

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
INTER-OFFICE MEMO

DATE: April 15, 2019

TO: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Deanna Alexander, Chair, Council on Emergency Medical Services

SUBJECT: Informational Report on the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council

**BACKGROUND**

Created by MCO Chapter 97 in 2000, the Milwaukee County Council on Emergency Medical Services (“EMS Council”) serves in an advisory and oversight role to the County EMS system. The EMS Council evaluates the operations of EMS delivery systems, considers options to improve standardization, coordination among stakeholders, and maintain best practices, and serves as a public hub for information sharing and discussion.

Emergency medicine is a major part of our healthcare system, and OEM’s Emergency Medical Services Division (OEM EMS) has directed the County’s system since departmental reorganization occurred in 2015. The EMS Council provides a regular and recurring opportunity for public discussion and review of issues related to OEM EMS, various public-private partnerships in providing EMS care, disaster response planning, and other public health concerns. The EMS Council also advises OEM EMS involvement with certain community or public health issues, and requests or cooperates in actionable activities. Highlights include:

**Standards of Care**

OEM EMS administers the protocols to include paramedic practice, practical skills, and medicine dosages, delivered by those paramedics under medical direction provided in partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin’s Department of Emergency Medicine. The EMS Council provides both support and a public pressure point to ensure outstanding work by OEM EMS in advancing the EMS system in an ever-evolving field while maintaining a patient-centered approach and introducing research-based protocols that are later replicated by other EMS systems in the United States:

- **The LVO (*Large Vessel Occlusion*) Stroke Protocol**, an official system of procedures which gives providers in the field efficient and life-saving tools to quickly identify the type of stroke a patient has suffered and determine the appropriate hospital for treatment.

- **The No-Diversion Protocol**, an official policy that collaboratively changes hospital processes to ensure emergency departments have capacity to receive new patients with limited exceptions. Previously, hospitals in the metro-Milwaukee area used a wider reasoning allocation to close their emergency rooms to new admissions, potentially regardless of the severity of the patient's condition.

OEM EMS has also been at the forefront of EMS care improvements adopted within Wisconsin as the statewide standards of care:

- **The Dispatcher-Assisted CPR Protocol** gives staff answering calls to 911 the knowledge and tools needed to deliver CPR instruction to callers and bystanders. This has directly saved more than 20 lives in Milwaukee County since its introduction, and was the model for 2018 state legislation mandating all 911 Centers provide the service; and
- **The Naloxone Protocol** gives first responders the ability to rapidly recognize and intervene when a field patient has clinically significant opioid poisoning or overdose. This protocol was the basis for OEM EMS's training to 29 law enforcement agencies in identifying opioid exposure and overdose, administering naloxone, and tracking its use.

### **Quality Improvement & Outcomes**

OEM EMS ensures quality of care by conducting randomized patient care checks while also implementing a structured culture of shared accountability. Over the past 18 months, OEM EMS has introduced the Just Culture model of individual and system accountability into its continuous quality improvement program (CQIP). Just Culture is a peer-driven review process that works collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure quality care is delivered in all cases. The idea is that there is a balance between human / staff accountability and system accountability, and reporting of events and errors in a non-punitive environment that allows for system and educational re-design ushers in higher levels of patient safety over the long term.

### **Research and Data Sharing**

OEM EMS collects and analyzes universal system data for predictive and prescriptive recommendations which directly impact patients. It partners with Medical College of Wisconsin's Department of Emergency Medicine in the academic study of trending data and comparison to like-minded EMS systems to advance the County's paramedic practice. In addition, OEM EMS is one of approximately 75 EMS systems that submits data on the treatment of cardiac arrest patients to the national Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES). OEM EMS also formed the Performance Collaborative Consortium with five of those systems to compare data and share best practices, thereby leading to improved outcomes in cardiac arrest cases. OEM EMS has just recently closed the loop on incorporating data from each major medical center in the

metro-Milwaukee area, allowing the department and the EMS Council to examine and consider variances and trendlines in the provision of EMS services regardless of the patient's medical destination.

### **Education**

OEM EMS directs the credentialing and continuing education of approximately 550 active paramedics. In 2018, OEM EMS earned certification from the Commission on Accreditation for Pre-Hospital Continuing Education (CAPCE), the national leader for continuing education in EMS. CAPCE promotes the evolution and growth of EMS through development of continuing education standards, encouragement of innovative learning solutions, the support of continuous learning opportunities, and the assurance of optimal learning experiences. The EMS Council serves as an information hub for the sharing of information between affected organizations in order to ensure all paramedics receive the required amount of training to maintain licensure and to field concerns or recommendations for the training program.

### **Service Delivery**

OEM delivers direct emergency medical care to patrons at the Milwaukee County Zoo, Fiserv Forum and UWM Panther Arena.

### **CURRENT WORK**

The EMS Council is both a forum for information sharing and also a credible public place for delivering meaningful change to our citizens in the area of emergency medicine practices. While its role has traditionally been advisory, the EMS Council is taking a more active role in advocating for policy and practice changes that will lead to better patient outcomes regardless of socioeconomic status. Examples include:

- Formal public input on the operating budget of OEM EMS and subsequent advisory to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors when warranted; and
- Commissioning research into disparities in the level of care delivered due to race and other social determinants; for example: answering research questions about whether and to what extent disparities exist in the pain relief administered to patients in field emergency scenarios, dependent upon the race or perceived ethnic background of the patient; and
- Influencing data sharing by all agencies providing pre-hospital medical care in Milwaukee County, including the private ambulance agencies, who have been historically reluctant to participate; and
- Expanding the definition of the EMS System in the ordinance to encompass more than 1,000 emergency medical technicians (EMTs) delivering Basic Lifesaving care (BLS) in the County.

The EMS Council believes that it facilitates collaboration in partnership between OEM EMS and community stakeholders as a model of what all stakeholders can do together, beyond simple mutual aid: shared services, interoperable systems, and consolidated operations lead to faster response times, better care and more efficient use of resources.

### COMPOSITION

The EMS Council meets on a quarterly basis and is comprised of 23 members positions, each of whom represents a stakeholder in the EMS system. These stakeholders include:

- 12 municipal fire departments and four private agencies who respond to 911 calls, deliver pre-hospital medical care in the field, and transport patients;
- Health care systems who receive patients transported to their emergency departments;
- The Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management (OEM);
- Public health and behavioral health agencies; and
- The community at large.

#### 2018-2019 EMS Council Membership

ROLE	NAME	ORGANIZATION
Council Chair	Deanna Alexander	Board of Supervisors
Council Vice-Chair	Robert Whitaker	North Shore Fire/Rescue
Office of Emergency Management	Christine Westrich	Office of Emergency Management
ALS Fire Chief Representative	Mason Pooler	West Allis Fire Department
BLS Fire Chief Representative	Daniel Mayer	Cudahy Fire Department
Milwaukee Fire Chief Designee	Joshua Parish	Milwaukee Fire Department
State Representative ( <i>ex officio</i> )	Jerry Biggart	Oak Creek Fire Department
Paramedic Representative	Daniel Weber	Greenfield Fire Department
Paramedic Representative	Ryan Wendt	South Milwaukee Fire Department
Private Provider Representative	Chris Anderson	Bell Ambulance
Private Provider Representative	Larry Knuth	Paratech Ambulance
OEM-EMS ( <i>ex officio</i> )	<i>vacant</i>	Office of Emergency Management
ICC Representative	<i>vacant</i>	-
ICC Representative	Steve Olson	City of Franklin
MATC Representative	Russell Spahn	Milwaukee Area Technical College
OEM-EMS Medical Director ( <i>ex officio</i> )	Riccardo Colella, DO, MPH	Office of Emergency Management
Medical Society Representative	Tony Thrasher, DO	Department of Health & Human Services
Hospital Association Representative	Jim Terrell, RN	Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center
Community Representative	Ann Christiansen	North Shore Health Department
Community Representative	Lynn Schubert	Aurora Health Care
Community Representative	<i>vacant</i>	-
Community Representative	<i>vacant</i>	-
Community Representative	<i>vacant</i>	-

The EMS Council is currently soliciting recommendations for vacant Community Representative seats to be put forth as nominations to the County Executive. Qualifications include professional affiliation, employment with, or an ownership stake in Milwaukee County, a municipality within Milwaukee County, or a government unit or business organization providing services directly related to EMS in Milwaukee County.



---

Supervisor Deanna Alexander  
Chair, Council on Emergency Medical Services

Attachments: NONE

CC: Chris Abele, County Executive  
Supervisor Supreme Moore Omokunde, Chair, Health and Human Needs Committee  
Health and Human Needs Committee Members  
Robert Whitaker, Vice Chair, Council on Emergency Medical Services  
Christine Westrich, Director, Office of Emergency Management  
Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors  
Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Health and Human Needs Committee  
Jack Laufenberg, Legislative Assistant to Supervisor Deanna Alexander