

Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Branch Activity Report
to the State Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Council (SEMTAC)

Jan. 14, 2021

This report is submitted as a record of key activities by the Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Branch for the period ending Dec. 31, 2020.

Organizational Effectiveness

During the majority of 2020, and especially during the fourth quarter of 2020, the EMTS branch personnel carefully balanced regular work responsibilities while concurrently supporting the state's unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic response. A sample of the state-wide contributions made to the pandemic response from the EMTS branch and significant internal process modifications to ensure continuity of branch operations include:

- The creation of dashboards and data products providing situational awareness around hospital resources (including ICU beds, ventilators and PPE) and statewide EMS resources.
- The EMTS Trauma Section maintained continuity of operations despite the deployment of the section manager to the Emergency Operations Center and the remaining trauma section staff being deployed to assist in COVID-19 response for testing and other related types of pandemic response.
- All trauma designation reviews were placed on a temporary moratorium as staff worked to create a platform for virtual reviews. The outcome of which trauma section had prepared us for reviewing trauma facilities virtually, on-site or a hybrid version of both and complements the American College of Surgeons who will no longer be performing on-site reviews.
- The EMTS Operations Section maintained continuity of operations despite moving to an all-remote work environment and having two staff deployed to the state EOC for COVID-19 response. The team developed, in coordination with division leadership and policy analysts, modifications to certification requirements and processes ensuring continuity of operations in a remote work environment: air ambulance service licensure, EMS education programs maintained recognition and continued to offer courses, and EMS providers certification.
- The EMTS Funding Section seamlessly maintained continuity of operations with the conversion to a remote working environment. Half of the section's staff were shared with the operations section to offset the workload added by the emergency executive orders and new work processes required to address the pandemic. While an initial regional grant review was held using the conventional format in early March, all of the remaining ten regional and five statewide grant review sessions were conducted using a web conference platform without a loss of fidelity. Additionally, the Funding section worked with the division's Fiscal Services section and converted all contracting documents to an electronic format, which also



helped funding from the grant awards to be available to recipients earlier in the fiscal year.

Anticipating the need for supplementary medical practitioners to administer the COVID-19 vaccination, Dr. Eric France (CDPHE chief medical officer) temporarily expanded the scope of practice for emergency medical technicians to administer the COVID-19 vaccine during the public health emergency. (Vaccine administration is in the regular scope of practice for EMT-Intermediates, Advanced-EMTs, and paramedics.)

Despite the challenges associated with the pandemic, branch personnel ensured the emergency medical services and trauma system development projects continued as planned. On October 22, 2010, the Board of Health adopted revisions to 6 CCR 1015-3, Chapter One rules. The revised rules, effective January 1, 2021, created a new licensure pathway for EMS personnel in Colorado with bachelor degrees in health sciences or an equivalent field. Additionally, on October 22, 2020, the department's chief medical officer approved revisions to 6 CCR 1015-3, Chapter Two rules. The revised rules, effective January 1, 2021, expanded and defined medical acts of EMS providers working in community integrated health care service agencies and in clinical settings.

Operations Section

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EMS Provider Certification

At the beginning of the first quarter of 2021, there were 19,317 certified EMS providers in the state: 13,556 EMTs; 383 AEMTs; 390 Intermediates; and 4,522 Paramedics (of which 430 paramedics have critical care endorsement, 25 have the community paramedic endorsement, and 11 have both P-CC and P-CP endorsements).

EMR Registration

There are 383 voluntarily registered Emergency Medical Responders.

Education

There are 224 recognized education programs in OATH representing education centers (initial training) and education groups (continuing education). Education centers are also recognized as education groups and are counted in both categories.

Emergency Medical Practice Advisory Council (EMPAC)

There are currently 391 active scope of practice waivers, of which 3 are for BLS provider levels, 42 are for both BLS and ALS provider levels, and 346 are for ALS provider levels. The next EMPAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 8, 2021, starting at 10 a.m. via Zoom. The next Regional Medical Direction committee meeting will be held the same day immediately prior to the EMPAC meeting, from 8 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Air Ambulance

There are 28 licensed air ambulance service agencies in Colorado, of which 20 are full two-year licenses and 8 are recognition licenses.



Funding Section

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Technical Assistance

At the request of local governments and in conjunction with the regional emergency medical and trauma services advisory councils (RETACs), staff members coordinate technical assistance services to local entities. The final report for the Bent County consultative visit was completed at the end of December. The department has performed 21 local EMTS system assessments since the program began. Copies of the final reports with recommendations are available from the department.

CREATE

The Colorado Rural Health Center continues to administer the Colorado Resource for EMS and Trauma Education (CREATE) grant program. There were no financial waiver requests submitted for review during the quarter. The Expert Review Committee evaluated ten applications requesting \$60,435 in funding. Five courses were approved with \$29,984 awarded.

Provider Grants and System Improvement Funding Requests

The legislature authorized approximately \$8.4 million for the funding program in fiscal year 2021. Five hundred thousand dollars was allocated for the CREATE educational grant program, \$330,000 for regional medical direction projects, \$298,327 for supplemental RETAC funding, \$65,000 to provide support for the new trauma registry software, \$350,000 in temporary funding for the peer assistance program and \$150,000 was set-aside for emergency grants. An additional \$1.7 million was held back due to reduced revenue projections attributed delays affecting vehicle registrations. Revenues have not yet recovered even though the restrictions affecting the ability to register vehicles have been relaxed for several months. Ninety-six funding applications were submitted for the fiscal year 2021 funding program; ten regional medical direction projects, three system improvement projects and 83 provider grants. For the fiscal year 2021 funding cycle, the department awarded \$3,370,796 in provider grant awards and \$60,700 for system improvement funding for 77 projects. The funding section fully executed all contracts and more than half of the purchase orders last quarter. The remaining purchase orders were fully executed in October. Twelve projects have been completed so far this year and \$2,057 has been reverted. The fiscal year 2022 EMTS Funding program opened for applications on schedule in mid-December 2020. Current estimates expect about \$4.7 million will be available for awards.

Emergency Grants

There were no emergency grant requests received in the last quarter.

Trauma Section

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Trauma Reviews/Designations

Due to national, state, and local responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department determined that it is in everyone's best interest to postpone trauma designation on-site visits. Additionally, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Verification Review Committee (VRC) has postponed all site reviews and issued a verification extension for one year to all verified trauma centers through 2023. This is an important factor since the American College of Surgeons serves as a contractor for state facilities. The Department, through a waiver process, granted all trauma facilities scheduled for a triennial designation review between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2023 a one-year extension to



their designation expiration date. All remaining facilities in the current review cycle and those seeking a new facility designation will be reviewed as soon as possible. There are currently 84 designated trauma centers.

Trauma Consultations and Outreach Visits

Staff members provided technical assistance and/or monitoring to several facilities during the last year. Trauma staff continues to provide technical assistance to all facilities updating their profile in OATH. Trauma staff initiated web conferences for trauma system orientation and made those presentations available online. Trauma staff also updated scoring tools and applications to be compliant with the most recent set of rule revisions. This process facilitated an entire web page redesign and was completed before the end of 2020.

Designation Review Committee (DRC)

The DRC meeting for July and October was held virtually. The department introduced committee bylaws for review and recommendations for revisions. The DRC will vet the new procedure document and present to SEMTAC for final approval.

Statewide Trauma Advisory Committee (STAC)

The STAC meeting for July and October was held virtually. STAC committee bylaws were also introduced for review and recommendations for revision. The STAC will vet the new procedure document and present to SEMTAC for final approval.

Other Trauma Section Activities

- Continued to provide technical assistance to stakeholders requesting registry assistance.
- Website remodel that considered stakeholder interface and lean process mapping to establish a more user friendly platform.
- Data analysis and quality improvement projects that require communication and collaboration with vendors and trauma programs to guarantee accuracy.
- Registry updated to include a new 2021 data dictionary, inclusion criteria, and data vendor schema.
- Brand new designation applications for each level in a user friendly up to date format.
- The Trauma Section has provided support to other sections and continues to provide support for various initiatives around the COVID19 response.

Data Section

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The data team continues to make progress enhancing data quality from licensed air and ground ambulance agencies across the state using Version 3.4.0. Over 200 agencies have transitioned to NEMSIS Version 3 data reporting. As a result, the department has shifted focus to quality improvement and enhanced data reporting. Most notably, the quarterly compliance reports that are sent to regional coordinators were expanded to include 13 total reports ranging from basic summary information to specific benchmark measures allowing coordinators to compare performance. In addition, the team has built several benchmark



dashboards that will allow ambulance agencies to retrieve their own patient care data and compare their performance to their region and the state overall.

Utilizing the department's new partnership with Biospatial - a tool that uses emergency medical services and health-related data sources to provide timely, national-scale syndromic detection, monitor real-time trends, and alert to syndromic anomalies critical to the nation's health and safety - the data team has built regional sub-organizations to share vital data across the state. In November 2020, RETACs were provided access to the Biospatial platform. Additionally, the team has begun sharing state level reports examining changes in time sensitive syndromes treated by EMS as well as other topics of interest. Such topics include disease surveillance, motor vehicle crashes, overdoses, and general performance measures.

With over a million records in the Colorado Trauma Registry, the branch continues to refine its trauma data. Following a transition to ImageTrend's Patient Registry in 2019, the 2019 trauma data collection was closed on December 31, 2020. The 2020 data collection is scheduled to close on June 30, 2021. Approximately 60,000 records have been entered or imported into the system from all 85 facilities. The team has begun building new summary reports for facilities to access and will continue to refine this system to meet the needs of the trauma facilities and the department.

Data Section staff members continue to:

- Provide NEMSIS Version 3 training and CQI, including new processes, rules, and updates
- Troubleshoot problems that arise with a completed schematron, ImageTrend ePCR, data entry, reporting, or other data issues
- Provide ongoing technical assistance to transport agencies, trauma centers and their software vendors
- Assist hospitals with accessing Hospital Hub Dashboard and Elite Field to enhance communication between medical staff and EMS providers
- Develop ad-hoc EMS and trauma reports to accommodate data requests and other data driven requirements including benchmarking and quality improvement
- Analyze data and prepare reports and/or presentations for stakeholders
- Assist EMS agencies using third party vendor software to establish an administrative web access and process for submitting XML data to the ImageTrend database
- Assist in implementation of the new Trauma Registry system in Colorado, including building data entry forms, validation rules, data dictionaries, scheduled reports, etc.
- Develop and implement new ways to use EMS and trauma data such as benchmark reports, dashboards, and presentations to enhance care for patients across Colorado

Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Councils (RETACs)

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First quarter activity reports and financial statements for FY21 and the Regional/Local Funding Overviews for FY20 were submitted by all 11 RETACs. The most recent quarterly RETAC forum was held in December virtually. SEMTAC member are encouraged to attend future RETAC forum meetings. The next RETAC forum is March 3-4 in Gateway.



Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC)

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EMS for Children is a federal partnership grant funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. To address the grant deliverables most effectively, the program is housed at University of Colorado School of Medicine, which employs the EMSC Program Manager and manages most EMS for Children activities. A close relationship is maintained with the EMTS Branch. The Pediatric Emergency Care Committee (PECC) serves as the advisory committee for the program. The program continues to implement a [strategic plan](#). Activities this quarter include:

- Submitted the FY2021 Non-Competing Continuation Progress Report to the Health Resources and Services Administration
- Conducted the quarterly Pediatric Emergency Care Committee meeting
- Created a revised draft of the Pediatric Emergency Care Committee bylaws; the revised bylaws will be voted on at the January 2021 meeting
- Facilitated three Colorado Pediatric Preparedness for the Emergency Room (COPPER) steering committee meetings
- Held several COPPER work group meetings
- Continued development of COPPER website, application package, curriculum guide, and resource library
- Participated as one of two states in the National Pediatric Readiness Project pilot for the 2021 assessment; Colorado achieved an 86.4% response rate among the state's emergency departments
- Launched a steering committee for the Colorado Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator (COPECC) program
- Developed a [handout](#) summarizing results of the 2020 EMS for Children Survey
- Promoted the 2021 EMS for Children survey using social media and listservs
- Helped the Children's Hospital Colorado (CHCO) EMS Outreach and Education team record, host, and edit virtual lectures
- Maintained statewide [pediatric emergency education calendar](#) on EMSC website
- Connected with the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Behavioral Health to begin discussions around collaborating and sharing resources
- Completed several enhancements to the EMSC website
- Attended the December RETAC forum

Additional information is available on the [EMS for Children](#) website.

