



Texas EMS, Trauma & Acute Care Foundation The TETAF UPDATE July 7, 2010

TETAF Initiates Texas Trauma Funding Coalition

In June TETAF released the first in a series of documents relating to supporting trauma funding in Texas. The document gives a quick primer on the Designated Trauma Facility and EMS Account. Stakeholders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the document and the major state funding stream for designated trauma facilities, EMS and RACs and find opportunities to share the information with legislators, local elected and business leaders and the media. Additional documents and action items will follow monthly. Additionally, TETAF will be initiating an **Uncompensated Trauma Payer Mix Survey** soon to help better document the need for trauma funds to the Texas Legislature.

The **Texas Trauma Funding Coalition** will hold its inaugural conference call July 22 at 2 p.m. At the August 17th TETAF General Meeting a portion of the meeting will be devoted to the coalition. Make plans to participate in this important movement. As part of the coalition TETAF will be expanding its website to a devoted coalition link.

Recent and Upcoming Hearings

The Texas Legislature only meets every other year for 140 days and therefore a very robust interim study period has become essential to the legislative process. TETAF continues to be asked to provide information to legislative bodies during the interim. On June 8th the **Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee** met in Amarillo to hear testimony on the committee's charge #3. The charge states:

Recommend improvements to homeland security, including the state's infrastructure and housing recovery operations. Make recommendations for incorporating best practices and addressing any gaps in existing procedures, and disaster preparation and response, including volunteer involvement, evacuation and sheltering and trauma care, and communications interoperability.

Doug Havron, TETAF Disaster Planning Division Chair and Administrative Director for Hospital Preparedness for SETRAC, provided expert testimony at the hearing along with several other state and local officials. On behalf of TETAF Doug offered the committee three recommendations:

1. **Patient and Evacuee Tracking** - Electronic scanning or swiping of driver's licenses is the fastest method to gather individual demographic during a mass casualty incident or

evacuation, however use of this technology is currently prohibited. TETAF asked for the committee's assistance in the formalization of patient and evacuee tracking methods that are efficient, integrated, and accessible by the healthcare provider community.

2. **Evacuation Assistance** - Registration of individuals on the Transportation Assistance Registry via 211 has become an effective tool during evacuation. Registration of the vulnerable populations should be protected from discovery by individuals without such a need to know. TETAF requested that language be added to exempt these registries from open record discovery. Currently almost anyone can access this information. The most vulnerable populations, especially in crisis situations, should be protected.
3. **Trauma Funding** – TETAF asked the committee to consider additional funding to RACs, EMS and designated trauma facilities, the mission critical organizations responsible for the on-going quality improvements to trauma, stroke, cardiac, and disaster related healthcare systems.

The committee specifically recognized Doug for his “impressive testimony”. **TETAF greatly appreciates Doug and SETRAC devoting their expertise and time to this important hearing.**

The Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee has scheduled a hearing August 3rd to review the Driver Responsibility Program and has requested that TETAF provide testimony at this hearing. The hearing will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the North Texas Tollway Authority Headquarters in Plano.

The **House Appropriations Health and Human Services Subcommittee** met June 14 & 15 to discuss possible health and human services budget cuts. Officials from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission explained to the panel that Medicaid is driven by caseload. With the Texas economy lagging caseload growth is growing at an 11 percent to 14 percent increase, the challenge of cost containment has only gotten more difficult in the past year. The state has relied to a great degree on provider rate cuts, which accounted for about a third of the general revenue savings culled as a result of the recent 5 percent budget cuts at HHS. As the state will face an unprecedented \$11-18 billion budget deficit, further cuts will have to be made and will affect many areas of health delivery in Texas.

The **House Public Safety Committee** requested TETAF to provide a briefing on the Texas Trauma System. Dinah Welsh visited with committee staff providing a thorough picture of the system. The committee has dealt directly with the Driver Responsibility Program and has heard countless “horror stories” of the program but knew very little about the positive impact DRP has had on the Texas Trauma System. TETAF has been asked to provide expert testimony at an upcoming hearing of the House Public Safety Committee where they will discuss possible improvements to the Driver Responsibility Program.

On June 29 TETAF offered testimony at the **Texas Health and Human Services Commission Rate Hearing on Texas Ambulance Provider Medicaid rate cuts**. Proposed is a 1% cut to Medicaid rates for these providers. While Texas ambulance providers have received two successive rate increases by the Texas legislature in recent legislative sessions, rates are still

Texas EMS, Trauma & Acute Care Foundation
3400 Enfield Road Austin, Texas 78703
Telephone: 512/524-2892 Fax: 830/298-3536 Website: www.tetaf.org

below the cost of providing services and current Medicare rates. The **Texas Ambulance Association** corralled close to a dozen members to testify against the cut as many providers were being activated to respond to Hurricane Alex needs. The cut is planned to be implemented in September 2010 unless there is a reversal.

TETAF Stroke Activities

With TETAF being granted DSHS approval to provide Support Stroke, Level III designation surveys several TETAF initiatives have begun to take flight. The Stroke Surveyor application will be placed on the TETAF website and distributed beginning August 1, 2010. The Stroke Surveyor's Course will be held November 4-5, 2010 at Seton Highland Lakes. Once surveyors are credentialed actual surveys to interested and eligible facilities should begin in early 2011.

Following the widely lauded Stroke Support Symposium held last year in Waco, a Stroke Support Symposium will be held September 17, 2010, at Dell Children's Hospital in Austin from 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Presentations at the Symposium will include:

- How to Become a Texas Stroke Support Center
- Essential Criteria: Texas Stroke Support Center
- Data Collection & Process Improvement
- Pre-hospital Assessment
- Emergency Department Nursing Assessment & Management
- Application Completion

Registration fees prior to September 1 for TETAF Subscribers will be \$125 per participant and \$175 for non-TETAF Subscribers. All fees increase by \$50 after September 1. Make plans to attend. Registration materials will be available and posted soon.

TETAF Meets with DSHS Staff

TETAF staff held their monthly meeting with DSHS staff June 24. TETAF discussed with DSHS the **stroke and trauma survey processes**. Plans are underway for the stroke survey process (see above) and TETAF and DSHS continue to seek ways to improve the highly acclaimed trauma survey process. A TETAF/DSHS **meeting with current TETAF credentialed trauma surveyors** is scheduled for August 19, 2010, in Austin. TETAF sought and has received **DSHS approval for TETAF to proceed with a trauma rule revision workgroup**. TETAF specifically asked DSHS if they perceived a possible conflict for TETAF to form the workgroup. DSHS responded that a TETAF workgroup was no different than many other workgroups formed by other constituent groups.

DSHS has requested for TETAF to provide a **crosswalk/gap analysis of the Joint Commission stroke center certification criteria versus DNV criteria**. TETAF also learned from DSHS that the possibility of **Level III trauma designation for pediatric facilities** appears to be promising but not confirmed.

Monthly meetings with TETAF/DSHS staff are scheduled.

TETAF Activities

The **Trauma Center Survey** process continues to be a strong area of service by TETAF to the entire Texas Trauma System. Through June 2010, 66 Level IV surveys are in process or

complete and 18 Level III surveys are in process or complete. TETAF greatly appreciates the work of its dedicated surveyors.

The TETAF Executive Board is pleased to announce the interim appointment of **Lori Vinson** as **TETAF Pediatric Division Chair**. Lori will begin her service on the TETAF Board immediately. The Pediatric Division will have the opportunity to nominate a permanent chair of the division at the August 17th Pediatric Division meeting in Austin.

A workgroup of the RAC Division met June 23 and has provided updates to the **TETAF Bylaws**. The revisions should be reviewed by all and with the inclusion of potential further edits final approval of the Bylaws is planned for August.

The inaugural meeting of the **TETAF Trauma Rule Revision Workgroup** met July 1, 2010. The workgroup will meet again August 5 in Austin. This meeting is open to all interested parties.

TETAF, in partnership with the **American Heart Association**, has initiated a **Texas Cardiac Resource Map/Project**. This will require input from all 22 RACs in helping to determine cardiac resources throughout the State of Texas. Your RAC's assistance with this project is greatly appreciated. Questions may be directed to Brenda.

TETAF has recently participated in the **Medication Cleanout** public service campaign in the Dallas Fort Worth area. The campaign provides a method for residents of Texas to properly dispose of unused, expired, or no longer needed medications to prevent poisonings, abuse, misuse and environmental contamination. Poisonings are currently second only to motor vehicle accidents as a cause of unintentional injury death. Additionally, 68.9% of emergency department visits for unintentional pediatric poisonings are due to medication overdoses; that's twice the amount of poisonings that occur from exposure to household products.

TETAF has also been requested to participate in the **Keep Houston SAFE Red Light Camera initiative**. Keep Houston SAFE is a public safety campaign involving a collaborative partnership between citizens, businesses, and the Houston Police Department. The main focus of the campaign is crime prevention and the implementation of proactive enforcement efforts and measures aimed at the reduction of criminal incidents, rather than responding to them after they have occurred. Simply, the goal of the Keep Houston SAFE campaign is to prevent crime. http://www.houstontx.gov/police/keep_houston_safe/index.htm# The TETAF Board must determine TETAF's involvement in the Keep Houston SAFE campaign and welcomes opportunities to participate in similar campaigns that may be active in other communities. Keeping red light cameras reduces injuries and deaths and the fines assessed by red light runners has the benefit of increasing funding for trauma.

Most of the eight divisions of TETAF have begun holding monthly conference call meetings and developing their **S.M.A.R.T. Goals**. Division chairs will be reporting on the work of their committees. TETAF staff is exploring opportunities to further use web based technology for various TETAF meetings. TETAF staff believes that this will provide an opportunity to involve

a greater number of interested parties in initiatives and educational opportunities provided by TETAF.

The TETAF Board will hold a **strategic planning meeting** August 4, 2010, at the Austin Resource Center. The TETAF Board will develop targeted budget strategies that align with the mission of TETAF and TETAF division goals. To this end, **Subscription Fees for 2011** will begin their development. **No fee increase is anticipated** for 2011 as TETAF continues to seek and has begun to realize new outside funding. TETAF is actively seeking grant writers with an interest in potentially contracting with TETAF to write and help secure possible grants for the organization.

TETAF's new logo and website will be revealed soon! Stay tuned.

For what should be a "*slow*" summer month, there remains a lot going on. Please let us know how we can provide the most value to you and your organizations.

Respectfully submitted,

Dinah Welsh
dwelsh@tetaf.org

Brenda Putz
bputz@tetaf.org