

OEMSCA NEWSLETTER

OEMSCA advocates for pro-EMS policies on Capitol Hill

Several Ohio EMS Chiefs Association members attended a legislative event in Arlington, VA this month, successfully advocating for policies that could positively affect third-service EMS agencies.

On April 10, a group of chiefs representing OEMSCA attended EMS on the Hill Day, as part of a larger group of more than 250 chiefs hosted by the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians.

OEMSCA President Vince Gildone said the organization's delegation visited the legislative offices of Representative Bob Gibbs, Representative David Joyce and Senator Rob Portman. Others from the larger NAEMT group visited Senator Mitch McConnell and Senator Rand Paul.

"I believe our efforts and the efforts of the other chiefs collectively were successful," Gildone said. "It's extremely important that our legislators understand when legislation does not spell out that it covers EMS, many of us are left out of the benefits of the legislation."

Gildone said he believes legislators and their staffs were attentive and understanding of the needs of third-service EMS agencies.

"Ohio was well represented," he said. "We were ready, willing and able to answer questions and enable our legislators to understand the importance of issues we were placing before them."

Eric Burgess, Eric Burns and Todd Shroyer joined Gildone for the event. Burns said his experience gave him insight into how much work it takes to get pro-EMS legislation approved. "It amazed me how many still have no clue what EMS is and what we do," he said. "I have become more and more aware that we, as chiefs, need to start being more proactive, not only on the local level of government, but on the national level."

Burns said he hopes OEMSCA can take the lead and set up an ongoing dialog between state and federal legislators and EMS leaders. He said the state EMS board does a good job, but



NAEMT immediate past president Dennis Rowe (center) poses for a photo with OEMSCA leadership

he said more can be done to ensure legislation that helps EMS professionals is approved.

"I think we need to get into our legislator's offices and have one-on-one sit downs so that they understand where EMS and Ohio stand," he said. "I will continue to strive and work diligently to help the national level EMS group fight for legislation to help EMS in Ohio and across the nation."

Gildone said the group had five main goals advocating for legislation or changes to assist EMS agencies across the state and across the country.

The first on the list was seeking \$30 million of funding for a bill that passed in December known as the siren law. The law supports and improves rural EMS, but when it was approved, it did not have funding attached.

The second priority was House Resolution 1309, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Healthcare and Social Service Workers Act.

"We requested that legislation address the epidemic of violence against healthcare and social service workers," Gildone said.

The proposal would require OSHA to create a federal workplace violence prevention standard which mandates employers to develop comprehensive, workplace specific plans to prevent violence before it happens.

The next priority was House Resolution 1646, the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome, or Hero Act. The legislation, if approved, would provide resources to increase recognition and treatment of post-traumatic stress (PTS) for EMS practitioners and fire fighters, provide grants to establish and assist peer-to-peer support programs and collect data on EMS practitioner and firefighter suicides.

Gildone said OEMSCA is asking that the bill be expanded to ensure that all 911 medical responders are covered under its provisions.

Another priority advocated for by delegates earlier this month was House Resolution 1241, the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act, known as VRIPA. This legislation would give financial incentive for retention and recruitment of much-needed volunteer workforces.

Lastly, Gildone said the group asked legislators to prioritize solving the drug shortage problem.

Anyone interested in continuing to advocate for some of the important causes to third-service EMS agencies, can visit this legislative tool on the NAEMT website: <http://www.naemt.org/advocacy/online-legislative-service/>. A list of key legislative issues are listed on the website.

"We must efficiently become EMS rock stars"

I have an advantage many others in EMS leadership do not have: my emergency medical services career started in late 1972 at the local volunteer fire and EMS station in my hometown. Many years ago, on the west coast, a survey was done to see what people expected from their emergency medical services and the three most important things on people's minds at that time were: comes quickly, looks professional and is nice to me.

I think our leadership embraced the three most important things on people's minds many years ago, but today, we need to add trust to that list. Our patients need to be able to trust that we will deliver the most up-to-date patient care, using the most modern equipment, and the best possible trained and educated paramedics and EMTs. (An EMS educator once told me there is a huge difference between training and education. She put it to me this way, "Would you want your child to come home from school and tell you they had sex training or sex education?") We must do all of this while arriving

quickly, looking good and being nice.

Trust should be at the heart of every EMS service. The communities that we serve must trust us as well as our patients must trust us. Much of this is accomplished by making the patient our first and foremost consideration on every ambulance trip. Many of the following things are done every day in our organizations but do the people we serve and the community leaders we work for know that we are doing them? We must demonstrate in our communities, constant improvement, performance assessments and an ongoing willingness to consider and act upon patient feedback.

Our organizations need to demonstrate strong business ethics as well as strong patient care ethics. We must always be patient advocates as well as develop methods to deliver and meet the performance standards of today while looking forward to future needs and requirements. In today's world, in order to survive, we must efficiently become emergency medical services rock stars.



OEMSCA President Vince Gildone

Yes, we must do all these things while responding quickly, looking good and being nice!

Zealously supporting Ohio's third-service EMS agencies and chief officers,
Vincent T. Gildone, OEMSCA president

OEMSCA NEWSLETTER

Hocking County EMS is always ready for unique challenges

In a county where millions of tourists visit annually, Hocking County EMS personnel must be highly adaptable, proficiently trained and always prepared to meet the challenges of providing exceptional medical services across more than 400 miles of coverage area.

HCEMS Chief Scoot Brooker has been with the department since May of 1993 and was named chief in August 2011. The agency has 28 full-time paramedics and 32 part-time employees, and it completed 4,228 runs in 2018.

Brooker said the department works hard to be prepared and be adaptable to any sort of challenge. This unpredictability is Brooker's favorite part of the job, but it also can be the most difficult part. "There is always something different," he said. "Situations and EMS calls are never the same. The most difficult thing is being able to adapt to the challenges that are presented to you."

Brooker said his department must be able to meet all the demands of any EMS department, but the unique geography and high levels of tourism in Hocking County present other challenges to his personnel.

The department has four Advanced Life Support crews per shift, with two stationed in Logan, one in Laurelville and one in Carbon Hill. One of the four ambulances is unique because it is equipped with rescue tools used to perform auto extrication and rescue operations. The four squads must handle calls across 424 miles of coverage area.

HCEMS also has other specialty units such as the Rope Rescue Team and Tactical Medics. The rope team is necessary because the county boasts nearly 4.3 million tourists annually.

"The major draw to the county is what is known as the Hocking Hills," he said. "The Hocking Hills region is an area for the outdoor enthusiasts and adventure seekers along miles of hiking trails, waterfalls, prehistoric caves and spectacular views from the tops of cliffs. This can create a challenge for EMS and rescue personnel when responding to emergencies. HCEMS has numerous members that are trained in rope rescue and are part of a County Wide Rope Rescue Team with members of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Watercraft. Brooker also said tactical medics



Hocking County EMS Chief Scott Brooker works on rope repelling training at Ash Cave.

are specially-trained paramedics who serve as support during SWAT operations.

"These specially trained paramedics have successfully completed rigorous training and continue to train to provide the highest quality medical care under difficult conditions," he said.

Training is a top priority for the department.

"With the addition of a new building, the Mark J. Potter Training Facility, HCEMS has greatly expanded its training division," he said. "Under the direction of Training Coordinator, Jeremy Young HCEMS offers not only a multitude of in-house training but also training to providers not employed by HCEMS."

Brooker also said technology plays an important role in keeping his personnel on the top of their game.

"Active 911 was a huge step forward for Hocking County," he said. "Active911 broadcasts all calls for service across a secure text messaging platform to all responders in the county. With Hocking County being very rural, often in the midst of a large-scale event, responders are needed to respond from an off-duty status. Active911 allows for all responders on-duty and off-duty to stay informed on calls for service happening in the county and respond accordingly."

Brooker said HCEMS joined the Ohio EMS Chiefs Association to show solidarity and cohesiveness with other third-service EMS agencies.

"Many third-service agencies feel as if they are irrelevant and on an island. As you watch the news you always hear about "police and fire" and EMS traditionally

goes unrecognized as most assume that EMS is attached to Fire Departments. EMS serves an important role within the community. Many legislative initiatives and state regulations are developed and implemented based on the assumption that EMS and Fire operate as one," he said. "That is just not the case."

Brooker said it's important for third-service EMS agencies to stick together.

"If the third-services join forces, the voice becomes louder and we will no longer be overlooked," he said.

HCEMS also is working hard on several outreach programs such as the Saving A Life Is Shocking Simple Campaign.

The campaign has a three-fold mission, train citizens of Hocking County in hands-only CPR and the proper use of an AED, make AEDs more accessible within the community and save lives.

"This has been a very successful program and through donations and fundraising efforts HCEMS has been able to place more than 17 AEDs out into the community," Brooker said.

Another successful campaign has been the Stop The Bleed Program.

"The 'Stop the Bleed' campaign was initiated by a federal inter-agency workgroup convened by the National Security Council Staff, The White House. The purpose of the campaign is to build national resilience by better preparing the public to save lives by raising awareness of basic actions to stop life-threatening bleeding following everyday emergencies and man-made and natural disasters," Brooker said.

Compiled by

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If you have questions or suggestions for future publications, please contact me

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