

**PINELLAS COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**MEETING MINUTES
September 29, 2023**

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met in person at the John Morroni EMS & Fire Administration Building, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Conference Room 130/132, Largo, Florida, at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Jorge Mercado, Citizen Representative (District 7) – Chair
Mayor Sandra Bradbury, Mayors' Council (Pinellas Park) – Vice-Chair
Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department - Secretary
Christopher Markham, Citizen Representative (District 1)
Jeri Reed, Citizen Representative (District 3)
Chief Anthony Tedesco, City of Clearwater Fire Chief (Alternate)
Chief Terry Tokarz, EMS Coordinator
Commissioner Kevin Kenney, Independent Fire District Elected Official
Mayor Dave Gattis, Mayors' Council (Belleair Beach)
Mayor Woody Brown, Mayors' Council (Largo)
Mayor Dan Saracki, Mayors' Council (Oldsmar)
Mayor Sandra Bradbury, Mayors' Council (Pinellas Park)
Chief Chad Pittman, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
Dr. Anthony Ottaviani, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society
Capt. Michael Leiner, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Dr. Eric Carver, St. Petersburg College
Capt. Thomas Kras, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue (Alternate)
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics

Absent:

Doreen Caudell, Citizen Representative (District 2)
Tina Ambrose, Citizen Representative (District 4)
Becca Tieder, Citizen Representative (District 5)
Ty Dougherty, Citizen Representative (District 6)
Nancy Hopkins, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter
Siomara Bridges-Mata, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Pinellas
Dr. Zachary Zimko, PEMHS, Mental Health Professional

Staff Present:

Lourdes Benedict, Assistant County Administrator
Cody Ward, County Attorney's Office
Dr. Angus Jameson, Medical Director
Dr. Andrew Smith, Associate Medical Director
James Fogarty, Bureau Director, Safety & Emergency Services
Craig Hare, Director, EMS & Fire Administration
Ken Grimes, EMS & Fire Administration
David Hudak, EMS & Fire Administration
Lynn Abbott, EMS & Fire Administration

Also Present:

Chaplain Milton Smith, All First Responders Matter
Erin Bates, Pinellas County Health Department (Alternate)
Commissioner Casey Cane, Independent Fire District Elected Official (Alternate)
Chief Doug Zimmerman, EMS Coordinator (Alternate)
Chief Brett Schlatterer, Pinellas Park Fire Department
Chief Jeffrey Davidson, Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue
Jazmin Soloman, Sunstar Paramedics

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Jorge Mercado called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Roll call was taken, and Lynn Abbott confirmed that a quorum was met. There were 18 voting members in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

Invocation by Chaplain Reverend Milton Smith, All First Responders Matter.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 23, 2023 MEETING - APPROVED

Upon presentation by Chairman Mercado, a motion was made by Mayor Dave Gattis, seconded by Mayor Dan Saracki and unanimously approved, that the minutes of the June 23, 2023 EMS Advisory Council meeting be approved.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

EMS DIRECTOR REPORT

Craig Hare provided an overview of the following items:

- Budget – Fiscally sustainable over next six years. EMS millage rate has been reduced.
- Traffic Preemption Project – Work has been progressing on the implementation of traffic preemption technology to enhance emergency travel times and ultimately save lives. The East Lake project is going well, and there was a recorded increase in emergency response time compliance from 85% to 91% in only a year, affirming the effectiveness of the technology. The Highway Department will work with traffic systems in Clearwater and St. Petersburg to bring the technology to 250 to 300 intersections. In a recent development, Kenneth City's fire contract is transitioning from Pinellas Park to Lealman Fire Rescue, re-aligning services effective February 2024.
- Workforce Sustainability – Recently conducted an interesting workshop on workforce sustainability, bringing together various participants for a constructive discussion. In the coming months, we will actively progress by forming sub-committees or work groups.
- EMS System Updates – Lifepak15 implementation is progressing smoothly, and system is currently halfway through the process. The cardiac monitors, once deployed, have demonstrated excellent functionality. Additionally, we are on schedule for the introduction of our new records system for EMS and Fire reports via ImageTrend. Training will commence in October, with rollout in November. Each agency will implement at their own pace, with the support of chiefs, assistant chiefs, Rescue Lieutenants, and CME Instructors, who have all been trained as power users.

- Active Assailant Preparedness – We held a productive meeting with the sheriff, police chiefs, and fire chiefs to discuss our preparedness for Active Assailant situations. Given the recent rise in incidents and the ongoing turnover in staff, decision was made to restart those workgroups to ensure the continuity of our past efforts. It is expected that the sheriff will have an oversight committee. In addition, Dr. Jameson is looking at our triage methods and patient tracking procedures. Despite the challenges, we are ahead of most large EMS systems when it comes to equipment, training, and our efficient “load and go” mentality (treat while transport), noting several positive initiatives in place.
- Stop the Bleed Program – Jazmin Soloman provided an update on this revised program with Pinellas County Schools. The bleeding control kits have been replaced with Stop the Bleed Kits. Pinellas County has generously provided funding for 1,500 kits, each restocked with supplies that will last for at least 5 years. The locations within the schools have been changed as well so that the kits will be more likely to be used. Age-appropriate training for school administrators and students have not only increased their comfort level but also dispelled any association with Active Assailant scenarios. Richard Schomp to show a demo kit after the meeting.
- Ambulance RFP Update – Referring to a document titled *Ambulance Service Agreement Request for Proposal Briefing, September 2023*, Craig Hare reviewed the rationale behind the decision to put the ambulance contract out to bid; whereupon, he conducted a comprehensive review of historical developments, recent contract history, financial considerations, and the goals driving this process. Our aim is to uphold an exceptional level of service within our financial means, while maintaining a highly efficient workforce. To that end, staff will bring back a fully vetted 5-year plan, slated to take effect on October 1, 2024. Following discussion, Mr. Hare noted that he welcomes any further feedback.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT

Dr. Angus Jameson presented the Medical Director’s Report and briefed the members on the following topics:

- Substance Use Disorder Programs - Continued focus on opioid use disorder. Approaching a milestone of distributing 200 *Leave Behind Narcan* rescue kits. Continuing to partner with Pinellas County Human Services on grant programs to get people into treatment. Preliminary data shows that rates are beginning to come down.
- Protocols - A new volume of our Medical Operations Manual was recently approved by our Medical Control Board. The Special Operations volume includes Swat Team and Hazmat Team Protocols, and a new section, Technical Rescue and addresses prolonged on-scene medical care in difficult conditions. Special thanks to Dr. Andrew Smith and David Hudak for their assistance during the review process.
- Clinical Operations - Trauma will be one of the main clinical focuses for 2024. Our guidelines have undergone thorough updates, incorporating the latest evidence for review. Dr. Jameson noted the existence of a “chain of survival” for trauma events, just as there is for cardiac events. Our goal as a community is to have all those layers working effectively, striving for the ambitious goal of zero preventable deaths.
- Dr. Jameson recently attended the annual meeting of the American Heart ECC Committee, which is responsible for all of the CPR ACLS training guidelines used nationwide. As a member of that committee, he is actively contributing to the upcoming 2025 guidelines.

- Recognized Pinellas County Fire Professionals of the Year: Rich King, Public Safety Telecommunicator, Regional 9-1-1 Center; Asst. Chief Doug Higley, Fire Professional, Pinellas Suncoast Fire Rescue; and Lt. Ryan Mitchell, Special Operations Professional, Pinellas County Technical Rescue Team, Pinellas Park Fire Rescue. Lt. Mitchell is lead instructor for our tech team, and his wealth of experience and contributions make him a tremendous asset for our community, noting that he will also be recognized at the state level at next week's state EMS meetings.
- We are proud to announce that we have been honored with the Mission Lifeline Gold Target Award for EMS, which means that we as a community are meeting and exceeding American Heart Association standards in establishing a robust system of care for heart attack victims. The evaluation spans from the initial 9-1-1 call to the treatment provided our patient and in our hospitals. Congratulations to all involved, with special acknowledgement to Jazmin Solomon for her dedication to the meticulous submission of all required data. It's a high bar to meet.

FIRE CHIEFS' REPORT

Chief Chad Pittman indicated there was nothing new to report at this time.

SUNSTAR REPORT

Richard Schomp provided statistical information regarding fiscal year-end comparables and current recruiting efforts and challenges. He highlighted Sunstar's very high patient satisfaction survey results and noted that they are fully staffed for EMR and EMT; the shortage is on the paramedic side. In discussing their Hurricane Idalia response, they were able to successfully evacuate four hospitals, including the challenging transportation of critically ill patients at Kindred Hospital. He shared that Fire Department assists saw a 45% rise that month and reiterated the crucial role of rescue trucks as a vital backup to the care they provide to the community. level at next week's state EMS meetings. Kudos to Jazmin Solomon on her data tracking for the AHA Award. Upon query, Mr. Schomp clarified that 30 ambulances have been ordered: 10 for 2024, 10 for 2025, and 10 for 2025.

AFFILIATES & STAKEHOLDERS

No discussion had from affiliates and stakeholders.

OPEN FORUM

Craig Hare shared the following accomplishments: level at next week's state EMS meetings.

- A luncheon appreciation was just held for EMS and Fire Administration staff. The Billing and Finance departments are on track to exceed a record \$80 billion in collections this fiscal year. Their ongoing efforts to refine reimbursement processes underscores their commitment to excellence.
- The Franciscan Center has just celebrated their anniversary. Many of our people benefit from the Center's stress management program, noting Pinellas County's long-term involvement with the program.
- Two training ambulances have been acquired through donations from St. Petersburg Fire Rescue and Pinellas Park Fire Department. They are specifically earmarked for deployment during peak demand periods. Notably, one of these ambulances played a crucial role in our response efforts during Hurricane Idalia.

- Discussion ensued about refreshing public service announcements for public response on approaching emergency vehicles and extending advance notice for upcoming workforce workgroups and Special Needs evacuations.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2023, format to be in person.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Kevin Kenney, seconded by Mayor Dan Saracki and carried unanimously, Chairman Mercado adjourned the meeting at 11:05 A.M.

*Audio and any correspondence received for this meeting is on file at the
Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration.*