



# GAEMS

GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

4th Quarter, 2009

My creed is that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with whom full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, and that honor is to be earned, not bought.

Sen. Margaret Chase Smith

1897—1995

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## State Office of EMS and Georgia Association of EMS Announce Grant Award

On August 7, 2009, the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) awarded the Georgia Association of EMS an **Enhancement of Patient Care Reporting Grant** in the amount of \$1,280,004. In announcing the award to GAEMS, DCH Commission Rhonda Medows, MD, remarked "DCH takes great pride in providing grant funding to entities such as yours to ensure that Georgians have access to

appropriate quality health care. There is much work to be done and through our collective efforts, we can make considerable strides in achieving our goals."

In accepting the grant, Courtney Terwilliger, Chair of the Georgia Association of EMS, said "GAEMS is delighted to receive this grant and greatly appreciates the support the Georgia Department of Community Health and Dr.

Medows provides to Georgia's EMS community. We look forward to partnering with the State Office of EMS in this most important endeavor." Acting Director of the State Office of EMS Billy R. Watson commented "since assuming the responsibilities as Director in January, two of my primary goals have been supporting Georgia's EMS providers and enhancing the data

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Beaumont, TX, September 25, 2005 -- EMT personnel help load a patient onto a medevac helicopter for transport to Houston. Judi Mayne, a paramedic, watches from the door. D-MAT units, a part of FEMA, augment the Memorial Hermann Emergency Room operation. Photo by Ed Edahl/FEMA

## DHS Program for First Responders

At the recent EMS Expo, GAEMS Board Members Courtney Terwilliger, Lee Oliver and David Moore met with First Responder Technologies (R-Tech) representatives Jeff Hudkins and Christine Lee.

According to their information, First Responder Technologies (R-Tech) program is an outreach program to federal, state, local and tribal first responders. R-Tech's mission is to protect America against terrorism, disasters and all other hazards by providing first responder solutions for high priority technology related capability gaps and assisting first responders through rapid prototyping, technical assistance and information sharing.

One component of R-Tech is [www.FirstResponder.gov](http://www.FirstResponder.gov), a single access portal and "one stop shop" for information. Another aspect is TechSolutions, [www.techsolutions.dhs.gov](http://www.techsolutions.dhs.gov), where first responders can submit capability gaps directly to DHS for possible development of a prototype to solve the gap, with the ultimate goal of transitioning the technology for widespread use by the first responder community.

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# GAEMS Preparedness Foundation Kicks Off

**By Shane Garrison, Chairman, GAEMS Preparedness Foundation and Vice President, Puckett EMS**

At the recent Georgia EMS Preparedness Foundation Board of Directors meeting I had the privilege of being elected as the Chairman of the Foundation's Board. Let me first start by saying thank you to the Board for their support and confidence. I'm truly honored to work with each of them. Also elected as officers were:

**Jim Cannady**, Vice Chair (National EMS Athens)

**Tim Brogdon**, Secretary (South Georgia Medical Center EMS-Lowndes County)

**Karen Grabenstein**, Treasurer (Ogeechee Technical College)

The mission of the Georgia EMS Preparedness Foundation, as a tax-deductible 501(c)3, is to provide education opportunities for emergency medical services personnel, to educate the general public regarding emergency medicine issues, and to take such other actions as are beneficial to the profession of emergency medical service personnel and public. Simply stated, I view our mission as supporting EMS through education, awareness and to provide a funding source for the men and women of EMS, so that they can better serve the citizens of Georgia.

Our mission is important work for EMS in Georgia and is long overdue. The work that we will do over the coming years will have a positive impact on our industry and will serve as a model for other states to use in establishing similar non-profit foundations to obtain funding for EMS in their states.

As you can imagine, there is much work to be done in getting our new foundation established and making sure that we're following state and federal laws as it relates to 501(c)3 non profit corporations. We will obviously work toward putting into place the typical start up details such as a bank account, Post Office Box, logo, letterhead, and website.

The Board members are all leaders in EMS in Georgia. I want to thank them all for their willingness to serve in this important role. To the EMS community as a whole, we appreciate your support. Together, we will do great things for EMS in Georgia.

For more information, Mr. Garrison can be reached at (770) 222-5045.

## Metter Gets New EMS Station



**David Moore**, Candler County EMS Director, stands with **Jamey Boyd**, EMTP, and **Jamie Nesbitt**, EMTI, in front of the new Candler County EMS/EMA facility. The staff hosted an Open House on October 15, 2009 with light refreshments and building tours for public visitors. The new facility has a training room that will also serve as the County Emergency Operations Center.

If you have a story or picture for the newsletter, please send them to:

[bnoyes@brockclay.com](mailto:bnoyes@brockclay.com)

## ALTERED STANDARDS OF CARE

### **Project Background and Activities to Date**

The Georgia Department of the Community Health, Georgia Division of Public Health (GA DPH), in partnership with the Georgia Association of Emergency Medical Services (GAEMS), has been undertaking a broad reaching, multi-phase statewide effort to plan for how the state's healthcare and emergency medical systems will deal with shortages of critical healthcare resources during disasters.

This project acknowledges that during an emergency event, such as a natural disaster or

an influenza pandemic, we likely will be confronted with large numbers of injured or ill persons and significant shortages of personnel, equipment and medicines. The combination of greater demand for services and shortages of critical resources will likely require that healthcare providers make difficult decisions about how best to allocate the scarce resources that are available. Those engaged in planning for critical resource shortages refer to this complex issue as "altered" standards of care. This project—the Georgia Altered Standards of Care (GA ASC) Project—is beginning to address these issues for the state.

In the first phase of the GA ASC Project (Phase I), GAEMS retained Troutman Sanders LLP to perform several important foundational activities for the project from August through December 2008. During this period, GAEMS worked closely with members of a planning team to accomplish the following activities:

#### **· Create a White Paper on Liability Issues**

Troutman Sanders authored a comprehensive draft white paper, "Altered Standards of Care: A Primer on Georgia Law." This white paper addresses current law in Georgia regarding the

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## Altered Standards of Care (cont.)

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legal standard of care governing healthcare and emergency medical response providers, particularly in relation to how the current law might impact the liability of these providers for the care they render during an emergency. GAEMS distributed the draft white paper to participants in advance of the Phase I stakeholder meetings to provide a baseline of information on key legal concepts of Georgia law and to receive feedback on the paper. We will finalize the white paper after all of the stakeholders meetings are completed.

### · **Conduct an Environmental Assessment of Key Stakeholders**

The GA ASC Project planning team, which is comprised of representatives from GA DPH, GAEMS, and Troutman Sanders, identified and invited a range of key stakeholder groups to participate in one of the four stakeholder meetings to introduce the proposed process to be used in addressing “altered” standards of care. During four meetings held on December 2, 3 and 19, 2008, Troutman Sanders provided important background information on what is meant by an “altered” standard of care, the legal framework for discussing standards of care, and the process that will be used to determine how those “altered” standards will be defined.

We received preliminary feedback from the meeting participants about providing care during large-scale emergencies and how best to involve members of various stakeholder groups in the next phase of deliberations about altered standards of care.

### · **Identify Preliminary Membership for a Work Group on Altered Standards of Care**

During the stakeholder meetings described above, GAEMS outlined the purpose and high level work plan for the Altered Standards of Care Work Group (Work Group), to be created in the next phase of the project. GAEMS also asked participants to consider serving as a member of the Work Group, or identifying someone from their organization that could serve. Troutman Sanders will continue to work with the project planning team to refine the list of participants and organizations to involve in the Work Group.

The overall goals accomplished during Phase I were to inform stakeholders about key legal and policy issues related to altered standards of care and critical resource shortages, as well as secure feedback from stakeholders regarding the process that should be used in deciding how critical resources will be used during disasters and emergencies.

In the second and third phases of the GA ASC Project, Troutman Sanders will continue working with GA DPH and GAEMS to convene the Georgia Altered Standards of Care Work Group, facilitate the Work Group’s activities, and assist in communicating the recommendations and outcomes of the Work Group’s deliberations.

### **Phase 2: Altered Standards of Care Work Group: Creation, Activities, and Schedules**

The second phase (Phase 2) of the GA ASC Project features a series of meetings of the Georgia Altered Standards of Care Work Group. At selected meetings, stakeholders representing key constituencies participated in discussions with the Work Group members as they addressed updates and additions to the *Critical Resource Shortages Planning Guide (Planning Guide)*

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## MetroAtlanta Ambulance opens new facility in Cherokee County



MetroAtlanta Ambulance Service, in conjunction with the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce and Cherokee County EMS officials, hosted an open house and ribbon cutting for Metro Atlanta’s newest ambulance station located in Canton, Georgia.

The station will be home to 24-hour and 12-hour crews that will support MetroAtlanta Ambulance operations in Cherokee County, Georgia. MetroAtlanta Ambulance provides contract services for Northside Cherokee Hospital and back-up 9-1-1 services for Cherokee County EMS. MetroAtlanta Ambulance Service is Georgia’s designated 9-1-1-ambulance provider for most of Cobb County including the cities of Acworth, Kennesaw, Marietta and Smyrna and provides contract interfacility ambulance transportation to 14 metro Atlanta hospitals throughout northwest Georgia.

MetroAtlanta is among only 113 ambulance services in the nation to receive accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) signifying the service meets the industries highest standards for a modern emergency medical services provider.



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# DHS Program for First Responders (continued)

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**From the Website [www.techsolutions.dhs.gov](http://www.techsolutions.dhs.gov)**


The TechSolutions Program was established by the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate to provide information, resources and technology solutions that address mission capability gaps identified by the emergency response community. The goal of TechSolutions is to field technologies that meet 80% of the operational requirement, in a 12 to 15 month time frame, at a cost commensurate with the proposal. Goals will be accomplished through rapid prototyping or the identification of existing technologies that satisfy identified requirements.

To be eligible to submit a capability gap, you must be an active/retired first responder. If you are a first responder who has identified a capability gap that impacts multiple departments or sectors of the first response community or have an idea that would aid fellow first responders in doing their job faster, safer, and more efficiently, please relay your idea or capability gap to the DHS TechSolutions Program by clicking the "Submit A Capability Gap" button on the TechSolutions Website.

Below is an example of the type of product developed through this program.



## Next Generation Breathing Apparatus

<p><b>Product Description:</b></p> <p>An innovative self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) that will allow First Responders more mobility and less fatigue while responding to emergencies, as well as increasing accessibility to confined spaces. The SCBA will be compatible with current systems.</p>	
<p><b>Demos/Deliverables/Transitions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fabricate production test units – FY08</li> <li>• Field operational testing – FY08</li> <li>• NIOSH and NFPA certification testing – FY09</li> <li>• Dept of Transportation (DOT) certification – FY09</li> <li>• Transition – FY09</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benefits to First Responder:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of cylinder weight (7.48 pounds)</li> <li>• Reduction of profile (1.95 inches)</li> <li>• Increased flexibility and reduced fatigue</li> <li>• Rechargeable</li> </ul> <p><b>45 minute air supply</b></p> <p><b>Intended Customers:</b></p> <p>Federal, State, Local and Tribal Nations</p> <p><b>Partners:</b></p> <p>IAFF, Sanders Industrial, DOT</p>

## Grant Awards (continued from page 1)

collection and information management efforts of the State EMS Office. This grant directly contributes to both of those goals and I greatly appreciate Dr. Medows making this grant available to GAEMS and thank her for her continued support of EMS in Georgia.”

The primary purpose of this grant is for the purchase and distribution of rugged laptop computers to selected EMS providers and for installation and implementation of a system to submit electronic patient care reports into the Georgia Emergency Medical Services Information System. The State Office of EMS will work in partnership with the Georgia Association of EMS and other stakeholders to determine the target communities and to

provide technical assistance to the EMS providers. GAEMS has developed a work plan specifying the details of this project and will coordinate the purchase, delivery and implementation of these laptops to EMS providers. Further details will be available during November 2009 and it is anticipated that the laptops should be available to EMS providers in early 2010.

While this is certainly an important and significant development regarding the EMS community's ability to improve the timeliness and quality of patient care data, it is only the next step toward the goal of developing a truly comprehensive data collection and information management system. GAEMS and the State Office of EMS will continue to pursue other strategies to support and

## Altered Standards of Care (cont.)

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relevant to Georgia. The *Planning Guide* is a tool to assist hospitals and EMS providers in preparing to provide care in emergencies during times of critical shortages in personnel and supplies.

### **Organization of the Georgia Altered Standards of Care Work Group**

The first activity in Phase 2 was for Troutman Sanders, the GA DPH and GAEMS to convene the Georgia Altered Standards of Care Work Group, which served as the focal point for the GA ASC Project.

### **Work Group Functions**

The Alternative Standards Work Group served the following functions:

- Provide a structured framework for the discussion of the complex and sensitive issues surrounding alternative standards of care.
- Provide a means to engage key stakeholders and obtain their input.
- Assure diverse input from key stakeholders.
- Serve as the principal author of recommendations for addressing the challenge of alternative standards of care in Georgia. This could include legislative, regulatory or operational recommendations.
- Serve as an advocacy group both inside and outside the healthcare community for the Work Group's recommendations.

### **Work Group Composition**

As was evident during the Phase 1 stakeholder meetings, the selection of appropriate members for the Work Group would be very important to the GA ASC project's ultimate success, and it was determined that the following disciplines should be represented:

- Hospital operations personnel
- Physicians
- Nursing professionals
- Emergency medical services providers
- Elderly care professionals
- Long term care professionals
- Department of Public Health
- Hospital Association
- Palliative care providers
- State and local government
- Faith organizations
- Community service organizations
- Medical educators

We received further input from Phase 1 stakeholders about the geographic distribution that should be represented in the Work Group. Participants in the stakeholder meetings confirmed that there should be a mix of urban and rural areas represented from various parts of the state.

Participants noted that there are differences among how healthcare and emergency medical service systems operate in different regions of the state, especially if they are near the border of another state. The Work Group composition attempts to reflect these regional distinctions.

### **Work Group Meetings Overview**

During Phase 2, the Work Group convened six meetings, one each month from February through July 2009. Over the course of these meetings, the Work Group crafted enhancements to the *Planning Guide*. Based on feedback received from participants in the December 2008 Phase 1 stakeholder meetings, the Work Group focused on four discrete topics that compliment planning for critical resource shortages in acute care settings:

- Pre-hospital providers;
- Non-hospital providers;
- Ethical frameworks; and
- Potential use of federal and state-endorsed standards or algorithms.

A proposed Phase 3, which would focus on the statewide rollout of the final version of *Planning Guide*, is projected to begin in late 2009 or early 2010 and will involve EMS providers throughout Georgia.

**Editor's Note: For more information on GAEMS and its emergency preparedness initiatives, please contact Keith Wages at [keith.wages@gmail.com](mailto:keith.wages@gmail.com). Keith serves as the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Georgia Association of EMS. Previously, Keith served as State EMS Director for Georgia and Minnesota, as Director of Planning for the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and as Division Director and Project Manager for an International Homeland Security and Emergency Management Consulting firm.**