Quality Assurance & Improvement:

It's Important!

• Steven M. Carlo, Vice President

How important is the quality assurance and improvement phase of implementation when establishing an EMD program? This question has been asked of me in myriad forms. If anyone still doesn’t know the answer, then this topic deserves some additional attention.

I know that a number of EMS agencies invest a considerable amount of time and what may be considered limited funds to train personnel in Emergency Medical Dispatch. This process is to be spotlighted, heralded and commended. However, a “process” implies an ongoing program. The individuals responsible for starting the program also support the program. They have fervor and strong intentions.

But, not every single employee in every agency has the same degree of enthusiasm. Some employees may be hesitant to become “involved” with the caller. Other employees may become so intent on “saving the world” that they start adding questions, ad-libbing and diagnosing the patient. Well, determining who “deserves” and who “doesn’t deserve” the benefits of emergency medicine is not something that can nor should be determined in the dispatch center. Historically, those who made this mistake ended up on Nightline, Dateline, 20-20, or 60 Minutes! They forgot about the customer/patient.

Having an effective QA/QI program is absolutely vital to the well-being of a dispatch center. The program should spot-check all of the players. Are all callers given appropriate instructions? Does the time of day and/or personnel on duty make a difference to the call interaction and/or outcome? How can we improve? What calls and individuals can we all learn from?

Any Q.I. process must also be a positive, non-threatening, learning experience. Highlight the best you can find. As the search continues, the good calls and protocol compliance will become more frequent. Human nature means that each of us would like to be the next example on the “Wall of Fame.”

The individuals responsible for starting the program also support the program... But, not every employee has the same degree of enthusiasm.

NAVIGATOR '96
Summit • Seminar • Conference

The National Academy has chosen Snowbird Resort to host its Navigator '96 Summit, Seminar, and Conference. The last time the Academy hosted their own EMD conference it was 1990 — the “Dawn of the Dispatch Decade” in San Diego, California. Back then the Academy had about 1500 members. Today, with the decade now more than half over, and with Academy membership beyond 15,000 EMD’s worldwide, it’s time for another major EMD event. The place is Snowbird Resort in Little Cottonwood Canyon near Salt Lake City. The dates are August 27-31, 1996.

Some of the biggest names in EMD will be there, including most of the membership of the Academy’s College of Fellows. After the conference, the Snowbird Resort kicks off its Grand Oktoberfest Celebration, a full Labor Day weekend of German food, drink, dancing and entertainment. Plan now to come early and stay late — this Conference is an event you won’t want to miss!

All workshops and sessions will be held in the world-famous Cliff Lodge, high in the Rocky Mountains.

In addition to management-specific leadership training, quality assurance and EMD case review classes, disaster management presentations, and hands-on workshops for ProQA and other software, the conference will have (continued on page 3)
From the President’s Desk

Conference Thoughts...
chart a better course

• Alexander Kuehl, MD, MPH, FACS

Come this August there will be help to navigate you through rough waters: The Academy-sponsored Navigator ’96 Summit, Seminar & Conference. I am a proponent of seeking professional guidance before charting a course. Those who have gone before can light a beacon so that others don’t go astray. We can all learn from the successes and failures of others.

The importance of seeking continuing education opportunities should never be underestimated. As an educator, I continually stress the importance of learning and improving our perspectives in situations conducive to the learning process. To the field of public safety communications, EMD is a relatively new concept; however, it is already well established and is even expected in most municipalities. Are you prepared with the knowledge you need?

At Navigator ’96, everyone involved in medical dispatch communications will have an opportunity to learn. For dispatchers there will be an EMD course that follows the newly approved Academy teaching curriculum. For dispatch supervisors, medical directors, and administrators there will be either the Management Seminar or Leaders Summit. If you are entrusted with responsibility for a medical dispatch center, you will want to be there. For everyone involved in EMD at any level, the final two days of this event will provide both excellent information and vital respite from the rigors of daily emergency management.

I personally look forward to the session on managed care and its potential impact on EMD. Changes are coming so fast that we cannot keep up with them. This session, and others, will allow us all to use our recent experiences and observations to help build more up-to-date models. We will also have an invaluable opportunity to network with our peers, check out professional opportunities around the world, and take home concrete ideas that we can actually use.

From the field...

MPDS Q&A
Where do I go from here?

• William Kinch, EMT-P, EMD Instructor

After asking standard case entry questions for an emotional call, such as a cardiac arrest or drowning child, have you ever found yourself wondering silently, “Where do I go from here?” or “Now what do I do?” Well, if you answered silently, “YES!” you’re not alone. In my experiences with several Quality Assurance & Improvement programs, this uncertainty in choosing a chief complaint, especially in time-critical high-emotion calls, is all too common.

To provide you with some direction in these critical situations, there are some simple "rules of thumb" that can easily be memorized and can be routinely followed. The rules are these:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conscious</th>
<th>Breathing</th>
<th>Go to</th>
<th>Card #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No/Uncertain</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No/Uncertain</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31, 15, 14, or 12 (at appropriate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember the two questions, "Conscious?" and "Breathing?" must always be asked separately and in order.

Through the QA/QI process, I’ve personally identified a surprising number of individuals who, incorrectly, go to Card 31 in the case of a cardiac arrest. A common response is, “They’re unconscious, so I should go to the unconscious card, right?” Well, this is an invalid statement because the correct treatment sequence protocol will eventually be reached, however, it could take an additional (and unnecessary) 30-45 precious seconds to get there as opposed to working directly through Card 9, the Cardiac Arrest "Bridge" protocol, to Pre-Arrival Instructions.

I have submitted a Proposal for Change to add these "rules of thumb" to the Case Entry protocol in the next version, if approval by the College of Fellows is granted, so this information can be more easily remembered and referenced. If anyone has comments or questions about this issue, about the MPDS in general, or would like a particular EMS or EMD topic clarified, please feel free to contact me.

Bill Kinch is a certified EMD Instructor and Senior National Faculty member for the Academy. On those increasingly-rare occasions when he’s not traveling on the EMS or EMD teaching, speaking, or consulting circuits, Bill resides in Lynnfield, Massachusetts. He can be reached through the Academy or via E-Mail: pmedic1041@aol.com.
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The Super Communications Center:
Medical Access Point 2001

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Mountains, at which we’ve negotiated a special $75 per
night room rate (either single or double occupancy).
Various efficiency studio rooms, condominiums,
deluxe suites and overflow canyon lodging are
available but these are not nearly as convenient as staying
at the Cliff. Since there is only a limited number of
space, please make your arrangements as early as
possible to avoid disappointment.

The 29-mile trip from Salt Lake International
Airport takes about 40 minutes. Airport shuttle service
can be provided by Canyon Transportation at the
reduced rate of $34 per person round trip if booked and
prepaid along with your lodging reservations.

CONFERENCE
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filled Breakout Sessions, all
dedicated to EMD and emergency
dispatch operations.
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directly impact our future.

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or (801) 742-2222 (all
Snowbird Resort).

General registration
and questions should be
handled directly through the National Academy:
(800) 960-6236.
Visit and MemberCard
are accepted. Register before
June 30th for the best
rates (see registration
brochure). All current
Academy-certified
EMDs or Executive members receive a $25
discount toward any
registration. Call us if
you have questions.

New EMD Teaching Curriculum…

Curriculum Committee
Connections

• Steven M. Carlo, Vice President

The Academy’s Curriculum Committee held our second face-to-face meeting in Salt Lake City over Superbowl Weekend, logging more than 300 hours of combined voluntary time in reviewing and revising EMD course materials and curriculum. Concurrent with our meeting, Salt Lake experienced a record snowfall which provided for extra excitement!

Our responsibilities included a charge to ensure compliance with the three ASTM documents dealing with Emergency Medical Dispatch and, as much as possible, with the new DOT/NHTSA documents. The DOT was expected to validate the ASTM standards with their own National Standard Curriculum on September 30, 1995, but this is still not in general circulation as of this newsletter’s press time.

In addition, the committee revisited the Course Manual and the approved audio/video list. Subgroups of the committee revised the certification examination and worked on creating new transparency to accompany the in-progress instructor manual. We also spent time discussing the upcoming Navigator ’96 conference and several long range topics in EMD training and education.

Participating committee members included: Bill Achneterline, Brian Dale, Barry Duff, Bill Kinch, Vicki Maguire, Bill Maps, Sudi Marans, Brett Patterson, Ross Rutschman, and myself. We started meetings on Friday, January 26th, and continued through Saturday and Sunday, with a wrap-up presentation of developed materials to the office staff on Monday morning.

The weekend was a great success and I appreciate the commitment of everyone involved. The group’s dedication and combined efforts even went to taping the Superbowl game, working through dinner and sitting down to pizza, wings, and the VCR in a hotel room at 11:00 PM to finally watch the game. I personally couldn’t make it past the first half before Morpheus overtook me and I resorted to finding the results on ESPN back in my own room. (In my defense, midnight Mtn. Time is 2 a.m. Eastern!)

For Academy-certified Instructors these revisions may seem like a never-ending project; but, believe me, there is a light at the end of the tunnel! We expect general distribution of the new EMD curriculum materials before the Navigator ’96 Conference in August. This will allow time for the preliminary production, editing and refining of the material.

Upcoming Courses

For more information on these and other approved EMD Certification Courses call Medical Priority. (801) 363-9127:

Mar. 4-6 & 11-13 Rochester, NY
Hosted by: Monroe County Public Safety

Mar. 12-14 Vancouver, WA
Hosted by: Clark County Dept. of EMS

Mar. 13-15 Fort Saskatchewan, ALB, Canada
Hosted by: Fort Sask. Ambulance/Fire

Mar. 14-16 Brookfield, WI
Hosted by: City of Brookfield Police Dept.

Mar. 14-16 Morrow, GA
Hosted by: Morrow City Fire Department

Mar. 15-17 Aztec, NM
Hosted by: San Juan Comm. Authority

Mar. 16-18 Garland, TX
Hosted by: Garland Police, Fire & EMS

Mar. 19-21 Broken Arrow, OK
Hosted by: Broken Arrow Police Dept.

Mar. 20-22 St. Paul, MN
Hosted by: St. Paul Fire Dept.

Mar. 22-24 Aguadilla, PUERTO RICO
Hosted by: Universal Technology College

Mar. 24-26 & 28-30 Lincoln, NE
Hosted by: Eastern Ambulance

Mar. 25-27 & 28-30 New Bern, NC

Mar. 27-29 Pontiac, MI
Hosted by: Pontiac Fire Department

Mar. 28-30 Hoffman Estates, IL
Hosted by: Northeast Multi-Reg. Training

Mar. 28-30 Casper, WY
Hosted by: Casper Public Safety Comm.

Mar. 28-30 Chirnsey, IN
Hosted by: Spencer County Sheriff’s Dept.

Mar. 28-30 Morgantown, WV
Hosted by: Monongalia County Emergency

Apr. 1-3 Loveland, CO
Hosted by: L.E.T.A.

Apr. 2-4 & May 16-18 Salt Lake City, UT
Hosted by: Medical Priority Consultants, Inc.

Apr. 8-10 & July 29-31 Huntsville, AL
Hosted by: University of Alabama

Apr. 15-17 Brookfield, WI
Hosted by: City of Brookfield Police Dept.

May 10-12 South Lake Tahoe, NV
Hosted by: California Rescue/Paramedic

May 17-19 Pratt, KS
Hosted by: Pratt Community College

June 1-3 Seward, AK
Hosted by: Seward Police Department

Footnotes:
The following organizations offer training & services of interest to Academy EMDs:

University of Iowa—EMS Learning Resource Center
Mike Hartley (319) 356-2597.

U. of Alabama-Huntsville
Sheila George or Rick Beck
(205) 551-4413.

Columbus State Comm. College (Ohio & region)
Art Gollon (614) 226-2400.

Palm Beach Community College (Florida & region)
Barry Duff (407) 439-8213.

Team Dispatch—FL
Regularly promotes EMD and offers awards as part of a free incentive and recognition program for dispatchers. Send your success stories for review.

1004 Green Pine Blvd., H-1,
West Palm Beach, FL 33409
E-Mail: TeamDisp@aol.com
Michael Richman (407) 687-9113.

Dispatch Monthly Magazine
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Subs. only $20 for 12 issues.
Write to: Mr. Alan Burton,
P.O. Box 1153, Benicia, CA
94510—(707) 747-0540.

Florida EMS Clearinghouse
Information service providing EMS-related journal articles/documents for small or no fee.
Sue McClean or Tonya Keifer
(904) 487-1911.

University of Delaware
Cont. Ed. through its Dept. of Prof. & Noncredit Programs.
Jacob Haber (302) 573-4440.

ACADEMY INTERNET:
NAEMD@aol.com

MEDICAL PRIORITY:
MPC2EMD@aol.com

E-mail to the above addresses from any I-Net/online service. There is also a bulletin board with a regularly updated EMD course list in the Public Safety Center of America Online.