

**PINELLAS COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**MEETING MINUTES
September 18, 2026**

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:

Commissioner Jorge Mercado, Citizen Representative (District 7) – Chair
Ty Dougherty, Citizen Representative (District 6) – Vice-Chair
Christopher Markham, Citizen Representative (District 1)
Christopher Hayes, Citizen Representative (District 4)
Chief Chad Pittman, City of Clearwater Fire Chief (Alternate)
Nancy Hopkins, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter
Chief Doug Zimmerman, EMS Coordinator (Primary)
Chief Mike Carpenter, EMS Coordinator (Alternate)
Mayor Woody Brown, Mayors' Council (Largo)
Mayor Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayors' Council (Madeira Beach)
Mayor Sandra Bradbury, Mayors' Council (Pinellas Park)
Dr. Anthony Ottaviani, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society
Chief Trip Barrs, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association (Alternate)
Dr. Deanna Stentiford, St. Petersburg College (Primary)
Chief Lindsay Judah, St. Petersburg Fire Rescue (Primary)
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics (Primary)
Shalisha Preston, Sunstar Paramedics (Alternate)

Absent:

Anthony Degina, Citizen Representative (District 2)
Christina Snoots, Citizen Representative (District 3)
Becca Tieder, Citizen Representative (District 5)
Commissioner Kevin Kenney, Independent Fire District Elected Official (Primary)
Commissioner Casey Cane, Independent Fire District Elected Official (Alternate)
Mayor Dave Gattis, Mayors' Council (Belleair Beach)
Dr. Zachary Zimko, Mental Health Professional
Siomara Bridges-Mata, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Pinellas (Primary)
Camille Hebting, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Pinellas (Alternate)
Dr. Ulyee Choe, Pinellas County Health Department (Primary)
Erin Bates, Pinellas County Health Department (Alternate)
Capt. Jason Schmittendorf, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office

Staff Present:

David Hare, Director, Safety & Emergency Services
Sean Davenport, Interim Director of EMS
Brett Schlatterer, Director of Fire
Dr. Angus Jameson, Medical Director
Patrick Allman, County Attorney's Office
Ashley Giovannetti, Marketing & Communications
Sabina Ortiz, Safety & Emergency Services
Tom Hund, EMS & Fire Administration

Lynn Abbott, EMS & Fire Administration
Marianne Merola, EMS & Fire Administration

Also Present:

Chaplain Milton Smith, All First Responders Matter
Colin Hilliard, Citizen
Chief Kenny Lane, East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District
Chief Andrew Hughes, Pinellas Park Fire Department
Chief Chris Wilfong, Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair 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 15 voting members in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

Invocation by Chaplain Milton Smith, Clearwater Fire & Rescue, All First Responders Matter.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 12, 2026 MEETING – APPROVED

Following brief discussion and presentation, a motion was made by Christopher Hayes, seconded by Ty Dougherty and carried unanimously, that the minutes of the June 12, 2026 EMS Advisory Council meeting be approved.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Chaplain Milton Smith, Citizen, thanked the EMS system and Sunstar for their continued support of All First Responders Matter.

INTRODUCTIONS

David Hare introduced Sean Davenport as the Interim Director of EMS, assuming responsibilities previously held by Craig Hare. Mr. D. Hare added that the Director of EMS position has been posted and is expected to be filled within the next few months.

EMS DIRECTOR REPORT

Sean Davenport provided an overview of the following highlights:

- The EMS System is transitioning to a new Learning Management System (LMS) program, First Due, to consolidate scheduling, credentialing, and education platform, noting plans for a January 1 implementation.
- Pinellas County EMS system was recently awarded Gold Tier status as a Pediatric-Ready EMS System.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT

Dr. Jameson presented on system developments:

- The EMS system completed a successful summer of Emergency Pediatric Care training.
- Protocols to be forthcoming for Pediatric stroke.
- The Airway Management project is underway, including countywide implementation of video laryngoscopy beginning in January. Training is progressing through a train-the-trainer model, followed by station-level practice in December. Plans for a January rollout. Focus will emphasize defect-free airway care aligned with national quality measures.

- Low-Titre Whole Blood program launched with first units deployed. System ready for emergency transfusions before arriving at hospitals, with expansion to additional units planned.
- DEA Rule changes include EMS transition from individual DEA practitioner licenses to EMS agency registration, with expected completion in mid-November.
- EMS Innovation conference and statewide stakeholder meetings scheduled for next week at Florida Center of EMS/CAMLS in Tampa.
- Protocol package was approved at yesterday's Medical Control Board meeting.

FIRE CHIEFS' REPORT

Chief Trip Barrs shared the following Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association highlights:

- Working with Safety & Emergency Services to draft a scope of work for a system consultant, noting County plans for an upcoming comprehensive EMS System review.
- In complex negotiations with the Medical Director's Office for an annual training plan review.
- Moving forward with collaboration with Sean Davenport on the new Learning Management System.
- On final approach with the ALS First Responder Amendment No. 2 agreements.

SUNSTAR REPORT

Richard Schomp provided an operational update, highlighting key performance metrics, system improvements, and community service activities:

- Transport Volume: Sunstar is projecting approximately 187,000 ambulance transports for the fiscal year. Emergency transports have remained relatively flat over the past several years, while non-emergency transports continue to decline. Current emergency transport volume is comparable to 2019 levels.
- School Board Partnership: Sunstar continues to work with the Pinellas County School Board to provide training for teachers, administrators, nurses, and students in overdose response, bleeding control, CPR, and related lifesaving skills. During the year, 70 registered nurses received CPR and bleeding-control training, 10 nurses were trained as CPR instructors, and approximately 360 school administrators received CPR or Triad of Life training.
- Prehospital Blood Program: Sunstar has trained 65 personnel in blood administration, including 32 field supervisors and 33 critical-care personnel. EMTs are included in the three-person team structure. The expanded deployment of blood in supervisor vehicles is expected to provide broader coverage than the current Critical Care Transport deployment. Sunstar will evaluate the pilot program and results to determine potential future expansion.

AFFILIATES & STAKEHOLDERS

Colin Hilliard, Florida Department of Health, provided an update regarding an increase in locally acquired dengue virus cases in the region and encouraged awareness among field staff. He also noted ongoing collaboration with mosquito control on community outreach and education, noting that additional reports are available upon request.

OPEN FORUM

- EMS Director Recruitment: Ty Dougherty asked for an update on the recruitment process for the EMS Director position and whether a member of the EMS Advisory Council could participate. David Hare reported that the position had been posted for approximately two weeks, one round of interviews had been completed, and the Fire Chiefs and Sunstar would participate in a panel review of finalists. Three finalists were identified for panel interviews,

including candidates from Texas, north of the area, and a local candidate.

- ALSFR Contracts: Brett Schlatterer reported that the ALSFR amendments are moving through the approval process. Several agencies are scheduled to take the amendments to their respective governing bodies, with signed amendments requested by September 25, 2026. Items not returned by that date will be moved to the second BCC meeting in October.
- Comprehensive EMS System Review: David Hare reported that the County Administrator has requested a comprehensive review of the EMS system and that the County will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant/facilitator. A steering committee is being established with representatives from the Fire Chiefs' Association, Safety & Emergency Services, Sunstar, and other stakeholders. The first steering committee meeting is scheduled for the following week to review the RFP and scope of work. A smaller selection committee will evaluate proposals after they are received.

The review is intended to examine the current EMS system, identify efficiencies and best practices, and consider updates to older resolutions and guiding documents. Mr. Hare relayed that the process is being initiated in response to current proposals concerning system funding and changes that have occurred in the EMS system over time. The intent is to consider factors beyond response times when evaluating the system.

Ty Dougherty requested that citizen representatives of the EMS Advisory Council have an opportunity to provide input during the EMS system review and suggested that citizen participation be incorporated into the RFP process. David Hare agreed that citizen input could be incorporated through surveys and other methods and stated that this could be included in the RFP.

NEXT MEETING

The next EMSAC meeting will be held in person on December 18, 2026, 10:00 a.m., at the John Morroni EMS & Fire Administration Building, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Conference Room 130/132, Largo, Florida 33774.

ADJOURNMENT

Christopher Markham moved, seconded by Ty Dougherty and carried unanimously, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

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