

AUGUST 2025

# MAINE EMS STAFF UPDATE



## OVERVIEW

This publication is intended to provide members of the Board and interested parties insight into the work of the Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services office in the previous month. This publication is not anticipated to be exhaustive, but instead a high-level overview of the work that has taken place.

It should serve as a jumping point for conversations and questions from the Board regarding the ongoing work that is being performed throughout the state.

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings all,

This has been a busy month, working to prep for the upcoming short session where we have three proposed bills. Preparing for the timelines and demands of the Legislative Resolves we received in this last session and making sure we are completing some of the outstanding work from past projects.

I had a great opportunity to visit the team at Bar Harbor Fire Department this past week. In a follow up to a recent visit from our Education Coordinator, I was able to deliver the EMS Awards for two of their team and had the chance to spend the day chatting and hanging out with them. Truly an engaged and caring group, and such a beautiful part of Maine.

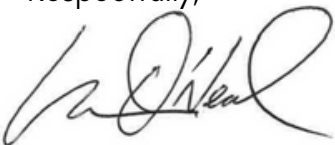
Marc Minkler and I met with DOT to kick off the latest version of the Island Patient Transport Committee. This will be to fulfill one of our Resolves but also provides an important way to keep us at the table with Maine DOT around the best ways to address the issue of EMS and patient transports off the island. We identified key stakeholders for the group, set a schedule for meetings and reviewed the Legislation to prepare for an August kick off.

We have been working to bring some of our Federal SUD grants through close out reporting, we are requesting extensions for this funding but anticipate we will see a significant reduction in the funding available through our FR-CARA and COSSUP Grants. That doesn't mean our SUD efforts will go away, but it does mean we may need to do some strategic repositioning to ensure we are still able to actively meet the needs of the community.

The latest episode of the Maine EMS podcast is out, and we are getting quite a bit of positive feedback. We have seen more than 150 individual listeners so far, and we are looking at ways to broaden the number of platforms we push the podcast out too. The next planned episode is scheduled to be an interview w/ Bar Harbor leadership about the challenges of providing EMS in a coastal area.

It's that time of year, when even the heat and insects can create EMS scene safety concerns, do your best to stay cool and safe and do great things!

Respectfully,



Wil O'Neal,  
Director, Maine Emergency Medical Services



# EMS FOR CHILDREN (EMSC)

The Maine EMSC Program received full federal funding on June 16, 2025. This funds the EMSC program through March 31, 2026. Additionally, EMSC Program Manager Marc Minkler shares the following notable recent achievements and updates with the Maine EMS Board. Since the last update, Marc:

- Spoke at the Maine statewide Perinatal Quality Collaborative annual conference on June 13 regarding EMS and OB and newborn responses and care.
- Participated as part of the interview team for the Associate State EMS Medical Director.
- Finalized work with Maine Department of Education in a collaborative effort for School Emergency Guidelines. These guidelines will be for non-clinical school employees as a guide for initial emergency care. Many thanks to Dr. Sholl for his assistance and review in this process as well.
- Assisted at the Region 1 I/C update class in Westbrook on July 18, 2025.
- Instructed at the BLSO course at MaineHealth Franklin Hospital on July 21, 2025.
- Lead the statewide PQC4ME quarterly meeting on July 22, 2025.
- Attended multiple NEMSQA meetings as a member of the development committee for NEMSQA standards.
- Attended meetings for the Transfer and Transport Committee, Education Committee, and Trauma Advisory Committee, as well as the Region One RAC and MDPB meetings.
- Attended the NASEMSO Pediatric Council Officers and East Region meetings.
- Attended the Maine State Webmaster meeting.
- Was requested by the Washington DC EMSC program to assist for independent verification of "Always Ready for Children" recognition of Children's National Medical Center in DC, and met with the Director of Nursing, CEO, and ED Nursing Manager virtually (Children's National is a 323-bed pediatric magnet hospital seeing over 103,000 patients annually. It is ranked #5 in the United States by US World and News for pediatric hospitals).
- Completed and submitted the annual performance review and budget analysis/reporting to HRSA on July 30, 2025.
- Continues to manage the entire Maine EMS website and social media platform.
- Continues to work with multiple agencies and hospitals with OB closures.

Continuing challenges include:

- Access to transport and critical care for pediatric and OB IFTs.
- Increased challenges around pediatric EMS volumes. In the first half of 2025, compared to 2024, we have seen an increase of 6% in calls for people under 18. In the years from 2018 through 2025, we project an increase of 7.5% in responses for patients less than 18 years of age. The only dip in volume was during COVID in 2020.
- Despite the increase in volume, we have not seen a significant change in age makeup in the response population. The largest age populations are under 2 years or over 12 years of age. The aspects and reasons for EMS activations as well as the challenges within these age groups vary wildly.



# DATA & PREPAREDNESS

Work is ongoing on the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) integration between Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and agencies.

Additionally, within the MEFIRS Patient Care Report:

- Rhinitis has been added as a symptom and “Recent Travel” has re-enabled as an optional field to assist with measles surveillance.
- As of July 30, there are a couple of new “Donor” fields.



## EMS CONNECTME

The EMS ConnectME Service and Mentor Trainings are now available on MEMSEd. Each training gives one hour of CEH, and the Mentor Training is available for both I/C and non-I/C credit. The Service Training is required for everyone at an agency with EMS ConnectME, and the Mentor Training is required for everyone who wants to be a Mentor. The trainings are available at the following links:

- [Service Training](#)
- [Mentor Training \(I/C\)](#)
- [Mentor Training \(non-I/C\)](#)

### EMS ConnectME Apparel

EMS ConnectME t-shirts and safety vests are now available for Learners and agencies. Each Learner is issued one t-shirt, which helps identify them during trainings, field trips, and calls. Additionally, each service gets one safety vest, which Learners must wear on calls during inclement weather when their t-shirt would be obscured by a jacket.

The program trainings and apparel are major milestones for the program, and we look forward to continuing to grow!





## EDUCATION & TRAINING

Since June, Maine EMS Education updates include:

- The progression of the Protocol update, with an anticipated distribution in October–November.
- Training Center grant approvals have been issued, and award distributions are in progress for the Maine EMS Sustainability Grant Program.
- Aiden Koplovsky has resigned from his role as the Chair of the Education Committee. CVs are currently being accepted to fill the position.
- Working with the University of Southern Maine to update the LMS/MEMSEd platform.
- Updating the Standardized Course List, which will include AVOC and FEMA programs, and the Prodigy EMS Instructor will be added to the Standardized Approved Course List.
- Invitation to be a part of a National Registry of EMTs (NREMT) podcast pertaining to the role of a State EMS Officer.

## LICENSING

On/about July 17, the NREMT started to experience issues with their digital systems after implementing a system update, which impacted the automated data feed our system relies on to verify NREMT certification status. Maine EMS is working with Imagetrend to fully restore the automated data feed; in the meantime, the Licensing Team is able to verify NREMT certification status by manually looking up the certification. Maine EMS sent a notice to licensees who are expected to renew their licensure expiring in July or August of 2025 on July 18, and the licensure team will continue to monitor the impact of this disruption.

Additionally:

- In the month of June, Maine EMS issued 113 New/Reciprocity Licenses, 59 upgrade/downgrade applications, 96 applications for licensure renewal using CEH, and 38 applications for licensure renewal using NREMT certification.
- The Licensing Team released an update to the Equipment Inspection Form for transporting and non-transporting EMS services.
- A new transporting service license was issued for Dover-Foxcroft, a new non-transporting service license was issued for South Berwick, and a change in licensing factors was issued for Lee Fire-Rescue.


## INVESTIGATIONS & RULEMAKING

The Licensing Team is currently working on planning for anticipated updates to our authorizing statute from the 1<sup>st</sup> regular and 1<sup>st</sup> special session of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, effective September 24, 2025, particularly as it affects Investigations. The Licensing Team has been providing crucial input during meetings of the Maine EMS Rules Subcommittee as they continue their work on a concept rule for Scope of Practice. Work is also ongoing for revisions to the Clinical Practice Matrix.

# COMMUNITY PARAMEDICINE (CP)

At its July meeting, the CP Committee discussed developing a quarterly series focused on healthcare systems collaboration. The Committee plans to kick this off in October with the opportunity for virtual and in-person attendance. The CP Committee will be off in August for a summer hiatus and meet next on September 11, 2025. The office anticipates releasing CP license applications in September. These will be available through the eLicensing portal. The CP Coordinator has been working with agencies that applied for RFA#202412213 to complete contracts; there are currently six executed contracts and another four in process. Work also continues on the EMS supplement grant, and over the next month, individualized support focused on their finances, as well as a leadership and mental health training opportunity, will be provided.

## STABILIZATION & SUSTAINABILITY



Regarding the **Stabilization Grant Program**, 184 transporting and non-transporting EMS agencies were awarded grant funds. Of those, 172 agencies have been closed out and 12 remain open.

For the **Sustainability Grant Program**, 231 transporting and non-transporting EMS agencies have been awarded grant funds, as have eight training centers. So far, invoicing has started for 212 agencies, with funding for those totaling \$8,868,455.92:

- \$6,310,885.71 to 141 transporting agencies; and
- \$2,557,570.21 to 71 non-transporting agencies.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH (EMD)

According to a status survey, 12 of 28 EMD Centers have implemented Protocol 41: First Party Caller in Crisis by training all staff and updating their software to make it available when processing medical calls for service. Of the remaining 16 EMD Centers, five have completed the training and are pending the software upgrade, three have staff that need to finish the training, and eight have not responded. Implementation of Protocol 41 is mandatory.

Since November 2023, over 170 mental health calls have been transferred from 911 to 988 using the Maine Crisis Response Policy. None of those calls have been referred back to 911 for emergency services. While this transfer policy remains optional for EMD Center PSAPs, the implementation of Protocol 41 as a tool to triage and manage callers in crisis is required to ensure we coordinate the most appropriate response, including transfer to 988 if so trained and when indicated.

The EMD Committee welcomed Jace Poulin of Franklin County RCC and Cheri Volta of Penobscot County RCC and UVAC as new representatives. There are still vacancies for a non-PSAP EMD Center Director, a Licensing Mental Health Professional, and a Physician Representative to the Committee.

During the second half of 2025, the Committee will focus on supporting EMD Centers through an evaluation and updates to their quality assurance programs as needed based on operational changes. Many EMD Centers have started utilizing Quality Performance Review (QPR) as a third-party quality assurance reviewing contractor.

# EMS REGIONAL UPDATES

## REGION TWO

The new Region 2 Council met for the first time on July 15, with more than 30 members in attendance. The meeting served as an introduction and orientation to the new Regional Council structure and duties defined by the Board's rules. Members asked for regular updates on Maine EMS initiatives like the CAD-MEFIRS Integration Project and the Connectivity Project, along with Board updates at subsequent meetings. The Council directed staff to create an application for voting membership, which will be available starting August 8, 2025. The Council also established a regular meeting schedule on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 2:00 p.m. and will reassess to move to bi-monthly or quarterly meetings as the initial workload of establishing a functioning Council is completed. The next meeting is August 19, at 2:00 p.m.

## GENERAL REGIONAL NEWS

The [Maine EMS Regional Needs Assessment Survey](#) is collecting responses until August 29, 2025. This feedback and data will help each of the four regions understand the needs and prioritize goals.

