

EMS NEWS

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Alameda County
Emergency
Medical
Services



**A Division of the
Public Health
Department**

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Inside This Edition:

History of EMS 1994-1999	2
Policy Review Committee	3
12-leads . . . are they worth the hassle?	3
Child Passenger Safety Event	3
News and Announcements	4
EMS Recognition nomination form	4

The 34th Annual National EMS Week is May 20-26.

This year's theme: *EMS - Extraordinary People/Extraordinary Service*. EMS Week is sponsored by the American College of Emergency Physicians as a time each year to recognize EMS personnel and educate the public about EMS.

A luncheon will be held at the Marina Community Center in San Leandro on May 16th at 12 pm. The EMS Agency will present awards to deserving individual nominated by YOU!

NOMINATION CATEGORIES

***Star of Life Award:** recognizes an individual who, by exemplary medical skills, outstanding actions and contributions to the advancement of excellence in the delivery of emergency care to the residents of Alameda County, is identified as representing the ideal EMT or Paramedic.

***Heart of EMS Award:** recognizes an individual, who by his/her actions shows exceptional compassion in the performance of his/her job, is an advocate for patients' rights, is involved in volunteer activities outside of work that enhance EMS, and/or is a role model for co-workers and others in the EMS community in Alameda County.

***Ben Mathews Lifetime Achievement/Innovation Award:** recognizes an individual or organization who by his/her actions and innovative thinking contributed to expanding the future of EMS in Alameda County, or an individual whose contributions to prehospital care

have been consistent and long lasting, representing, in effect, a lifetime of outstanding service to the profession and the public.

***Rising Star:** recognizes an individual who is new to the field of prehospital care (< 3 years experience) who shows rapid improvement, exemplary skills, and/or has taken on added responsibility.

***Siren Award:** recognizes an individual, or a team of individuals from one or multiple agencies, who performed exceptional or heroic actions and/or exemplary team work in saving or attempting to save the life of another. The nominee(s) displayed significant and exceptional heroism and faced substantial risk of his/her own life in saving or attempting to save a life.

***Bear-Hug Award:** recognizes an individual or organization that works to reduce child and youth disability and death due to severe illness and injury, addresses the emergency medical needs of children when serious injuries or illnesses occur by working with children for better healthcare access, and/or is making a difference in the lives of children in Alameda County.

***Circle of Life Award:** recognizes an individual or organization that works to reduce preventable injuries to the older population, raises awareness regarding the need for injury prevention programs for older adults, works with seniors for better healthcare access, and/or makes a difference in the lives of seniors in Alameda County.

***Civilian Hero Award:** recognizes a civilian who either:

1. Stepped forward, to save another human in peril. This person, not trained in, active in, or affiliated with the provision of EMS or rescue service, has shown valor in an attempt (successful or unsuccessful) to rescue another. The incident must have taken place in Alameda County; however, the nominee need not be a resident of Alameda County. The nominator need not have been involved in the incident; or,

2. Took on a cause relative to the provision of EMS services or a safety concern within the community that benefited the residents of Alameda County.

***Hospital Award for Excellence:** presented to a hospital facility, team, or staff member for participating or assisting in a pre-hospital care event, project or situation of exceptional nature; or making a significant contribution to EMS service by an one-time or continuing act of service in the public's interest.

***Peer Commendation:** presented to any EMS personnel receiving three or more nominations from members of the EMS, healthcare or first responder community citing courteous or outstanding performance of duty.

See also: AED Life-Saver and Memorial Recognition information and the nomination form on Page 4 or check the EMS website.

Editor's note: this is part 3 of the story. Part 1 can be found in the December 2006 edition and Part 2 in the February 2007 edition of the EMS News.

1994 brought a change to the leadership of the EMS Agency. After 21 years as the first and only EMS Director, Ben Mathews retired, and Assistant Director Diane Akers was promoted to the Director's position.

Another change that impacted EMS was the increasing number of patients covered by HMO's. This shift in how and where medical care was delivered decreased the number of insured patients, leaving the EMS system with the increasing responsibility of providing service to primarily the self-pay and uninsured. With the potential for a lower call volume and a higher rate of uncollectibles, the concern was that the system would no longer be able support the level of quality the residents had come to expect. This scenario became reality when in January of 1994, AMR notified the County that they had experienced a 2.5 million dollar short-fall in the previous year. As a temporary solution, the Board of Supervisors approved changes to the contract to assist AMR in recovering financially and appointed a task force of high level policy makers to plan for the rapidly changing future of EMS.

In October, the Task Force sent their recommendations to the Board and the planning phase of the project got underway.

1995 saw the creation of the EMS Council by the Board of Supervisors. This committee had representatives from a broad cross-section of EMS constituents. Forty-four recommendations were eventually recommended for implementation by the Council.

Other changes that occurred this year were revisions at the state level to continuing education requirements for medics. Prior to 1995, each paramedic had to ob-

tain a minimum number of hours in both didactic and field care audits credits. Alameda County EMS was the front-runner in advocating for combining the CE hours into a single requirement and setting standards for providers of CE. 1995 saw more of the County's fire departments interested in implementing paramedic first responder programs. In an effort to assist them, the EMS Agency hired two fire liaison nurses. This innovative program paved the way for what is now a countywide First Responder ALS system where each responding engine provides a paramedic.

On the political front, California voters passed Proposition 218 which redefined the services qualified for an assessment district. EMS services no longer qualified, and the district had until July 1997 to comply.

1996 saw the introduction a standardized emergency management system (SEMS) that changed the way personnel and agencies at all levels responded to disasters. Another new concept gaining ground was the addition of illness and injury prevention programs to EMS. Four staff members were added whose sole responsibility was injury prevention.

1997 The EMS Agency implemented the State approved EMS for Children program to provide a continuum of care that integrated a wide range of services for pediatric patients.

On June 3rd the EMS agency again went to the voters to ask that they continue to financially support EMS services, this time as a special tax. Measure C passed by 81%.

In October, the EMS Agency again saw changes at the administrative level. Dr. Jim Pointer returned to Alameda County to serve as the EMS Medical Director. (Dr. Pointer was the first EMS Medical Director serving from 1981-1988.) Diane Akers decided the time was right for her to leave the County

to pursue an EMS consulting business. Dr. Pointer stepped in as acting Director in addition to his other duties. The Agency was also relocated to the main public health building in downtown Oakland.

1998 started off with the introduction of a new EMS Director, Michael Harris. His first major project was the upcoming bid process for the ambulance service contract. AMR held the contract since 1990. A Request for Interest was issued, but only one qualified bidder responded. The process was then changed to a sole-source contract and negotiations began.

The new contract included many new provisions, including fire department first responder ALS (FRALS) within 8 minutes and 30 seconds. This allowed AMR to staff transport ambulances with one EMT and one paramedic and to cut the response time standard to 10 minutes and 30 seconds. The money saved through this program was paid to the EMS Agency who then disbursed the money to the fire department for each FRALS unit. This change marked a huge difference in EMS operations and improved the care provided to our patients.

1999 was highlighted by an effort to expand the role of the paramedic. Alameda County Fire and the EMS Agency joined forces to implement a paramedic immunization project that would allow paramedics to administer immunizations to children in fire stations. The program was approved by the state, and after an extensive training program, several immunization clinics were held. The bill to expand the program statewide was sent to the governor who declined to sign it due to last minute lobbying by professional nursing organizations.

Editor's Comment: Well this is taking longer than anticipated, but we should wrap this up in the June edition.

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE GETS UNDERWAY

The EMS Agency has formed a committee to help with this year's policy review process. Interested volunteers from all provider agencies will meet with EMS staff and Dr. Pointer to draft proposed changes and review existing policies.

It is really important to hear from field personnel before the policies go into effect

comment on the draft policies. The first is a written comment period that is scheduled for May. Additional revisions may be made and a second draft will be posted in June. A final public comment forum is scheduled for the July 19th Emergency Medical

Pointer, the large majority of policy changes result from field personnel. Keep those ideas and suggestions coming!

For more information about the policy review process check the EMS website or contact Kris Helander-Daugherty at kris.helander@acgov.org or 510

Policy Review Process:

- May 3 - First draft released
- June 1 - Written comments due
- July 2 - Second draft released
- July 19 - Public forum

The policy review process takes about six months to complete. If you have ideas for the 2008 Field Manual, submit them now. Field personnel have two opportunities to

Oversight Committee.

It is really important to hear from field personnel about the policies before they go into effect. According to Dr.

PREHOSPITAL 12-LEAD...ARE THEY WORTH THE HASSLE?

Submitted by Gail Porto, RN

It had been a busy Monday for the A Shift at Albany Fire when a call came in at 1:52 am...a wife was frantically calling, stating that her husband was having difficulty breathing. Immediately Captain John Weitzel, EMT-P, Engineer Jim de Roque, EMT, and paramedics Desmond Smith and Michael Robb responded with an engine and ambulance. On arrival they found a 52 year-old male with agonal respirations and ventricular fibrillation. They began CPR and shocked once with no change. After 2 minutes of CPR and ALS intervention they shocked him a second time, and he converted to sinus tachycardia with corresponding pulses.

Enroute Code 3 to Alta Bates Hospital paramedics Smith and Robb, thinking "outside the box," tried to determine

why a healthy 52 year old would suddenly go into cardiac arrest. Just then the 12-lead they had just run showed that an ST elevation MI was in progress. They quickly diverted to Summit where the patient had emergency angioplasty and stent placement. A few days later the patient was looking forward to the life ahead of him...the one that was almost taken away. He expressed gratitude to all members of the team that were responsible for his favorable outcome.

This call made everyone involved feel good, but remarkable calls involving 12-lead EKGs are not rare. Piedmont Fire responded into Oakland for a 63 year old female who had a 30-minute history of "burning" in her chest. Upon arrival of paramedics Brian Gidney and Scott Mundy, the discomfort was gone but she rated her pain at

onset as a "6". She had no prior cardiac history, but the 12-lead showed marginal ST elevation in leads II, III, and aVF. Enroute to Summit the medics repeated the 12-lead twice. Each one showed an increasing ST elevation. At Summit, she was taken to the Cath. Lab, and then, directly to the OR for bypass surgery. She is recovering rapidly and is most appreciative of the care given to her by these paramedics who, according to her, saved her life.

The question is often asked, "How do you thank someone that has just saved your life?" For these professionals, experiencing positive results like these is reward enough.

Is requiring 12-leads in the prehospital setting worth the hassle? These patients think so!

SAFE KIDS COALITION COORDINATES CPS WEEK 2007

A fun and educational time was had by all at the annual **CPS Week Safety Event** held on Saturday, February 17th. The event combined car seat check-ups and awareness events for 'tween-agers. The event was coordinated by Alameda County Safe Kids



Coalition and Michael Lee, assistant to Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker.

The focuses for the 'tween event were:

- Seat belt use and the back-seat law
- Trunk entrapment
- Spot-the-tot or back-over issues

Bob Rollins of the Berkeley Police Department served as lead with 10 volunteers who inspected 35 car seats. Other participants include Babies-r-Us,

San Francisco Girl Scouts, and FH Dailey, the local General Motors dealer.

The program concluded with a proclamation presented by District 3 Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker acknowledging CPS Week. For more information on Alameda County Safe Kids Coalition contact Barbara Cheatham at 510.618.2048 or Barbara.cheatham@avgov.org.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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- Gail Steele District 2
- Alice Lai-Bitker District 3
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HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY

- David J. Kears, Director

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Anthony Iton, MD, JD, MPH Director/Health Officer

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEB

- Information for liquor store owners about the consequences of selling alcohol to minors - available in 5 languages. This is a part of the Oakland-on-the-Rocks project.



- Dr. Pointer's EKG of the Month. This will be a regular feature on the website.

EMS WEBSITE: acgov.org/ems

Marla Blagg accepted a promotional opportunity with the Alameda County Fire Department as an emergency manager. We will miss Marla and her dedication to quality, and wish her success in this new position.

**7th Annual Statewide Senior Injury Prevention Conference**

takes place on May 10, 2007 at Samuel Merritt College. The focus is on the role of medications on injury risk, especially the use and misuse of prescriptions, herbals, and over the counter medications and the issues that can arise with medications from hospital to home.

For more information on the conference, check the EMS website or contact Colleen Campbell at 510.577.3535 or ccampbel2@acgov.org

Call for policy ideas - The 2008 policy review process is beginning. If you have ideas for policies that need to be revised, submit them to Kris Helander-Daugherty at 510.618.2032 or kris.helander@acgov.org.

The best input we get is from you, the field personnel who use these policies every day. If you have ever said, *I wish EMS would...* now is the time to send us your ideas.

Memorial Recognition

As part of EMS Week activities the EMS Agency pays respect to individuals of the Alameda County EMS community who died during the past year. Please send information to Kris Helander-Daugherty at 618-2032.

To view last year's presentation, see the EMS website

AED Life-Saver

Is a new component of EMS Week. This award is presented for the performance of any public AED effort that results in saving a life. This recognition will be awarded to anyone involved in an AED save during 2006. Submit the entire team...and don't forget the individual that responded with the AED!

EMS WEEK NOMINATION FORM

Nominations must be received by the Alameda County EMS Agency by May 1, 2007.

1000 San Leandro Blvd. #200
San Leandro, CA 94523
Attn: Award Committee

I wish to nominate _____

for the following EMS Recognition Award:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Star Of Life Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Siren Award |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart Of EMS Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Ben Mathews Award |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bear-Hug Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen Hero Award |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circle Of Life Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Rising Star Award |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Award for Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Commendation Award |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AED Life-Saver - <i>specially designed AED pins will be awarded to the whole team</i> | |

Employer/Organization: _____

Contact Information:

work phone: () _____ home or cell phone: () _____ email: _____

EMT, EMT-P MD, RN, Other - Occupation if not EMS: _____

Nominated by: _____

Your phone: () _____ Your email: _____

Final selection or substitutions will be at the discretion of the award committee.