Surviving in a Political World:
Can’t we all just get along?

Jay Bradshaw
Director
Maine EMS
Objectives:

- Surviving and thriving as a state EMS official
- What the media and elected officials have in common.
- The importance of messaging
- Risks of poor communication
- Developing your message
- Delivering your message
- Scenarios
“All politics is local.”
- Former Speaker of the House Thomas “Tip” O’Neill

“...so is the delivery of pre-hospital care.”
- Doug Wolfberg, Esq.

“We have met the enemy and he is us.”
- Pogo
What's in a number?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nascent (0-5)</td>
<td>42 (75%)</td>
<td>38 (68%)</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran (6-15)</td>
<td>8 (14%)</td>
<td>13 (23%)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career (&gt;15)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Experience</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>306</td>
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New this year 10
Minimum 0.5
Maximum 26
Mean 4.9
Median 3.0
Mode 1.0

Leadership Skills For State EMS Officials - 2014 Workshop

![Graph showing the number of directors versus length of service in years.](image-url)
• Good news: most leave voluntarily
• Bad news: collective experience in steady decline
Who are you?

• EMA
• Those ambulance people
• Public Safety
• Public Health
• Health Care?
See and be seen

• Know your audience; be sure your audience knows you
  – Please sir, may I attend *more* meetings?
  – Accessibility
  – H1N1
  – Community Paramedicine
  – Area Agencies on Aging
Relationships Matter

- Internal (intradepartment, providers, chiefs, docs)
- External (Highway Safety, DOT, SHSP, Rural Health, home health care)
- Receptive to change
  - Scope of practice
  - Regulations
- Be an advocate and help others do the same (PIER)
The media; and legislators; and me. Oh my!
Some W’s and an H

• Who are these people?
• What do they do?
• What do they want?
• Why is it important to us?
• How should we respond?
Civics 101

- Executive
- Legislative
- Judicial
How a bill becomes a law

- Constituent request
- Department bill
- Title requested/approved
- Bill drafted
- Assigned to Committee
- Public Hearing(s)
- Work Session(s)
- Committee vote
- Floor votes
- Governor action
The media and elected officials: pretty much the same, only different

- Each can help or hinder your mission
- Neither fully understands what you do
- Both may approach you with preconceptions and information from various sources
- Their motivations and underlying interests may not be apparent
- Both need answers and have deadlines
- Turnover
• Constituents or readers
• Authority in reality or by perception
• Mandated or obligated
  – Do you have to jump whenever asked?
• Responsibility or general responsibility
• Decisions based on information and influence or information and influence based on the decision – chicken or the egg
• Term Limits
You talking to ME?

• Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

• The ability to shape and deliver an accurate and effective message is a critical skill

• It’s not always about being right!
An effective message has several essentials:

- It must be factual
- It must be clear
- It must be concise
- It must persuade or assure
- It must be memorable
- It must be free from personal views
Messaging (Continued)

It is absolutely essential that you stay away from long, convoluted explanations and industry jargon – you are talking to the average “Joe and/or Judy”.
Limit Risk – Be Prepared!

- The public is misinformed, possibly alarmed
- Investigations, hearings, audits
- Risking your agenda...Budget and legislative
- Loss of agency and personal credibility
- There is no such thing as being over prepared
“You spent $367 on coffee?”
So what are you going to do?

- Work closely with your legislative liaison or public information officer
- Anticipate the questions and concerns
- Simplify the message as much as possible
- Incorporate the elements of persuasion – anecdotes can be your friend.
- Leave something behind.
Packaging

• Convey a courteous and relaxed but professional image.
• Keep your answers short and simple.
• If you don’t know...
• If you don’t understand a question, ask for clarification
• Avoid using technical jargon and acronyms
• Stay on topic – there is no such thing as “off the record”
• You don’t have to respond immediately. Think about your answers and then make sure you call back before the deadline (real or perceived)
• If a question contains words you dislike; don’t use them, even to deny them.

• Don’t get angry, cry, or block a camera lens, unless you want to guarantee a spot on the evening news.
• Double check your appearance with a mirror.
• Be serious and professional.
• If you don’t like the interview setting, change it!
• Keep your answers short and concise; think and talk in 10 second sound bites.
• Be on guard as soon as the cameras arrive – and don’t assume the interview is over until the TV crew drives away.

• No gum chewing, sunglasses, or sarcastic comments.
Remember, your audience is sitting around watching TV, so talk in their language.
Widow: EMTs took off

January 16, 2012 - 5:35am BY CLARE MEELOR STAFF REPORTER

Morse says ambulance left her in storm as husband died

'I wasn't with him when he died, I have to live with that forever': Ambulance staff refused to let wife drive to hospital with dying husband - and left her by side of road in a blizzard

- Widow forced to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation on her own husband in attempt to revive him
- Launches complaint against paramedics

By DAVID GERRODS
UPDATED: 05:01 EST, 16 January 2012
From: Susan Sharon [mailto:ssharon@mpbn.net]
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 5:23 PM
To: Bradshaw, Jay
Subject: Re: EMS stat

Jay,

Looks like it will be on Sunday morning around 8:20 and 10:20. Not sure it will be repeated twice outside of Maine...but it will be on. I wish I could have had more time. It feels like I barely said anything. So, my apologies in advance.

susan
It's Proven To Save Lives, So Why Is Maine Opposed To Narcan?

NPR  In some states, the overdose antidote known as Narcan is becoming more popular among law enforcement. Not the state of Maine; that state's governor is opposing a bill that would put Narcan in the hands of more first-responders. By Susan Sharon

raytrebor  a month ago

Bradshaw says most paramedics and advanced medical technicians already carry Narcan and are trained to safely administer it under certain protocols. He fears making Narcan more widely available could discourage people from calling those best equipped to deal with an overdose emergency.

Jay Bradshaw should be fired.

Any director of any EMS who is not aware of the overwhelming case studies, pilot programs, and established practices that have demonstrated community based naloxone save lives with very few, if any downsides, should not be in a position where he can effectively advocate for a policy that results in increased mortality.
Common Pitfalls:

- Forced choice questions
- Open-ended or vague questions
- Questions framed from anonymous or proxy sources
- Hypothetical situations
- Questions based on an incorrect interpretation of a response
- Badgering and repeated questions
- Filling the pause
Crisis Communications

• Be available
• Keep the front office in the loop
• Get access to the decision makers
• Have the “top dog” ready to respond if necessary
• Get the news out and get it over with
Legislative Scenario

You have been called before a Legislative Committee to discuss the following:

State EMS Director, shouldn’t your educational or authorized activities standards be lowered to meet national standards or bolster rural services? They already have trouble maintaining the standards now. Don’t you care about access to EMS for the small communities?

How do you respond?
Media Scenario

Do you think it is appropriate that a registered sex offender is working as an EMT?

How do you respond?
Summary

• A good relationship with both the media and the legislature is important to your success.

• The responsibility for developing and delivering an effective message is yours.

• Know your state laws and department rules regarding lobbying and legislative and media contact.

• Understand the issues of “government and public relations”.

• Work closely with your legislative liaison and public information officer.

• Be seriously prepared.
Questions?