



W e s t c h e s t e r R E M A C General Meeting Minutes - April 20, 2009

Date: April 20, 2009
Time: 9:00 AM
Location: Westchester County Department of Emergency Services
Chairman: Dr. Nicholas DeRobertis, MD

MEMBERS

Dr. Mark Silberman
Dr. Ron Nutovits
Dr. Carlos Flores
Dr. Karlene Chin
Dr. Robert Marcus
Dr. Emil Nigro
Dr. Joseph Ponticiello
Dr. Richard Marino
Dr. Nicholas DeRobertis
Dr. David Goldwag
Dr. Tim Haydock

AFFILIATION:

Community Hospital at Dobbs Ferry
Hudson Valley Hospital Center
Lawrence Hospital
Mt. Vernon Hospital
Northern Westchester Hospital
Phelps Memorial Hospital Center
Sound Shore Medical Center
St. John's Riverside Hospital
St. Joseph's Medical Center
Westchester Medical Center
White Plains Medical Center

ATTENDANCE

Present
Present
Absent
Absent
Absent
Absent
Absent
Present
Present
Present
Present

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

VACANT
Dr. Joli Yuknek
Dr. Richard Gallager
VACANT
Roland Faucher
Chief Anthony Chiarlitti

Medical Specialty (Trauma)
Medical Specialty (Pediatrics)/WPHC
Medical Specialty (Psychiatry) / WMC
EMS – Proprietary
EMS – Voluntary / MVFAVAC
Police / Pleasantville PD

VACANT
Present
Absent
VACANT
Present
Present

GUESTS

Joseph Bilotto
Gilbert Styles
Jeff Casas
Mike Volk
Daniel Olmoz
Malcolm Dixon
Ray Cordi
Rich Robinson
Dr. Erik Larsen
Dr. Michael Guttenberg
Robert Prianti
Sam Lubin

Harrison EMS
Hudson Valley Paramedics
Port Chester/Rye/Ryebrook EMS
WCDES
WCDES / Regional EMS Office
Transcare
Empress EMS
NYS DOH, Bureau of EMS
White Plains Hospital
St. Joseph's Medical Center
NY Presbyterian EMS
Ossining Volunteer Ambulance

MEETING

Meeting was called to order at 9:12 AM by Chair Dr. Nicholas DeRobertis. It was determined initially that a quorum was not present and the meeting would proceed for informational purposes only. However, it was later determined that a quorum was attained as additional members arrived.

Minutes from the March 16, 2009 meeting were previously disseminated to the members. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as written.

SEMAM

Dr. Haydock reported that there has been no SEMAM meeting since February. The next SEMAM meeting is scheduled for June. It was briefly mentioned that information should be forthcoming at the next meeting in regard to the voting privileges of delegates recently appointed from other regions.



HOSPITAL DIVERSION

A brief presentation of diversion data from 2009 was given by Dan Olmoz. It was noted that there was big disparity between total diversion hours with a few hospitals making up the majority of the total diversion hours. Discussion ensued in regard to identifying the issues the hospitals with high diversion hours may be facing. Several measures to limit diversion were discussed. However, it is not known what procedures are in place at the hospitals in question. It was suggested that hospital CEO's be made aware of the data since the diversion problem is far more than an Emergency Department issue. A brief description of diversion procedures in a California jurisdiction, NY City, and England was given and it was emphasized that there needs to be collaboration and oversight to really make things work. It was reiterated that Westchester County inquires what hospitals are doing to alleviate diversion at the time of their request when contiguous hospitals request to go on diversion. It was suggested that additional meetings occur with hospital CEO's as was done in the past. It was also pointed out that the State is taking a more proactive role with hospital throughput. A suggestion was made to contact the NYS DOH to identify any work that is being done in this regard from a patient safety aspect. Dr. DeRobertis will work with Chief Volk and Commissioner Sutton on meeting with the respective hospital CEO's.

SUBCOMMITTEES

PROTOCOLS – In Dr. Cordi's absence, Dan Olmoz reported on the following:

Paramedic Protocols – an update was provided on the status of the roll-out materials. Although members of the REMSCO Training and Education Committee had agreed to develop presentation materials, completion has been slow to progress. The Regional office staff is working to complete the materials. It is anticipated that the roll-out will begin in May.

STEMI – It was mentioned that the STEMI TAG met immediately following the REMAC meeting on March 16th. Discussion at the meeting revolved around 12 Lead ECG transmission and receiving capabilities. It was voiced by some of the participants that they have reservations in regard to diverting STEMI patients to cardiac interventional facilities when they may not be able to review the patient's ECG. A survey was conducted at the request of Dr. Goldwag to determine hospital ECG receiving and EMS transmission capabilities. Preliminary data from that survey indicates that EMS agencies continue to make progress with transmission of ECGs. However, of the five hospitals that replied, most indicated they either don't receive 12 Lead ECGs or they only receive them via fax machine. Discussion ensued regarding moving forward with a protocol that will allow diversion of STEMI patients from local hospitals regardless of ECG receiving/transmission capabilities. It was suggested that each hospital can decide whether or not transmission of a 12 Lead ECG will be required from the field. Additional discussion identified some disagreement for not having a standardized procedure as it may lead to varying approaches from medical control physicians. It was recommended that a mandatory quality improvement mechanism would be needed for any STEMI patient diversions. It was agreed that another meeting will be scheduled for the TAG to continue discussion.

EVALUATION – It was reported that additional correspondence was received from an individual who was dissatisfied with a previous REMAC Evaluation Committee determination. The individual has clarified that he is not interested in having the matter revisited by the Committee. However, he requests that the outcome letter be rewritten because he did not appreciate some of the content in the letter. It was reiterated that appeals of REMAC determination are to be directed to the State EMS Council. It was pointed out that if the Evaluation Committee was asked to reconsider the content of the letter that there the possibility that an alternative decision could be made. It was decided that additional discussion is needed on the matter.

INTERFACILITY TRANSPORT TAG – It was reported by Dr. Guttenberg that he has agreed to serve as the chair of the TAG. The group met for the first time on April 7th and agreed that the matter is a major undertaking that will require several additional meetings to develop a report. It was mentioned that the group will initially look at best practices in other regions/areas and will collect information in regard to training and credentialing. It is anticipated that a previous report developed by the SEMSCO will serve as the main reference and additional information regarding neonatal care will be researched. It was questioned what the status of state-wide policies was. Information in this regard will be explored. Interested parties were welcomed to participate.



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SPECIAL COMMITTEES

HUDSON VALLEY REGIONAL TRAUMA ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTAC) – It was reported that there has been no discussion since the last REMAC meeting.

HUDSON VALLEY / WESTCHESTER HELICOPTER COMMITTEE – There was no meeting held this period. There was a brief discussion in regard to a recent article on the possible discontinuation of a medevac helicopter servicing the eastern portion of Connecticut. It was questioned if there would be any impact on the region.

It was mentioned that an incident occurred recently in Westchester where a patient was unable to be transported because they exceeded the weight limits for the helicopter. It was suggested that the committee review the incident to determine if additional outreach needs to be done to first responders.

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AT DOBBS FERRY

It was mentioned that a REMAC Advisory was developed and distributed on April 1st to all EMS agencies directing ALS personnel to establish communications with online medical control at Dobbs Ferry Pavilion prior to transporting any ALS criteria patients there. Dr. Silberman indicated that Empress and Greenburgh EMS have been advised of the process and that a log is being kept of all calls and dispositions. It was pointed out that Dr. Silberman will be making the results of the data collected available to the REMAC at three and six month intervals.

It was mentioned that the REMAC needs to consider if Dobbs Ferry Pavilion should continue to have REMAC voting privileges since the hospital is now technically part of St. John's Riverside Hospital. It was recommended that the REMAC by-laws be referenced and the matter be revisited at the next meeting.

NOTICES OF INTENT

A notice of intent for PAD was received from Cablevision Systems Corporation –Greenburgh, Amalgamated Life – White Plains, and Allstate Insurance Company - Tarrytown.

APPLICATIONS FOR SPECIAL PERMISSIONS (I.e. Albuterol, Mark I, EMTD)

No notices were received since the last meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

It was announced that notification was sent to all proprietary EMS services in the county of Mr. Ray Cordi's application to serve as a non-voting REMAC member for the EMS proprietary sector. Having received no letter contesting the application, the REMAC voted and the motion was approved unanimously. The approved application will be brought to the Regional Council for ratification on May 28, 2009.

NEW BUSINESS

There was a brief discussion in regard to REMAC attendance and the importance of members communicating their ability to attend to the Regional EMS office. It was emphasized that it is imperative for members to attend the regular meetings so business can be conducted. An excerpt from the REMAC By-laws was read "*members with more than three consecutive unexcused absences from regular REMAC meetings each year shall be considered to have voluntarily resigned and will be notified in writing thereof. Absences for which members are represented by their designated alternates shall not be counted as unexcused absences.*"

It was suggested that a request be included in the meeting announcement for members to e-mail or call with their ability to attend. It was also recommended that a review of the REMAC attendance records be done and an advisement be made to those members failing to meet the minimum attendance requirements.



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It was reported that the Greater Westchester EMS Conference took place over the weekend and was very well coordinated. Everyone who participated was thanked and it was suggested that more support be given to the event next year.

It was reported that Port Chester Rye, Ryebrook EMS is proposing an expansion of the service's current pilot program for CPAP to include respiratory distress cases. A brief discussion ensued about proceeding carefully with COPD patients. It was agreed that additional supporting documentation will be presented to the REMAC at the next meeting for consideration of an expansion of the pilot program.

Dr. DeRobertis mentioned that he had been hearing complaints from EMS providers that there are too few call audits being offered in the region. It was suggested that hospital be reminded of the requirement to offer call audits on a regular basis. Information will be gathered to identify call audit availability.

Chief Volk mentioned on behalf of Commissioner Sutton that there have recently been a number of calls monitored on the county radio system where there appear to have been significant delays in patient care due to agencies not being able to respond promptly. It was reported that a recent chest pain call required dispatching 10 separate agencies to get the patient transported to the hospital. It was suggested that the REMAC review such cases to determine contributing factors. A discussion ensued regarding dispatching, response times, mutual aid, and a depleted volunteer system. It was pointed out that the REMAC should use the opportunity to bolster the Quality Improvement Committee in an effort to provide a mechanism to review such matters. It was also mentioned that service medical directors should be reviewing their respective agencies for the ability to respond in a timely fashion.

It was again reported that a request for a municipal certificate of need at the advanced life support level was received by the Regional EMS office from the White Plains Department of Public Safety. A letter advising of the application process for REMAC ALS approval was sent to the department. To date no further information has been received for the REMAC to consider.

An announcement was made that the Annual Regional EMS Awards Ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 21st.

NEXT MEETING – Session was adjourned at 10:50 am. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 18, 2009 at 9:00am.

PLEASE NOTE: A web cast of this meeting is available on-demand and may be viewed at <http://www.wremSCO.org/>

Respectfully submitted by Daniel Olmoz