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1. NASEMSD Submits Comments on AAP Clinical Report on the Role of the Pediatrician in Rural EMSC
NASEMSD submitted comments to the American Academy on Pediatrics on their draft report on the role of the pediatrician in rural emergency medical services for children (EMSC). NASEMSD noted that “the EMS medical director, who is ultimately responsible for the medical care provided by an EMS service, is not referenced in the document. Supporting and advising the EMS medical director and participating in the QI processes is an important role for the rural pediatrician, especially as it relates to establishing a focus on the care of children,” stated NASEMSD. The final report will be available later this year. Questions about the report may be directed to Sue Tellez at STellez@aap.org.

2. Bill Introduced to Provide Continued Improvement in EMS for Children
On April 11, 2005, Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) introduced a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide a means for continued improvement in emergency medical services for children. “The Wakefield Act,” also know as the “Emergency Medical Services for Children Act of 2005,” was co-sponsored by Senators Hatch (R-UT), Kennedy (D-MA), Dodd (D-CT), DeWine (R-OH), and Conrad (D-ND). According to Sen. Inouye, the EMSC program has been the driving force toward improving a wide range of children’s emergency services. EMSC is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The bill (S.760) will re-authorize the EMSC and help continue advances in the emergency healthcare delivery system. To track the bill progress or to get a copy of the bill, visit http://thomas.loc.gov and search for the bill by bill number.
3. First Responder Funding Reform Clears Committee; Headed for Floor
Moving one step closer to the most significant overhaul of homeland security spending to date, the Committee on Homeland Security on April 21, 2005, unanimously approved the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005. The legislation, H.R. 1544, implements the 9/11 Commission’s recommendation to allocate federal homeland security funds to first responders based on risk rather than political formulas. First responder funding represents 11 percent of the Department of the Homeland Security budget. In 2006, assistance to state and local first responders will total $3.6 billion. The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved related legislation on April 13, 2005. To track the bill progress or to get a copy of the bill, visit http://thomas.loc.gov and search for the bill by bill number.

4. NASEMSD Requests Amendment to First Responder Funding Reform Act
On April 15, 2005, NASEMSD sent a letter to Representative Cox regarding H.R. 1544, the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005. The letter requested that emergency medical services (EMS) organizations be included in the “Consultation with Standards Organizations” section of an amendment to the bill. “Reports issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for 2002, 2003, and 2004 reveal that only four percent of DHS preparedness funding has gone to EMS organizations,” stated NASEMSD. “EMS is a key component to readiness and response to any natural or manmade disaster.” In particular, NASEMSD requested that it and the National Association of Emergency Medical Services Physicians (NAEMSP) be added to the section of the amendment.

With support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the “EMS Agenda for the Future” was developed in the 1990s with input from about 90 national organizations. The resultant vision represented a profound transformation from the original and narrow concept of the EMS system as a separate system designed to provide care and transportation to the sick and injured to an integrated model working in complement to the overall public health system. NASEMSD conducted a survey project of the 56 state and territorial directors of EMS systems through calendar year 2004. A final report on the Implementation Status of the EMS Agenda for the Future is the result. The report is available at http://www.nasemsd.org.

6. Members of Congress Request Restoration of the CDC’s Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant
More than 70 members of the U.S. House of Representatives have added their signatures to a letter urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies to restore funding for the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant at the Fiscal Year 2005 appropriated level of $132 million. State and local health departments rely on the block grant to address health issues for which there is no additional federal support or inadequate support and for unanticipated emergencies such as SARS and West Nile virus. The Fiscal Year 2006 federal budget proposes the elimination of the program. The letter, spearheaded by Representatives Tom Udall (D-NM) and Sue Kelly (R-NY), noted that federal investment in health prevention represents less than five percent of annual health care costs in the United States. A fact sheet on the program is available on the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials Web site at http://www.astho.org.

7. National Plan for R&D in Support of Critical Infrastructure Protection Released
8. Emergency Response Organizations Announce Nationwide Emergency Alerting and Messaging Initiative (NEARS); NASEMSD Joins Initiative
NASEMSD has joined a coalition of more than 16 national organizations to support the NEARS initiative. NEARS is a non-profit, cooperative effort to demonstrate and deploy interagency emergency data messaging. The NEARS partners plan to deploy a framework for interoperable data messaging, using national emergency message and data standards, commercial information technologies, and a shared, electronic directory of agencies called the Emergency Provider Access Directory (EPAD). More information on the initiative is available at http://www.comcare.org/nears.

9. COMCARE Emergency Response Alliance Announces New Name
COMCARE formally adopted a new name along with enhance mission and vision statements. The Board of Directors gave final approval to these changes. The organization now will be known as “COMCARE,” with a descriptive tag line “Emergency Response Alliance.” More information is available at http://www.comcare.org.

10. DHS Deploys Protective Security Advisors
The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is preparing to support critical infrastructure and key resource stakeholders. A cadre of highly experienced security specialists, Protective Security Advisors (PSAs), was deployed in neighborhoods throughout the country to assist local efforts to protect critical assets, and to provide a local perspective contributing to the national risk picture. Initially, the PSAs will work with the chemical, dams, nuclear and commercial facilities asset owners and operators to assist in conducting comprehensive risk and physical/technical security analyses. To learn more contact Leslie Anne Sibick at leslie.sibick@dhs.gov.

11. FEMA Tests Digital Alert System
An article by Dibya Sarkar in Federal Computer Week (April 11, 2005) reports that FEMA is partnering with several agencies on an initiative, called the Digital Emergency Alert System pilot. The pilot, which is being conducted in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, is testing IP data-casting technology. The one-year test project could determine how federal officials distribute messages to the nation during a widespread emergency. To view the full article, visit http://www.fcw.com/article88522-04-11-05-Print.

12. HERO Act Introduced in House
On April 14, 2005, Representatives Jane Harman (D-CA) and Curt Weldon (R-PA) and a bipartisan group of colleagues, introduced Homeland Emergency Response Operations (HERO) Act (H.R. 1646). The bill would give unused radio spectrum to first responders to improve radio interoperability. The bill would require the Federal Communications Commission to set a deadline of January 1, 2007, to transfer broadcast spectrum to public safety agencies. For a copy of the bill or to track its progress, visit http://www.thomas.loc and query by bill number.

13. GAO Releases Report on Management of First Responder Grant Programs
In fiscal years 2002 through 2005, the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) managed first responder grants totaling approximately $10.5 billion. The bulk of this funding has been for statewide grants through the State Homeland Security Grant Program and urban area grants through the Urban Areas Security Initiative. The report provides information on the history and evolution of these two grant programs, particularly with respect to ODP grant award procedures; timelines for awarding and transferring grant funds; and accountability for effective use of grant funds. To view the report, visit http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-530T.
14. AHRQ Launches New Web Site Designed to Provide Single National Source for Patient Safety Findings and Resources
A new Web site announced April 12 by HHS' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is a national “one-stop” portal of resources for improving patient safety and preventing medical errors. The site, AHRQ’s Patient Safety Network, or PSNet, is available at http://psnet.ahrq.gov.

15. GAO Releases Report on Anthrax Detection
The Government Accounting Office (GAO) released on April 5, 2005, “Anthrax Detection: Agencies Need to Validate Sampling Activities in Order to Increase Confidence in Negative Results.” In September and October 2001, letters laced with Bacillus anthracis (anthrax) spores were sent through the U.S. mail to two U.S. senators and to members of the media. These letters led to the first U.S. cases of anthrax disease related to bioterrorism. In all, 22 individuals contracted anthrax disease; five died. These cases prompted Congress to ask GAO to describe and assess federal agencies’ activities to detect anthrax in postal facilities, assess the results of agencies’ testing, and assess whether agencies’ detection activities were validated. The report is available at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05493t.pdf.


The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction provided its final report to the President on March 31, 2005. The unanimous report is based on a lengthy investigation, during which hundreds of experts from inside and outside the intelligence community were interviewed and thousands of documents were reviewed. The report offers 74 recommendations for improving the U.S. intelligence community. The report is available at http://www.wmd.gov/report/wmd_report.pdf.

18. Institute of Medicine Releases Report on Smallpox Vaccination Program
The Institute of Medicine (IOM) is preparing the release of a report, “The Smallpox Vaccination Program: Public Health in an Age of Terrorism.” IOM’s Committee on Smallpox Vaccination Program Implementation was convened in October 2002 at the request of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The committee was charged with providing “advice to the CDC and the program investigators on selected aspects of the smallpox program implementation and evaluation.” NASEMSD was represented by former Pennsylvania EMS Director Peg Trimble on the liaison panel to the committee. The report was released in March. The published book will be available summer 2005. Information will be available at http://www.nap.edu and on the project Web site, http://www.iom.edu/smallpox.

19. Fellowship Offered in Unintentional Injury and Violence Prevention
The Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently are recruiting for one year fellowships in unintentional injury and violence prevention. Fellows will work at their own institutions on research or practice-based projects that consider unintentional injury or violence prevention from the perspectives of health education or behavioral science. Compensation includes a $1,500 stipend; fellowship certificate; student membership in SOPHE; complementary registration to SOPHE’s annual meeting and presentation space; and
recognition by both SOPHE and CDC. The deadline for applications is July 31, 2005. For more information, visit [http://www.sophe.org](http://www.sophe.org) or email Eleanor Dixon-Terry at [edixon-terry@sophe.org](mailto:edixon-terry@sophe.org).

### 20. CMS Proposes FY 2006 Rate Increases for Inpatient Stays in Acute Care Hospitals

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is working to ensure continued and even greater quality of care in America’s acute care hospitals. Under a proposed rule issued on April 25, 2005, by CMS, acute care hospitals that submit data on 10 quality measures established by the Secretary are projected to receive a 3.2 percent increase in their payment rates for inpatient services in Fiscal Year 2006. Only those hospitals that are participating in Medicare’s quality reporting initiative will receive the full 3.2 percent increase. For more information, visit [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1428](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1428).

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


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