

EMT Training, Recruitment & Retention Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 12th, 2024, via WebEx

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Call to Order- State Rep. Bill Hauter 1:04 p.m.

Tak Force Roll Call: Members Present:

State Rep Bill Hauter, Dr. Matthew Jackson, Dr Eddie Markul -Proxy for KC Booth, Christopher Tennyson, Dr Ameera Haamid -Proxy for Dr. Katie Tataris, Brian Holcomb, IDPH representatives: Bobby Van Bebber, Allison Nickrent, Greg Willis, Leslee Stein-Spencer, Robin Watts

Quorum is established.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - N/A 1st Meeting

Welcome:

- **Introduction of IDPH Staff:**

- Bobby Van Bebber, IDPH Division Chief EMS & Highway Safety
- Leslee Stein Spencer, Senior EMS Advisor
- Robin Watts, Assistant to EMS Division Chief Bobby Van Bebber
- Allison Nickrent, IDPH Division Chief Governmental Affairs.
- Greg Willis, IDPH Legislative Liaison Governmental Affairs

- **Introduction of Task Force members:**

- State Representative Bill Hauter, House District 87 and Emergency Physician and Anesthesiologist at OSF Saint Francis.
- Dr Matthew Jackson, OSF Healthcare Medical Director for EMS and prehospital care.
- Christopher Tennyson. Regional Superintendent of schools for Lee Ogle and Whiteside Counties and Vice President for the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools for Illinois
- Dr Ameera Haamid, alternate EMS Medical Director for Region 11 in Chicago South & Emergency Physician working at University of Chicago (proxy for Dr. Tataris).
- Dr Eddie Markul, Ed Physician & EMS Medical Director Region 11 at Advocate Illinois Masonic Chicago North.
- Brian Holcomb, EMS Director at Wabash General in Wabash County, Illinois & certified community paramedic.

NEW BUSINESS:

Impact of EMT and Paramedic Shortage on EMS and Health Care in Illinois

- Bobby stated he would like to start out with responsibilities of the Task Force overall and discuss ideas or proposals that could be made to improve any issues along with any data that is available regarding the impact of EMT and paramedic shortage in Illinois and how that impacts health care.
- Representative Hauter stated we are all feeling and seeing the issues.
- Dr. Markul mentioned significant delays in the time it takes to transfer patients to a facility and if we're talking about critical care capabilities, it is much worse. Inquiring if Region 11 had any data on it. It would be great if we had data to frame the conversation. Bobby replied he'd be happy to see what he could come up with for the next meeting.
- Representative Hauter mentioned in legislation a few different things and thought there were EMS apprenticeship programs that were already established, and they were trying to establish more of them. Maybe they were talking about pipeline programs. Chris Tennyson mentioned one thing that the State Board of Education has done in the past several years along with regional offices of education: when we identify our career area with the shortage, like for example, we're working on education right now in our area of manufacturing and agriculture, we have partnered with our local Community College here and we now have programs where students start working their junior year on some qualifications and some courses to get them ready for one of these careers. If they all meet the conditions over their junior and senior year, they graduate from high school with a pathway endorsement in that field. It's a leg up on the program.
- Chris also mentioned there's an EMT program. That certainly could be something to look at along creating a career pathway program for EMT's where we can get students interested in high school and get them to start working and as a benefit of completing that and getting things done ahead of time with their program.
- Representative Hauter states it would be like a Co-op program. Classic example is where you get time off from your actual school day and you would go in. He is wondering if he is saying we would like to do that with EMS.

EMS Apprenticeship Programs

- Chris replied, we must look to how to set it up. We are saying that each program is unique. For example, to be a graduate with an educator pathway program, part of that program is that they do spend time working in classrooms for students and doing a couple lesson plans and working with teachers' hand in hand. So, it depends on the career. Doctor Haamid mentioned the Chicago Fire Department also has Chicago Police

and Firefighter Training Academy, working with high school students to make sure they are pipelined and ready to enter the career space. There are also community organizations. There is one that works to boost minorities. They're identified as the Black Fire Brigade. There are a couple of other entities through the US that do similar things working with students. There are a couple to investigate that exist currently. We need to look at what things may work well, and we would benefit from for improvement. I have also put a link in the chat.

- Brian mentioned an occupation class through the high school where anybody that's interested in any health care fields come and spend a couple of weeks in each department to learn how each department works. And we've had pretty good outcome with them joining EMT classes afterwards looking for jobs in the area. Rep. Hauter mentioned there are a lot of barriers. What are the barriers and how can we break those down? Finding mentors or some sort of pipeline or apprentice program, finding a class, and then once they get through, I think the huge barrier is the pay and the reimbursement crisis compensation.
- Representative Hauter mentioned ground ambulance reimbursements and how can we improve on that.

Ground ambulance reimbursement impacts on recruitment and retention of EMTs and Paramedics

- Bobby mentioned recent legislation was passed and did reword medical care or monitored care to include mental health to help improve reimbursement. This does not fall under our division but would like to find someone we could talk to about reimbursement and how it works.
- Dr. Jackson mentioned it's not necessarily a quality of trainings. He believes it's an experience issue. I think we are training people. I think the number of trainings is down, I think the quality of trainings is there, we're just not receiving them into the training pipeline. I think that's part of the issue. There's culture changing as well. I think it's multifactorial.
- Dr. Hamid mentioned the Chicago Fire Department has a course about twice a month, and within the course there's a 20 to 30 minute open round table discussion with Chicago personnel.
- It's particularly about recruitment, retention and some of the things that come out as far as why people leave the workforce, including interpersonal violence, lack of pay, communicable illnesses, taking care of patients and the psychological trauma of being out there in the field. Also, burnout and fatigue from doing back-to-back calls and not having the resources to run them. There is also an overuse of the EMS system by some

patients. We have talked about better or improved opportunities for scholarships. And there are also other nonprofits that send people to school for free. There are also the EMS Corps

Open Discussion

- Rep. Hauter asked Bobby to speak about what is expected at these meetings and the number of meetings we need. We need to start setting some goals.
- Bobby stated we are to meet no less than six times. He would like some action items from the group that he can act on to prepare for the next meeting. He is happy to come up with data.
- Allison mentioned the task force is responsible for drafting and submitting a final report that is technically due by September. 1st, 2024. and theoretically we would want six meetings before then. Of course, with session being done, I think we would miss the deadline before session. But it is of course possible we could work with you and your colleagues to see if we could get that extended in the veto session after we've missed the deadline.
- Rep. Hauter will look at the minutes and some of the notes and comments and put together the next agenda. Looking for a meeting end of June beginning of July. We will have a more detailed and relevant documents and agenda items.
- Rep. Hauter asked if we needed a public comment and how it was advertised. It is put on the Internet for the public to join in.
- Dr. Haamid asked at the next meeting if we could have data related to the workforce trends and the perceived impact on patient care or known impact on patient care in the profession itself and maybe data on the barriers that have been identified through any type of survey data that's already published. Bobby is going to put together a short presentation on that.
- **Action item:** Bobby Van Bebber to provide data related to workforce trends.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

RECORDING LINK:

[EMT TRAINING, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE-20240612 1805-2 - WEBEX](#)

CHAT ATTACHED

FUTURE MEETINGS: 2024

VIA WEBEX-

JULY 11

JULY 18

Motion to adjourn by State Rep. Bill Hauter with motions from Dr. Eddie Markul and Dr. Matthew Jackson.

Adjourned: 2:00pm