



Kent Appelhans, Chair
Mark Marchetta, Sr., Vice Chair

Dr. Carol Cunningham, State Medical Director

RURAL EMS SUB-COMMITTEE

STATE BOARD OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL, FIRE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
1970 W. Broad Street, Room 1101, Columbus, Ohio 43223

RURAL EMS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 17, 2021

Call to Order: The in-person meeting was called to order by Chairman Burns at 3:07pm.

Committee Members Present: Karen Beavers (EMFTS Board member), Eric Burns (Chair), Thomas Charlton, MD, Vincent Gildone (Vice-Chair), Doug LaRue, Cody Shetler, Todd Shroyer, Diane Simon, and Michael Simon.

Committee Members Absent: John Bichard, Joel Dickinson, Kenneth Majors, Lucas Palm, and Tamera Wires. A quorum was present. Chairman Burns welcomed the new committee member and those who remained on the committee.

DPS and EMS Staff Members Present: Rob Wagoner, EMS Executive Director, and Robin Burmeister, committee support staff.

Public Present: None.

Welcome and Introduction: Eric Burns, Chair, welcomed committee members, and everyone introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes: The first order of business was to approve the Minutes of the June 15, 2021, meeting.

ACTION: Motion to approve the Rural EMS Committee June 15, 2021, meeting minutes. Tom Charlton MD – First. Michael Simon – Second. None opposed. None abstained. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS: RRTF (Recruitment, Retention, Training and Funding)

The main focus of the meeting centered on recruiting and retention of EMS providers. Ideas included using surveys, public service announcements about the critical need for EMS personnel, a web page set up where job postings can be listed, and using course pretests for reading and comprehension so that a tutor can be assigned to a student if needed. Separating recruiting and retention into two independent focus points is a consideration. EMS Executive Director Wagoner shared that some funds from the American Rescue Plan Act have been designated for recruitment and retention use for fire and EMS use in 2022-23. Funds must be used within two years. A plan for the use of the funds is being developed and more information will be forthcoming.

Discussed turned to developing community culture to support fire and EMS has proven to be successful. Use of social media, being flexible, and having a work-life balance is essential. When overtime is mandated, morale declines.

Discussion also ensued about contacting legislators regarding making EMS essential in Ohio. Some members shared that they have seen recent media addressing this, which is a start.

Concerns about lower wages in EMS was discussed as the main reason that certified EMS personnel move on to RN and PA degrees as they can make more money. Paramedics can work in ERs until 10/1/22 due to the passage of the EMS Staff bill. This strains remaining EMS workers who have to cover more shifts and lose work-life balance and getting burned out.

Due to nursing shortages, many hospital ERs cannot have all their beds available. Staff on ambulances are not responsible for patients once they are on hospital property, and patients are suffering as they may sit in an ER waiting room for over 12 hours. Hospitals are obligated to put the patient somewhere in the hospital. Mr. Gildone shared that his county no longer has OB services due to shortages.

Creating public awareness of what health services and public services cost was discussed as well as the state needing to increase Medicaid reimbursements as the state can mandate an increase. Health care is being redefined across the country, which affects EMS. The public needs to stand up and say the current health care is not acceptable. No funding for wages for paramedics holding college degrees. Fire doesn't run near as often as EMS yet fire has higher wages, better retirement plans, and less hours.

The EMS website is being revamped, but there is no job availability posting pages or sections. The committee discussed putting a link on the page to an EMS job page. Karen Beavers will check with the Ohio EMS Association to see if a job information page can be added to it.

NEW BUSINESS: The committee discussed that logistics in Ohio is poor and facilities are unsure when supplies will arrive. EMS systems around the country are starting to fail because there are not enough CDL drivers to get the trucks out to deliver the supplies.

Discussion took place about holding an "EMS on the Hill" in Ohio. Fire is the biggest caucus at this time and is organized. The committee also discussed the need to have an EMS representative on the EMFTS Board instead of an aide. These are political appointments. Send people to organizations, schools, etc., and stress the community needs certified health care workers. EMS needs to organize for the common good. This will require a mentality change for the overall good. EMS-Fire agencies have figured out how to promote themselves and EMS agencies need to learn how to do this. Very expensive platform to run EMS. EMS is staffed for efficiency, but that efficiency transfers to burnout.

Telemedicine is being used increasingly. It is on the EMFTS strategic plan to "treat in place." One drawback is that patients then refuse to go to the hospitals, or they are taken to the hospital but really didn't need to be transferred. Work is being done towards obtaining funding. Recognition of a critical care paramedic certification would be helpful.

Surveys, one on retention and one on recruitment. Send questions to support staff, Robin, and she will work with Dir. Wagoner to organize the submissions.

The committee discussed the need to notify responder employers that there is a rule in place that the responder may be late due to assisting on a call and that they cannot be fired as a result of tardiness.

NEXT MEETING: The next Rural EMS Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2021, from 3-5 p.m. The committee will be meeting in-person at ODPS, 1970 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43223.

ADJOURN:

ACTION: *Motion to adjourn at 5:05p.m.* Cody Shetler – First. Karen Beavers – Second. None opposed. None abstained. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Burmeister, AP3
Support Staff