NYS DOH Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services
Briefing for EMS Agency Leadership and Providers
Wednesday 1/21/21, 4:00 PM to 5:08 PM

Unofficial Notes
This is not verbatim transcript of the call. Notes were typed during the call and reviewed and added to afterward. There was no prepared agenda distributed before the call. Questions and/or comments from providers were submitted before and during the call.
“This meeting is being recorded” announcement played. Some of the past briefings have been posted to the Archived Webcasts section of the NYS DOH website.

Panelists:
Ryan Greenberg, Director, Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services
ryan.greenberg@health.ny.gov
Peter Brodie, Deputy Chief, Informatics, Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services (Host)
peter.brodie@health.ny.gov
Richard Robinson, Deputy Chief, NYC, Metropolitan Area Regional Office
richard.robinson@health.ny.gov
Edward Mager, Deputy Chief, Buffalo, Western Region
edward.mager@health.ny.gov
Jean Taylor, Deputy Chief, Education Branch
jean.taylor@health.ny.gov
Amy Eisenhauer, Program Administrator, EMS for Children
amy.eisenhauer@health.ny.gov
Mark Philippy, Chair, State EMS Council (SEMSCO)
mark.philippy@mlrems.org
Valerie Ozga, Vital Signs Academy and Executive Secretary to SEMSCO and SEMAC
valerie.ozga@health.ny.gov

Any Eisenhauer
- EMS for Children survey was sent out 1/6/21 by the National Emergency Medical Services for Children Data Analysis Resource Center (NEDARC). Send an e-mail to amy.eisenhauer@health.ny.gov if survey was not received.
- A lot of e-mail addresses are not current. Squads need to update agency contact information if there have been changes.
- Vital Signs Academy presentation on 2/2/21 will be on Child Abuse and Neglect.
- From Chat Box: We found the e-mail of the NEDARC survey in our junk folder.

Edward Mager
- Receiving inquiries from EMS agencies asking about extensions on filing CON recertification packages and expiration dates. There are no extensions. Agencies need to do timely submissions to BEMS&TS regional offices for certification and Controlled Substance license renewals to avoid enforcement actions.
- Renewal packages are sent by e-mail and a lot have bounced back because agencies have not provided adequate and appropriate e-mail addresses. Please complete DOH-2936 Certified EMS Agency Information Update Form and e-mail to BEMS&TS regional office.

Valerie Ozga
- Vital Sigs Academy is going strong 4 days a week and attendance has been phenomenal.

Richard Robinson
- Renewal packages have been sent out to agencies and should be sent back electronically for expeditious processing.
- Staff have been engaged and operating at several state operated vaccination PODs.
Mark Philippy

- Last State EMS Council (SEMSCO) meeting was very productive.
- A lot of action items came through the State Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (SEMAC) and were later ratified by SEMSCO and will go to the DOH Commissioner for consideration and approval.
- Part 800 equipment standards will be sent to DOH Division of Legal Affairs for incorporation into a regulatory change.
- At next meeting there is hope to tackle ongoing issues that have been stymied by COVID-19.
- There is a lot of fresh blood on SEMSCO and hope to get them involved in committees and get substantive work done in 2021.

Peter Brodie

- Diligently working on making sure the new PCR forms will be available.
- Have the documentation standards for BLSFR agencies and expect them to be available 2/2/21. If interested e-mail EMSdata@health.ny.gov and also the Regional EMS Program Agency.
- Transporting agencies and ALSFR forms will also be available on 2/2/21. If interested e-mail EMSdata@health.ny.gov and also the Regional EMS Program Agency. There is a little different information needed to make the transition happen.
- Working with agencies across the state to make the transition to ePCRs.
- Paper PCRs can still be used but there will be deadline date to stop sending them to Regional EMS Program Agencies. Instead they must be scanned into a computer, an on-line form with about 30 to 35 data fields completed as well as information on procedures done, medications administered and the package is then electronically transmitted. This enables QA/QI to be done electronically.
- Data & Informatics Unit has 3 staff. E-mail address is EMSdata@health.ny.gov
- Question: Are there any updates regarding sending the quarterly & semi-annually controlled substance reports via email? Answer: Please reach out to me at EMSdata@health.ny.gov
- Question: Who does the weekly POD report on number of EMS providers used and number vaccinated? Answer: There is an online portal and will be posted in the Chat Box. Ryan Greenberg added that they may be going away from the report.

Ryan Greenberg

VACCINATIONS

- Can continue to use the links that go directly to hospitals. If not working go to https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/ which shows NYS run vaccination PODs.
- Aware of 1st does issues with some available appointments going into April.
- Governor’s 1/25/21 briefing indicated they are working on how to best balance vaccinations between those who are eligible and front line providers and everyone else can gain access to the vaccine. Solutions in discussions include the way the system manages how people come in and fill out a survey and having certain PODs specific to certain categories. To become a local POD you need to speak to county or local Department of Health. Some larger organization such as unions submitted information to Governor. Organizations want to do POD only for own department and most departments are small and it is problematic and should consider doing POD in building for geographic region or county or supply vaccinators. Hopefully, there will be more information next week.
- If provider has not gotten notice for 2nd dose by about a week before due for dose they should check their spam e-mail and if not there call the site where 1st dose was given.
- Northwell Health on Long Island is working on getting 2nd vaccination notices out. If notice not received by a week before 2nd dose is due call (844) 919-8222. If provider is not in Northwell Health records for having 1st dose BEMS&TS can be contacted at covidemsinfo@health.ny.gov
- Providers in Phase 1A who cannot get 1st dose scheduled can contact BEMS&TS at covidemsinfo@health.ny.gov
- Agency lists of problem situations is preferred rather than each individual member e-mailing.
- State vaccination POD sites continue to be added. There are 13 state sites this week and additional sites will come on-line in next week or 2. Spots fill up quickly.

VACCINATIONS AND WHAT TO DO IF EXPOSED, QUARANTINED OR TEST POSITIVE


- EMS providers who test positive for COVID-19 should wait at least 10 days from date testing positive if asymptomatic, or 10 days from the date of onset of symptoms, and be fever-free and have improving symptoms prior to getting the 1st dose of vaccine. Seek guidance from agency Medical Director and/or personal physician.
- If testing positive after 1st dose do not go for a 2nd dose vaccination and follow guidelines for quarantine. Some sites indicate 10 to 14 days since last day tested positive. Seek guidance from agency Medical Director and/or personal physician.
- Travel restrictions do not change and require 2 negative tests before coming off quarantine. See COVID19 Travel Advisory.

VACCINATOR TRAINING

- Go to Vital Signs Academy at https://vitalsignsacademy.com/ and log-in or register. The course involves on-line self-learning, knowledge checks and a quiz.
- NYSDOH COVID-19 Vaccine Vaccinator Training (V 3.2) course is a self-paced learning course. The videos do not have audio to them and the slides will advance on their own. Individuals are expected to read the slides in the allotted time of the video and if needed may pause it to re-read. There are four training modules.
- The 2nd part is a skills assessment that takes place at a POD site. The checklist is at [Skills Checklist for Vaccine Administration (immunize.org)](https://immunize.org) It can be signed off on by an MD, PA, NP, RN or a certified EMS provider designated by the POD’s highest medical authority who has reviewed and signed off on the skills of the evaluator. Preferred EMS evaluators include Certified Lab Instructors, Certified Instructor Coordinators, Field Training Officers, EMS Training Coordinators, Agency leadership.
- The 3rd and final part is to go back to Vital Signs Academy and complete the NYSDOH COVID-19 Vaccine Vaccinator Training Attestation. A valid CPR card is a requirement. A certificate will be issued and the provider and can offer their services to any POD.
- Many of the 13 state run PODs as well as local PODs have been staffed by EMS vaccinator teams. On short notice the state mobilization plan has been used to send out vaccinator teams of 4 to 12 people to sites needing vaccinator help. Later in call Patty Bashaw in Essex County, Ambulnz, Empress and AMR/CrowdRx were mentioned for their help.
- Question: Do ALS providers need to have their skills signed off on? Answer: Yes. The standard in the state is that if you do not normally vaccinate you need to complete the skills assessment which should be fast for ALS and also BLS if used Check and Inject or trained on a regular basis. Skills assessments can be done at a POD.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDANCE

- Seeing increased numbers of EMS agency personnel becoming COVID-19 positive. It is not surprising considering community spread and everything else going on. Stay aware and watch for this and how to respond. If agency is seeing more than 1 testing positive and needs guidance contact BEMS&TS District and/or Deputy Chiefs who can provide information on best practices such as limiting personnel in buildings.
- There are no exceptions for EMS providers needing to quarantine even if asymptomatic.
- In extreme or severe situations where otherwise quarantined providers are needed on the job to sustain operations agencies can apply to the DOH Commissioner on a case by case basis for up to a 30 day return to work waiver. Hopefully after 30 day the organization is not in the same situation. Check HERE to link to 1/7/21 clarification of revised protocols. Resources in a large department would likely be different than in a small department. Agency Chief Executive needs to sign off on a checklist and attestation that other mitigation actions have
been addressed. Agencies can reach out to Deputy Director Steven Dziura who is spearheading coordination of that.

- **Question:** Paramedic students are doing clinicals in hospitals or on ambulances. Are they eligible for vaccinations under 1A or 1B? **Answer:** If providing or assisting in direct patient care they would qualify under one or the other category.

- **Question:** Can urgent care centers charge for a COVID-19 check? **Answer:** Yes.

- **Question:** What is considered exposure? **Answer:** Wearing appropriate PPE during patient care is not considered exposure or close contact. Contact tracer may follow-up asking what provider was wearing during patient care. Was face mask, goggles, N95, gloves, gown worn? If answer is no or most of the time there may be an exposure/close contact issue.

- **Vaccination does not change quarantine guidelines or the need for wearing appropriate PPE or doing screening of patients from 6 feet away at the doorway.**

- **Question:** Do providers who received their initial NYS certification through reciprocity from another state need to go through a regular refresher for their 1st refresher or can they do a CME refresher? **Answer:** Can do a CME refresher and their documentation needs to be signed off on by a NYS Certified Instructor Coordinator.

- **Question:** Can providers who took class in NYS and took NREMT exam in lieu of NYS exam do CME refresher for 1st time recertification? **Answer:** Yes. CME refresher is open to everyone. NREMT exam for all levels is just a certification exam. Actual certification is issued by BEMS&TS after all paperwork is submitted and that allows individual to then practice as an EMS professional.

- **Question:** When will the new EMT skills sheets be out. **Answer:** They are on hold at the moment and hopefully will be out shortly. COVID-19 has affected priorities. New education guidance is going through the approval process. Those starting a class now will continue to use the old skill sheets. Classes starting after the new sheets are issued will use the new sheets. If sheets come out after a class starts the instructor will have option of skills testing with either old or new sheets. Same rules apply for challenge refresher classes.

- **Question:** Any update for on-line CME platform Suffolk EMS was creating? **Answer:** There was discussions about hosting training before COVID-19 hit. Vital Signs Academy is available for use and will follow up.

- **For those providers under age 18 Pfizer is the vaccine they should receive. To figure out which POD sites offer Pfizer the sites can be called or look at the vaccination card for those who already received vaccinations at the sites as card would list the manufacturer.**

- **Question:** What's the e-mail for COVID-19 questions? **Answer:** covidemsinfo@health.ny.gov

- **Question:** Do you recommend we encourage EMTs to complete the vaccinator training to get as many trained as possible? Or should it really be targeted by individuals that already have a job identified? **Answer:** We encourage everyone interested and available to be trained and equipped to assist with the pandemic response.

- **Question:** For past 2 weeks have not been able to register for vaccination in Erie County area. When will the web site registration be available again? **Answer:** Depends on if there is problem with registration process or if registrations are full - reach out to BEMS&TS. New PODs will be opening.

- **Question:** Where can you go for vaccinations? Do you have to go in your county? **Answer:** You do not have to go in your county. You could travel to further locations.

- **Question:** Am-I-Eligible site asks about where person is support staff but category for EMS is not listed. **Answer:** Not sure of an answer. Send e-mail with specifics to covidemsinfo@health.ny.gov

- **Question:** Who does the weekly POD report on number of EMS providers used and number vaccinated? **Answer:** There is an online portal and will be posted in the Chat Box.

- **Question:** Had some providers at agency recently get their first dose appointments canceled. Anything we can do for them? Additionally, should agency leadership still schedule their providers or with the I-Am-Eligible site up should providers do it themselves? **Answer:** Providers can do it themselves but agency leadership should stay on top of situation to ensure it is being done. Send information about providers being cancelled to BEMS&TS.

- **Question:** Can an agency not participating in ET3 utilize telemedicine? **Answer:** ET3 will be starting up around the state. 25 agencies have been approved by CMS for participation in
ET3. Alternative destinations need to be approved through REMSCOs and the BEMS&TS so it is known where all the destinations are. There will be procedures on the appropriate way to document telemedicine. There was mention of transfer of care to a virtual ER. ET3 has payment tied to it. National standard on virtual telemedicine and instructions are to come.

- Question: Is Check and Inject (Syringe Epinephrine) a pre-requisite for BLS providers who want to be vaccinators? Answer: Check and Inject is not a prerequisite for vaccinators.
- Question: Can we get a copy of the recently approved Part 800 changes? Answer: You can see a copy of it as it is a public document that was brought up at SEMSCO and SEMAC. Reach out to Regional EMS Program Agencies or one of the Associations or Valerie Ozga, Secretary of SEMSCO. Happy to share the proposals which are in draft form and not in effect yet. It still has to go through regulatory change.
- Question: Can EMS vaccinators also work at flu shot clinics? Answer: Yes, they are not limited to COVID-19 vaccination PODs. EMT-Ps can serve at PODs and also in community paramedic situations if involved in a program.
- Question: Where can we find the document about vaccinations after testing positive? Specifically between testing positive between the two shots. Answer: Policy Statement 20-09 Guidance for EMS to Receive Vaccinations Weeks 1-4. Scroll down to page 3 at the bottom.
- Question: Will completing the vaccinator training qualify us to perform future vaccinations? I’m thinking flu shot clinics. Answer: Training allows for flu and COVID-19 and must operate in a POD unless you are a community paramedic.
- Question: Can you help handling 1B issue? Having an issue helping volunteer fire and PD getting vaccines in Westchester. Answer: Reach out to Richard Blackley, Westchester Program Agency Coordinator. [914 231-1685 or progcoord@wremsco.org]
- Question: Are we uploading CME recertifications? Any links yet? Answer: We are having a meeting on Tuesday regarding this ... the challenge is putting all the right parties in the right place at the right time.
- Question: EMT students in class wear N95s. If a student tests positive but is asymptomatic does whole class have to quarantine? Answer: No specific answer. That would be Contact Tracer decision.
- Question: Can you help handling 1B issue? Having an issue helping volunteer fire and PD getting vaccines in Westchester. Answer: Reach out to Richard Blackley, Westchester Program Agency Coordinator. [914 231-1685 or progcoord@wremsco.org]
- Question: Albany County Sheriff’s paramedics are vaccinating homebound patients outside of POD. Was any special approval given? Answer: Yes. Special approval was given for EMT-P to operate outside a POD. Contact Ryan Greenberg for information.
- Question: What constitutes a Community Paramedic? Answer: It is a long answer. It has to do with a program being operated within an agency and additional training for the providers.
- Question: Is there a sunset date for the EMT-CC to EMT-P bridge program? Answer: No date yet. Question about EMT-CC came up at SEMSCO meeting. There is discussion about 3 recertification cycles or about 10 years so sometime on about 2030 and EMT-CC would have to bridge to EMT-P or become an AEMT. Looking into having part of AEMT program on-line and going in-person for the other half. This would open up opportunities and cut down the year and a half of training.
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- Survey on EMS agency interest in participation in state mobilization plan will be sent out in February. Participants would be paid for their mobilization time. BEMS&TS has 2 District Chiefs assigned to emergency preparedness.
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- Question: EMT students in class wear N95s. If a student tests positive but is asymptomatic does whole class have to quarantine? Answer: No specific answer. That would be Contact Tracer decision.
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- Question: Vital Signs Conference in 2021 is planned and trying for in-person event. There is a 50/50 possibility.
- Next briefing call is Thursday 1/28/21 at 4:00 PM