



Florida Fire Chiefs' Association
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SECTION
MEETING MINUTES – June 3, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: 3:00 pm

EMS SECTION COMMITTEE:

NAME AND TITLE	PRESENT: (IN-PERSON)	PRESENT: (VIRTUAL)	ABSENT:
Bill McGrath Co-Chair (Southeast)	X		
Tim Roche Secretary	X		
Greg Dewitt Board Liaison	X		

PRESENTATION:

PRESENTER:	None
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ZOLL Medical – Ventilation in Cardiac Arrest

- Presentation focused on current evidence regarding ventilation practices during adult cardiac arrest.
- Discussion emphasized that ventilation quality may be as important as airway selection.
- Research presented demonstrated that both hypo- and hyperventilation negatively affect patient outcomes by reducing coronary perfusion and cardiac output.
- Current evidence suggests EMS providers frequently hyperventilate cardiac arrest patients despite training.
- New real-time ventilation feedback technology has demonstrated significant improvements in ventilation rate and tidal volume compliance with American Heart Association guidelines.
- Ongoing clinical research is expected to better define optimal ventilation targets and improve future resuscitation guidelines.

RightSite Health – Alternative Care Pathways

- RightSite presented its physician-led telehealth program designed to divert appropriate low-acuity 9-1-1 patients from emergency departments.
- Patients are connected with an emergency medicine physician within seconds through telehealth.
- Care navigators coordinate follow-up services including transportation, prescriptions, primary care appointments, specialty referrals, and social service resources.
- Program data indicates approximately 84% of eligible patients are successfully managed without emergency department transport.
- Agencies discussed operational considerations, response times, reimbursement, patient satisfaction, and integration into EMS systems.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES:

PRESENTER: Chief DeWitt

- Update provided on recent firefighter cancer legislation.
- Legislative priorities that were not adopted included:
 - Expansion of covered cancers.
 - Portability of cancer benefits between employers after five years of service.
 - Elimination of the requirement to remain on employer-sponsored health insurance following retirement.
- The legislation that passed provides the \$75,000 death benefit if a retired or terminated firefighter dies within one year from cancer or cancer-related treatment.
- Discussion continued regarding the proposed homestead exemption constitutional amendment.
 - Concerns were expressed regarding potential reductions in local government revenue and impacts on fire rescue funding.
 - Members were encouraged to educate local communities on the potential fiscal impacts.
- FFCA continues advocating on behalf of fire and EMS interests during the legislative process.
 - Positive update provided regarding improvements to Florida Retirement System benefits included in the Governor's budget.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH:

PRESENTER: Tom Dib

- EMS personnel license renewal process has been updated.
- Agencies should:
 - Obtain or verify their bulk payer code.
 - Build renewal rosters prior to the renewal period.
 - Submit renewal payments beginning in August.
- Individual EMTs and Paramedics must now complete their own electronic renewal application and attestations through the Department of Health licensing portal.
- Department representatives will provide webinars, Teams demonstrations, and ongoing technical assistance before the renewal period opens.
- Agencies were encouraged to begin preparing now to avoid delays.



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STATE MEDICAL DIRECTOR:

PRESENTER:	DR. JAMESON
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- Update provided regarding statewide whole blood initiatives.
- Although the originally proposed legislative funding was not approved, the Department of Health is pursuing alternative funding through Public Health Infrastructure Grants.
- Estimated funding between \$1 million and \$5 million may become available to assist agencies in starting or expanding whole blood programs.
- Agencies were advised that funding mechanisms may utilize contracts rather than traditional grant processes.

- Update also provided regarding implementation of new DEA registration requirements.
 - Agencies were encouraged to evaluate transitioning DEA registrations to agency ownership where appropriate.
 - Benefits include simplified controlled substance ordering, improved compliance, and operational efficiencies.

GRANTS:

PRESENTER:	None
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- Potential funding opportunities remain available to expand prehospital whole blood programs.
- Healthcare coalitions remain valuable partners for Stop the Bleed initiatives and related grant opportunities.



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TRAINING:

PRESENTER: CHIEF MCGRATH

- Regional EMS educational opportunities continue to be posted through the FFCA website.
- USF continues offering online educational programs, including the "Mindset Project."
- The program provides approximately 2½ hours of online content addressing resilience, trauma exposure, clinician education, and mental wellness.
- Program is recommended for EMS students, probationary personnel, and new hires as part of onboarding.

- Pediatric stroke recognition continues to receive statewide attention.
 - Agencies without pediatric stroke destination protocols were encouraged to develop local transport plans with their medical directors.

- Multiple disaster response training opportunities continue statewide in preparation for upcoming special events and infectious disease response.

PEER AND MENTAL HEALTH:

PRESENTER: CHIEF MCGRATH

- Continued promotion of the USF Mindset Project as an evidence-based mental health education resource.
- Program is designed to improve awareness of occupational stress and trauma before personnel experience significant cumulative exposure.

- Section leadership encouraged agencies to incorporate the training into recruit academies and probationary employee orientation.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT:

PRESENTER: CHIEF JULIE DOWNEY



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- Disaster Response Committee reviewed development of a combined START/JumpSTART triage algorithm.
- Members discussed similarities between START, SALT, and RPM triage methodologies while emphasizing the importance of consistent statewide application.

- Continued promotion of Stop the Bleed education and public hemorrhage control initiatives.
- Florida Infectious Disease Transport Network (FIDTN) provided updates regarding:
 - Ebola preparedness.
 - Hantavirus monitoring.
 - Highly infectious disease transport capabilities.
 - Ongoing statewide exercises and train-the-trainer initiatives.

- Preparations continue for the FIFA World Cup with coordination among DOH, ESF-8, ESF-4/9, and State Emergency Operations Center.
- Multiple disaster response plans have been updated including:
 - Recovery Branch Field Operations Guide.
 - START/JumpSTART materials.
 - Ambulance Deployment Plan.
 - State Regional Response structure.
 - Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (NFPA 3000) benchmarks.

- Florida Forest Service provided wildfire outlook:
 - Significant increase in wildfire activity compared to 2024.
 - Current drought conditions continue to elevate wildfire risk.
 - Agencies were encouraged to utilize Florida Forest Service and weather monitoring resources for situational awareness.

NEW BUSINESS:

PRESENTER:

CHIEF MCGRATH

- Members were encouraged to update FFCA membership information to ensure accurate distribution lists and communications.



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- Website resources continue to expand with meeting minutes, training opportunities, committee contacts, and best practice documents.
- Discussion included:
 - Upcoming pediatric stroke protocol development.
 - Continued Medical Care Committee initiatives.
 - Recruitment of additional committee participation following leadership retirements.
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EVENTS:

- 1) Leadership Conference – July 10-14, 2026 in Punta Gorda in SunSeeker Resort Punta Gorda
- 2) Health and Safety Conference – October 19-21, 2026 in the Margaritaville Hotel in Orlando
- 3) Florida Fire and EMS Conference – January 4-8, 2027
- 4) **ALS Competition** –
 - a. Preliminary Monday, January 4, 2027
 - b. Finals Tuesday, January 5, 2027
- 5) ESLI Leadership classes - <https://www.ffca.org/emergency-services-leadership-institute>

ADJOURNMENT: 4:40