylor advised when she looks up the EMT number and the course number the class tested and the end of course paperwork was sent in the day after the practical skill exam before the listed end of course exam date established in the system. It still is not going to get uploaded until after the end of course exam date.

Taylor advised that certification cards have only been sent to original/basic course students who tested March through June. She will be going in on Friday [10/2/20] to do July. There were several issues with missing scores and for those she does not know if they were original or refresher students. If original student tested in March through June and did not receive a card they should send in a duplicate card request and a duplicate card will be printed and sent. [See form DOH-4453 at https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-4453.pdf]

Question: Will students that test in December get 6 chances to retest?
Answer: Greenberg indicated yes, 3 after the original course and then after a full refresher course would get another 3 attempts which mirrors the National Registry in testing.

Question: What courses are we allowing that for?
Answer: Taylor indicated for courses testing from September on going forward. Greenberg asked to hold off on discussing PSEs and the number of stations as it gets complex when talking about some things and remediation. MacMillan confirmed that the challenge refresher course is only available to those who have been an EMT. Original students who fail 3 tests would need to take a full refresher and not a challenge refresher as they have never been an EMT.
Taylor confirmed the new policy [Policy Statement 20-07 Interim Guidance for EMS Courses] went into effect 8/24/20 for courses testing September on. She acknowledged that traditionally in the past original students failing 3 tests were allowed to take a follow-up challenge refresher course and whatever sections they did poorly on would have to attend those classes. Going forward since they are being given 3 attempts and if they can’t pass the exam on 3 attempts they probably need to sit through an original refresher of all the classes.

MacMillan asked a panelist for comments on paramedic programs, scheduling exams, moving dates and recent things that have occurred. Donnelly advised for paramedic PSEs they are sending a state representative and a NREMT representative out to all the paramedic PSEs. They are finding people are not planning correctly and when it comes time to retest people there are not enough proctors left or enough time left. Per NREMT, if somebody retests, all can retest all their skills so that has to be built into the program. Another thing is courses are staggering students so everyone is not there at the same time but NREMT has not changed their regulations so there are no retests until every student has already tested so it is winding up that the room is filling anyway. This has resulted in putting more exams on and coming back to do retests. She repeated that you have to wait till the whole class has initially been tested in every skill before you can start a retest. Students may have to come in another day for a retest.

Greenberg commented that if a PSE test date has to be moved to notify both NREMT and BEMS&TS. If Course Sponsor is planning on doing a very small group, anything less than 5 people, to notify Donnelly because for a very small group there may be only 1 person sent. If there are only 1, 2 or 3 people being tested for whatever reason such as COVID-19 it may be asked to coordinate and move the students to a different test site because it is costly and labor intensive to bring in the proctors. It has not happened too many times.

Greenberg advised they are sending a proctor for every original ALS practical skills exam. There may be 1 or 2 proctors depending on class size and the number testing. They would consider sending a proctor for a NREMT refresher course only if requested – reach out to Donnelly.

MacMillan advised that if NYS original course student is sitting for the NREMT exam but not the NYD DOH exam the student needs to complete a reciprocity application and submit it to BEMS&TS along with their NREMT cognitive and PSE exam results. Include the NYS course number. [go to link at https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/ems/pdf/2016-04-06_draft_rec_pkt_revisions.pdf]

Greenberg commented that student safety is of the upmost concern to BEMS&TS. Ensure everyone has a plan on their reopening, have a plan in the event there is an exposure, have a plan in the event a student comes down with COVID-19. There would be the same challenges that all schools have but our providers go into more high risk environments in their day-to-day jobs working on an ambulance, doing rotations in a hospital and the likelihood of them having an exposure could be higher. If having an in-person class follow all guidelines. Notify BEMS&TS if there has been an exposure or if a class needs to go remote for period of time – it is being monitored. Share best
practices with BEMS&TS and one and other to ensure safety of everyone. If any help is needed contact BEMS&TS – plans do not need to be created from scratch. MacMillan added that when submitting through course applications through the portal that if there is a plan for shutdown or reopening to add it to the submission. Greenberg added that they may ask every course sponsor to submit their plan(s).

Taylor advised the new Course Sponsor agreement will require a plan for on-line learning to be in place in case the 2nd wave happens or the next major disaster. It would be updated every 2 years. Every Course Sponsor needs to have a very strong social media policy. It has come up a few times over the last few years but is happening more and more. Every student has a cell phone and camera and they are on Facebook, Twitter and whatever. This is a new policy that is being required of all Course Sponsors. While waiting for us to get the forms out these are the policies you can start working on. Go back through current policies, see what changes have been made, what changes you want to make and start revising those policies. Greenberg commented that whatever is posted on social media, everybody is watching and some of the complaints received that they have had to look into have been directly related to pictures showing non-compliance with plans. One easy way to have BEMS&TS show up at a Course Sponsor and evaluate if following COVID-19 plan or not is a picture showing up on social media showing non-compliance. Please lead by example.