



EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE COMMITTEE



REGULAR MEETING

Friday, January 14, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.

Location: Via Zoom

M I N U T E S

MEMBERSHIP / ATTENDANCE			
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MEMBERS</u></p> <p>Michael S. Ritter, Chair Arturo Pedroza Lawrence A. Grihalva Timothy Munzing, MD Luis Estevez Ted Heyming, MD Robert Viera Becky Firey Rebecca (Beckie) Gomez Chief Adam Loeser David Gibbs, MD Michael Killebrew Chief Stu Greenberg</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>REPRESENTING</u></p> <p>– Orange County Medical Assoc (SOCEP) – Board of Supervisors-First District – Board of Supervisors-Second District – Board of Supervisors-Third District – Board of Supervisors-Fourth District – Board of Supervisors-Fifth District – Ambulance Assn. of Orange County – American Red Cross – City Selection Committee – Orange County Fire Chiefs Assoc. – Orange County Medical Assoc. – Orange County City Managers Assoc. – Orange County Police Chiefs & Sheriffs Assoc.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>HEALTH CARE AGENCY STAFF</u></p> <p>Steve Thronson – Chief of Medical Health Services Tammi McConnell, MSN, RN – EMS Division Director Carl H. Schultz, MD – EMS Medical Director Gagandeep Grewal, MD – Associate EMS Medical Director Rommel Navarro, Pharm.D. – Chief Pharmacist James Gee, Pharm.D. – Pharmacist Laurent Repass, NRP – EMS Information Systems Chief Adrian Rodriguez – EMS Performance Chief Danielle Ogaz – EMS Systems & Standards Chief Wayne Tolosa – Health Emergency Management Chief Denamarie Baker – St. Emergency Program Coordinator Meng Chung, EMT-P – BLS Coordinator David Johnson, RN – Facilities Coordinator Jason Azuma, NRP – OC-MEDS Coordinator Mike Chiles – Program Supervisor II Maria Nava – EMS Specialist Justin Newton – EMS Specialist Andrew Roberts – EMS Specialist Kirstin Wong – EMS Specialist Erica Moojen – EMS Office Supervisor Eileen Endo – Office Specialist Lisa Wilson – Information Processing Technician</p>	
GUESTS PRESENT			
<p>Jordan Abushwish – Providence St. Joseph Julia Afrasiabi, RN – UCI Medical Center Whitney Ayers – Hospital Association of S. California Dave Barry – Anaheim Fire and Rescue Jenny Beelke – Lynch Ambulance Service Drew Bernard – Emergency Ambulance Service Randy Black – Orange County Fire Authority Ruth Clark, RN – Orange County Global Medical Center Laura Cross, RN – Mission Hospital Chad Drueten – Emergency Ambulance Service Gloria Guerra, RN – St. Jude Medical Center Vanessa Hayflich – Mercy Air Service Matthew Kaplan, MD – Children’s Hospital of Orange County Jeff Lopez – Huntington Beach Fire Department</p>	<p>Walt Lynch – Lynch Ambulance Service Julie Mackie, RN – Mission Hospital Patrick Powers – City of Placentia Sharon Richards – Hospital Association of S. California Phil Robinson – City of Laguna Niguel Rhonda Rosati, RN – Brea/Fullerton Fire Department Karen Sharp, RN – Saddleback Memorial Medical Center Chief Dan Stefano – Costa Mesa Fire Department Cyndie Strader, RN – Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian Christine Waddell, RN – Huntington Beach Hospital Jacob Wagoner – Lynch Ambulance Service Randy Webb – Kim Zaky, RN – Children’s Hospital of Orange County</p>		

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Dr. Michael Ritter, MD.

2. INTRODUCTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Ritter thanked all healthcare providers for their hard work in keeping residents safe under the stressful circumstances due to the increase in COVID-19 patients.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was suggested the County Paramedic Advisory Committee report needed more clarification regarding the statement made. It should read: *“Dr. Schultz reported that this committee discussed hospital diversion, revise the **trauma triage guidelines** to **ensure that hanging victims and patients who suffer injuries involving electric motorized vehicles going 20 miles per hour go***

to a trauma center, the waiver of EMT skills verification until December 31, 2021, and the extension for an EMT or paramedic to administer vaccinations.

Minutes from the October 8, 2021 meeting were approved with the correction noted and submitted.

4. OCEMS REPORT

- **Medical Director's Report**

Dr. Schultz reported there are many issues of drug distribution for treatment for COVID-19. Sotrovimab is a monoclonal antibody that is only given by IV infusion. Another is a prophylactic that is administered to high risk patients only and is going to facilities for treatment of cancer patients on active chemotherapy and other high risk patients. This drug is not available to the public. Both Paxlovid and *Molnupiravir* (in pill form) are accessible in a limited supply and are being shipped directly to outpatient pharmacies by the State. These types of drugs are available in a limited supply and patients are discouraged from visiting the emergency department to get these drugs as hospitals are lower on the priority list to receive them.

Dr. Schultz announced that Saddleback Memorial Medical Center's Stroke Neurology Receiving Center (SNRC) designation has been suspended and is now in compliance to be designated as a fully functioning Stroke Neurology Receiving Center.

- **Health Emergency Management Report**

Dr. Grewal reported that the COVID 19 case rate increased exponentially within the last month from 9.4 per 100,000 population to 216 per 100,000. The positivity rate is 27.5% with the number of hospitalizations is over 1,154 with 171 patients in the ICU. There is a higher percentage of pediatric patients in comparison to last year. There are significant outbreaks that have occurred in skilled nursing facilities. He reported that Orange County's hospitalization rate is relatively low. Dr. Grewal reported on the distribution of test kits, including iHealth kits used for healthcare workers reporting to work.

Wayne Tolosa reported that resource requests for personal protective equipment (PPE) has increased from two to 40 requests per day. The team at the AOC is determining trends on the distribution of PPE, test kits, etc. Dr. Ritter asked about the reports of people setting up bogus testing sites that have been set up. Chief Loeser asked if the different test kits are available for fire departments. Dr. Grewal reported there are test kits available for fire service personnel. Mr. Tolosa reported that there are test kits that may be available for return-to-work purposes for the paramedics.

- **Hospital Diversion Report (January 1 to December 31, 2021)**

Attached to the agenda is the annual Hospital Diversion Report for calendar year 2021. This report gives an annual overview of hospital diversion for each specialty center diversion. Karen Sharp (Saddleback Memorial Medical Center) asked about the initials "EDLA" as identified on the ReddiNet screen. Danielle Ogaz reported that this identifies an Orange County facility who is likely to receive patients from Los Angeles (These hospitals are La Palma Intercommunity Hospital; Los Alamitos Medical Center, and St. Jude Medical Center). When a Los Angeles County hospital that borders Orange County is on diversion, the respective Orange County hospital will also close for ED Saturation for ALS transport only. The hospital will remain open for BLS and specialty receiving center patients (cardiac and stroke). Orange County EMS suspended diversion on December 30, 2021 until further notice.

- **Ambulance Patient Off-Load Time (APOT) Report: January 1 to December 31, 2021**

Laurent Repass reported the number of 9-1-1 ALS transports during the month of December is the highest recorded since 2018. APOT has been much higher over the past 30 days. The 90th percentile is at 34 minutes, 28 seconds during the month of December.

Committee members discussed and expressed concerns regarding response times from dispatch to arrival on scene times and the time from the scene to arrival at the hospital; ambulance shortages and the reports about lengthy wait times for ambulance units to appear on scene throughout the State. Ms. McConnell reported that Orange County EMS meets with the emergency ambulance providers every other day for the past three weeks.

- **EMCC Correspondence** - *None shared.*

5. EMCC ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE AND ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS

- **Facilities Advisory Committee (January 11, 2022 meeting)**

Dr. Schultz reported that the trauma medical directors have come to an agreement to voluntarily not to go on trauma center diversion during the current acute crisis.

- **County Prehospital Advisory Committee (January 12, 2022 meeting)**

Jeff Lopez reported on the discussion that had taken place at CPAC. Discussion items included the suspension of hospital diversion; the bi-directional data sharing project; the discussion between Orange County and Los Angeles County EMS which allows Orange County hospitals to report the hospital as closed to ALS patients that could be transported to those Orange County facilities bordering Los Angeles County. They also discussed mutual aid ambulances due to the shortage of ambulance units; and the temporary suspension of diversion and APOT times.

Karen Sharp asked for further information on the bi-directional data sharing project. Laurent Repass reported that correspondence has been sent to Chief Executive Officers at each of the emergency receiving centers regarding available funding that may be available so that hospitals could receive immediate patient electronic prehospital care reports and in return transmit data to the fire service providers. The project is expected to be completed by July, 2023.

Automated data exchange is mandated in OCEMS policy 300.50 and it has been a long standing goal of EMS to have an automated system. Jeff Lopez reported an incident in which a patient was able to be transported to another hospital where the patient could receive the necessary care and establish a mutual aid relationship with an ambulance provider. Mr. Lopez thanked Laurent for all of the work that he has done to make the exchange of patient care information much more efficient.

- **Transportation Advisory Committee (January 5, 2022 meeting)**

Robert Viera reported on the discussions from this Committee meeting including the number of ambulance vehicle licenses with a 97% pass rate; the MED-9 radio compliance of all licensed ambulance units in Orange County.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Emergency Medical Services Fee Study**

Ms. McConnell reported that the EMS Fee Resolution is scheduled to go before the Board of Supervisors on January 25, 2022.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- **Suspension of Hospital Diversion**

Dr. Schultz gave a brief background on the reasons for suspension of hospital diversion. At one time hospital diversion reached over 200 hours in a 24-hour period. This may be interpreted as one third of Orange County hospitals would be closed to ambulance traffic and the remaining facilities would be required to care of all patients in Orange County. Rhonda Rosati thanked Dr. Schultz for allowing closure of those facilities bordering Los Angeles County to be closed in an effort to protect Orange County hospitals. Dr. Schultz reported that the suspension of diversion will continue until APOT times decrease significantly.

Tammi McConnell reported that when the three closest hospitals in Los Angeles go on diversion, La Palma Intercommunity, Los Alamitos Medical Center, and St. Jude Medical Center will automatically go on diversion and will not accept Los Angeles County ALS ambulance transport patients. In addition, Orange County EMS has used Federal Resources to send 6 paramedics per day (three for day shifts and three for night shifts) to support these hospitals. Hospitals may make resource requests to fill additional staffing needs through the AOC.

- **Ambulance Patient Off-Load Times Discussion**

Dr. Schultz gave a brief background on the necessity of this discussion due to the increase of ambulance traffic.

Presently, ambulance personnel are allowed to use cots after a 60 minute wait to offload patients. Cots may be used for those patients so that the ambulance crew may be returned to service in the emergency department and the use cots to allow for offloading ambulance patients.

- **Ambulance Mutual Aid**

Dr. Schultz reported that Orange County EMS has authorized 9-1-1 ambulance licensed ambulance companies to contract with licensed ambulance services to augment the number of ambulance attendants and vehicles available when shortages occur. Dr. Schultz reported that 9-1-1 ambulance licensed service providers a licensed ambulance service providers wh

- **Facilities Designation (Continuing) for Specialty Receiving Centers**

Danielle Ogaz reported that the Facilities Advisory Committee recommended hospital designations/redesignations of specialty receiving centers as listed in the designation reports presented on November 10, 2021 and January 12, 2022. Mr. Johnson reported that Orange County EMS had issued a moratorium and delayed the designation process, a practice performed by national accrediting agencies. Most of the conditions pertain to response rates for radio testing; and ensure hospitals have a plan in place to lower diversion rates.

The Emergency Medical Care Committee recommended that the Orange County EMS Medical Director approve the redesignations as indicated in the report provided by the Facilities Advisory Committee.

8. MEMBER COMMENTS

- Chief Adam Loeser expressed concerns on comments made on fire delivery systems and stressed the importance of developing partnerships to deliver emergency services.
- Larry Grihalva concurred with Chief Loeser's comments and stressed the importance of collaboration of all partners within the EMS system. The importance is to focus on optimum patient care. He stressed the importance of being an advocate for the system.
- Mr. Estevez reported he would be happy to meet with Chief Loeser and the comments made come from a sense of frustration seeing the struggles the system is going through.
- Becky Firey reported there has been a national blood crisis, the Red Cross has not seen the donor turnouts, while they prefer to have a seven day blood supply on hand. Presently, the Red Cross has a one day blood supply on hand. Ms. Firey is encouraging people to please donate blood.

9. PUBLIC FORUM

Patrick Powers stated that while he appreciated the comments made stressing the importance of collaboration. He stressed the importance of Orange County EMS taking leadership in changing policies and procedures to reflect the requirements of the EMS plan.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 8, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.