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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS 1979-1999 THE EMD PROTOCOL THE PROFESSIONAL EMD

This year the Academy celebrates 20-years of EMD professionalism—made possible by the MPDS Protocol.

Creating Time Standards That Work

Jeff J. Clawson, MD, Board of Certification Chair
Bob Sinclair, PhD, Senior Technical Editor and Research Specialist

One of the most controversial challenges to EMDs today is the pressure to be fast—very fast—in their call processing times. We've all heard "the clock is ticking and patients are dying or going downhill with every second that passes"...but are they?

As Brian Dale writes in this issue's CDE article (page 2), taking the time to get the chief complaint right the

first time is critical to giving the patient the best possible care. It does no good to be quick *but wrong*. In terms of patient outcome, the truth is the vast majority of calls are not time sensitive. Inflexible and arbitrary response time standards for EMS agencies (that further pressure the communication center) are not based on research related to patient outcome but largely on politics and perceptions.



We all recognize that the goal is to be quick *and right* during call processing, but what is the appropriate amount of time that an EMD should spend in call processing in order to respond accurately and appropriately? As we've discovered through reviewing our extensive database of calls throughout the world, the answer is not simple. In fact, before we can begin to address this question we must define our terms—the mileposts that represent the critical time junctures in a call—so that we're all talking the same language and comparing the same times.

Several years ago, on the Norwegian isle of Utstein, cardiac-oriented clinical investigators established a universally acceptable set of criteria that would aid in the study, as well as in the interpretation, of data pertaining to cardiac resuscitation science. This led to the more realistic comparison of "apples to apples" in cardiac care, but in emergency dispatch we are often comparing Lamborghinis to lemons.

Last year at the *Navigator '98* Conference, in the Norwegian-like setting of the mountainous Snowbird resort, several attendees recognized the need to agree on definitions for the various time sub-intervals found in call processing. Preliminary work

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Preparing for the New Millennium

Alexander Kuehl, MD, MPH, FACS, FACEP, President NAEMD



Welcome to the first edition of the *National EMD Journal*. You'll note numerous additions and improvements from the old *Dispatch!* format. Foremost is an emphasis on CDE, call center operations, and research. The mission of the Academy is to advance the profession and the *National EMD Journal* will become an important tool in that endeavor. The Journal will be growing and evolving over the next year and we look forward to receiving your comments, suggestions and contributions.

One of the great honors of serving as your President has been to preside over the Annual Leaders Summit at the Navigator Conference. The Academy is especially proud to host the NAEMSP Medical Director's Course and the NAEMSP Research Workshop as pre-conference events. This will attract a gathering of many of the most innovative and challenging EMS/EMD leaders in the country including Dr. Joe Ryan, Dr. Jeff Clawson, Dr. Harry Baker, Larry Anderson, Steve Forry, Jerry Overton, Mike Taigman, Carl VanCott, Dr. Paul Pepe, Mic Gunderson, Dr. Bob Bass and Dr. Ray Fowler. Think of the opportunities for interaction which will emerge!

Many of the workshop participants and faculty will join us on September 1st in the 1999 EMS/EMD Futures Summit. If you would like to participate in shaping the future of prehospital care for the next century—or if you've been searching for a new discussion forum to recapture the excitement and optimism of the "Sand Key" conferences—this is it! We'll see you in San Antonio. I promise that you will remember the Alamo!