

Washington Update July 31, 2004

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1. NEMSIS Included in House Transportation and Treasury Appropriations Subcommittee Mark-up

On July 14, the House Transportation and Treasury Appropriations Subcommittee marked up their FY 2005 appropriations bill. It includes \$500,000 for the NHTSA EMS division to implement NEMSIS. The House Committee report has the following statement under NHTSA: "Effective EMS systems are necessary for post crash injury control; however local EMS systems vary considerably. NHTSA serves as a lead Federal agency to ensure continual advancement of the performance of all EMS systems, by providing national leadership and guidance for systems administrators. In October 2001, the GAO published a report on emergency medical services that emphasized the need for consistent information for improving performance at the local level, setting and monitoring national level policy, and improving researchers' ability to assess EMS outcomes. NHTSA has helped to develop a National EMS Information System (NEMSIS), but the next and most important step will be implementation of NEMSIS> The Committee has provided \$500,000 in fiscal year 2005 for NHTSA to begin the implementation of this important program." The Senate is not expected to act on this bill until September.

2. State EMS Directors Asked to Provide Input on Ambulance Diversion

The Institute of Medicine (IOM), an affiliate of the National Academy of Sciences, is exploring issues surrounding hospital diversion for a study on the *Future of Emergency Care in the United States Health System*. As background for this paper, the IOM staff has requested information regarding state legislation, administrative rules, policies, procedures, or protocols regarding ambulance hospital diversion. NASEMSD issued a survey on July 13, 2004. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey. If you did not receive the survey, contact Sharon Kelly at info@nasemsd.org.

3. NASEMSD Urges Congress to Provide Increase in Funding for CDC

NASEMSD and more than 100 organizations (the CDC Coalition) sent a letter to Senators and Congressmen on the Appropriations Committees urging votes to significantly increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC Coalition supports a funding level for CDC that enables it to support effective state, local and community programs that protect the health and safety of Americans. The coalition estimates that a minimum of \$9.5 billion is needed in FY 2005 and \$15 billion by FY 2008, to adequately fund the CDC. The letter states that “funding for the CDC has not kept pace with new threats to health and safety and tremendous opportunities to improve health and reduce health care costs have gone unaddressed.”

4. PHHS Block Grant Not Supported by House Appropriations Subcommittee; NASEMSD Signs Letter to Senators

The House Appropriations Committee recently approved an appropriations bill that cut the CDC’s Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant by \$23 million. A cut of this magnitude (approximately 18 percent) will force state and local health departments to eliminate or severely reduce some very important public health activities. NASEMSD has signed onto a letter being coordinated by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) urging an increase in funding for this program. The letter will be sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

5. Emergency Medical Service Support Act Introduced in the House

On July 14, 2004, Rep. Joel Hefley (R-CO) introduced the Emergency Medical Service Support Act. The bill (H.R. 4831), related to Senate bill 2351, was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. The Emergency Medical Service Support Act requires the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response, to establish a Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services to improve coordination and enhance support of emergency medical services. For a copy of the bill and to track its progress, visit <http://thomas.loc.gov> and search by bill number.

6. Safeguarding Emergency Responders during Major Disasters and Terrorist Attacks Addressed in New NIOSH/RAND Report

When a major disaster strikes, emergency responders must act quickly and effectively. Any threat to their safety diminishes their ability to function at their best. Because safety conditions during a large-scale crisis are unfamiliar and unpredictable, standard approaches to safety management can fall short. A major disaster requires the many different agencies involved to join forces to safeguard responders – both during an event and while preparing for the next one. These are the conclusions in a study done jointly by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the RAND Corporation. The report, *Protecting Emergency Responders, Volume 3: Safety Management in Disaster and Terrorism Response*, recently was released. The report is available at <http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG170>.

7. Recalls Issued for Emergency Vehicles

Recalls for ambulances and other emergency vehicles possibly used by EMS providers have been issued. These recalls can be found on NHTSA’s Web site at <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/>. Ford Motor Company is recalling 47,314 MY 2003 Crown Victoria police/commercial vehicles and Lincoln Town Car model vehicles sold to fleets. For details, visit the Web site and query for 04V328000. International Truck and Engine Corporation is recalling 19 MY 1993-2001 4700LP ambulances. Query for 04V009000. Horton Emergency Vehicles is recalling 14 MY 1997-2000 ambulances built on Chevrolet or GMS cab/chassis Models C3500 and K3500. Query for 04V101000. PL Custom Emergency Vehicles is recalling 86 MY 2003 Medallion, Titan, Sentry, Rescue and 2003-2004 Crusader emergency vehicles equipped with seat belts by AmSafe. For details, query for 04V246000.

8. Summary of ODP Report to Appropriations Committee is Available

Under the provisions of the *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, 2004*, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is required to submit a report to the Committee on Appropriations for the Senate and House “that accounts for the fire grant and State formula grants allocated to independent EMS teams, and to those operating as part of a fire department.” The report must include a description of the barriers that EMS teams face in receiving Federal grants, and recommendations for eliminating those barriers. The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) met with NASEMSD while preparing the report. A copy of the report summary is available at <http://www.advocatesforems.org/default.cfm/PID=1.40>.

9. “Ready” Campaign Wants Half of America Prepared by End of 2004

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will expand its “Ready” Campaign, designed to help Americans prepare for terrorism. According to Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge speaking at the Public Preparedness Symposium on July 20, the goal is to have nearly half of all Americans, in some form or combination, prepared by the end of 2004. DHS will expand the “Ready” campaign, which it launched in February 2003, to target specific segments of the U.S. population. “We will add to the strength of our existing “Ready” campaign by launching two new preparedness endeavors – Ready for Business and Ready for Kids,” stated Ridge. More information is available at <http://www.dhs.gov>.

10. GAO Releases Report on Critical Infrastructure

In a July 2004 report, the General Accounting Office (GAO) recommends that the Secretary of Homeland Security direct officials within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to (1) proceed with the development of an information-sharing plan that describes the roles and responsibilities of DHS, the information sharing and analysis centers (ISACs), and other entities and (2) establish appropriate department policies and procedures for interactions with other critical infrastructure protection (CIP) entities and for coordination and information sharing among DHS components. The full report is available at <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-780>. Highlights of the report may be read at <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d04780high.pdf>.

11. New Bioterrorism Agents Course Available

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created a new course, “The Bioterrorism Agents: Plague (WB3094). The course is presented online in seven lessons. All course participants will learn about the natural epidemiology of plague and how to diagnose it, how to recognize possible bioterrorist plague, and how to manage plague cases in contained casualty and mass casualty situations. Course participants will finish with a self-assessment module that will allow them to review the information with simulation-like questions that would mimic real-world experiences. Continuing education credits for this web-based module were approved in June 2004 and will expire in June 2007. To apply for continuing education credits, please use the CDC/ATSDR Training and Continuing Education Online system at <http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/phtonline>.

12. PEAP Provides Info Briefs

The Pediatric Expert Advisory Panel (PEAP) of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness has begun issuing Info Briefs. The first issue, “*Atropine Use in Children after Nerve Gas Exposure*,” addresses the critical issues regarding treatment and planning for possible pediatric nerve agent exposure, and provider recommendations for the role of the Mark-I Kit and the pediatric dosage of Atropen. The Info Brief is available at <http://www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu>. Future briefs will be posted to the same site.

13. NPIN Provides Information on Infectious Diseases

The CDC National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) is the nation’s largest collection of information and resources on HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and tuberculosis. NPIN is funded by the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention. NPIN services include a toll-free number for reference and referral services (1-800-458-5231); free publications and other materials; a Web site that includes a collection of online searchable databases; and a resources and training center. Learn more about these valuable resources by visiting <http://www.cdcpin.org>.

14. Wildfire Season Heats Up As Predicted

According to *DHS Today*, the 2004 wildfire season is living up to its hype as one that has the potential for devastating and severe fires, particularly in the western part of the United States. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) authorized the use of federal funds during the week of July 19 to help battle four separate wildfires threatening hundreds of homes in California. Federal funds also went to Nevada and Washington to fight wildfires there. The authorizations make FEMA funding available to pay 75 percent of the state's eligible firefighting costs under an approved grant for managing, mitigating, and controlling designated fires. To help firefighters called upon to assist in battling wildfires, and community leaders tasked with safeguarding their towns, FEMA has announced a new 2004 Wildland Update Web page. Visit this new page at http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/wildfire/update_2004.shtm.

15. New Web Site Provides Resources for Managers of Medical Units for Incidents

A new Web site (<http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/shwt/emsg/resources.htm>) has been launched. The site is geared to EMS individuals with the primary responsibility to organize and manage an effective and efficient medical unit for a wildland fire or all-risk incident. The site will help with the quick development of the medical unit and also serve as a resource for the unit.

16. State of Oregon Recruiting for EMS Director

The State of Oregon will be recruiting for EMS Director. Please check the Oregon Job Listing Web page (<http://www.emp.state.or.us/jobs/>) for more information. This position oversees EMS exams and certifications, data registry, professional standards, EMSC, a rural mobile training program, and the state trauma program.

17. NAEMSP Issues Call for Abstracts

The National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) now is accepting abstracts for review for oral and poster presentations at the NAEMSP Annual Meeting, Specialty Workshops, Scientific Assembly, and Trade Show in Naples, Fla., January 13-15, 2005. Authors are urged to submit original work involving EMS or resuscitation research. The full spectrum of out-of-hospital and resuscitation research will be considered including basic science, clinical, health service research, epidemiological, operation, economic, and educational studies. Abstracts must be submitted electronically. To do so, visit NAEMSP's Web site at <http://www.naemsp.org> and click on the Submit Abstracts icon or directly at <http://convention.allacademic.com/naemsp2005/>.

18. 9-11 Commission Final Report Available on Internet

The much anticipated report of the 9-11 Commission has been released. The 585-page report is available at <http://i.a.cnn.net/cnn/US/resources/9.11.report/911Report.pdf>.

19. CMS Asks for Comments on Evaluation Criteria and Standards for Quality Improvement Program Contracts

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published a notice in the Federal Register (Vol. 69, No. 141, July 23, 2004) with a comment period regarding evaluation criteria and standards for quality improvement program contracts. CMS has not included EMS in the QIO process. The comment period ends on August 23, 2004.

20. August is National Immunization Awareness Month

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). The theme is “Are you up to date? Vaccinate!” The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the lifespan. Free promotional materials, including brochures, posters, bookmarks, and stickers, are available at <http://www.partnersforimmunization.org/niam>.

21. Upcoming Events (denotes event is newly added)**

National Association of EMS Educators 9th Annual Educational Symposium and Trade Show, Sept. 7-12, 2004, Hollywood Renaissance, Los Angeles, Calif. Information is available at <http://www.naemse.org/symposium>.

Conference on Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities, Sept. 22-24, 2004, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Va. Information is available at <http://www.nod.org>.

The 2004 Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Annual Meeting: “Highway Safety – Priority 1.0”, Sept. 25-29, 2004, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu, Hawaii. Information is available at <http://www.ghsa.org>.

**ASTHO 2004 Annual Meeting: “Communication, Cooperation, Coordination – Building Bridges in Public Health”, Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 2004, St. Paul, Minn. This conference is co-located with the Annual Meeting of the Association of Public Health Labs. Information is available at <http://www.astho.org/>.

Drive for Live, 2004 MADD National Conference, Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2004, Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, Grapevine, Texas. Information is available at <http://www.madd.org/>.

**CAAS Fall 2004 Accreditation Seminar, Oct. 20, 2004, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Information is available at <http://www.caas.org>.

Air Medical Transport Conference, Oct. 25-27, 2004, Cincinnati Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Information is available at <http://www.aams.org/amtc2004.html>.

4th Global Homeland Security Conference & Expo – Protecting the Nation’s Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets, Nov. 22-23, 2004, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, VA. Information is available at <http://www.protectinfrastructure.com>.

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