



Annual Report

2014-15 Grant Period

This report is to provide Regional providers and stakeholders, governmental officials within the member counties, and the PA Department of Health with an overview of the accomplishments achieved during the 2014-15 grant year.

Seven Mountains EMS Council is one of fourteen (14) such organizations which maintain grants with the PA Department of Health to: assist the department (lead agency) in carrying out the provisions of Act 37 (EMS Systems Act). Figure 1 shows the current regional council service areas throughout the Commonwealth:

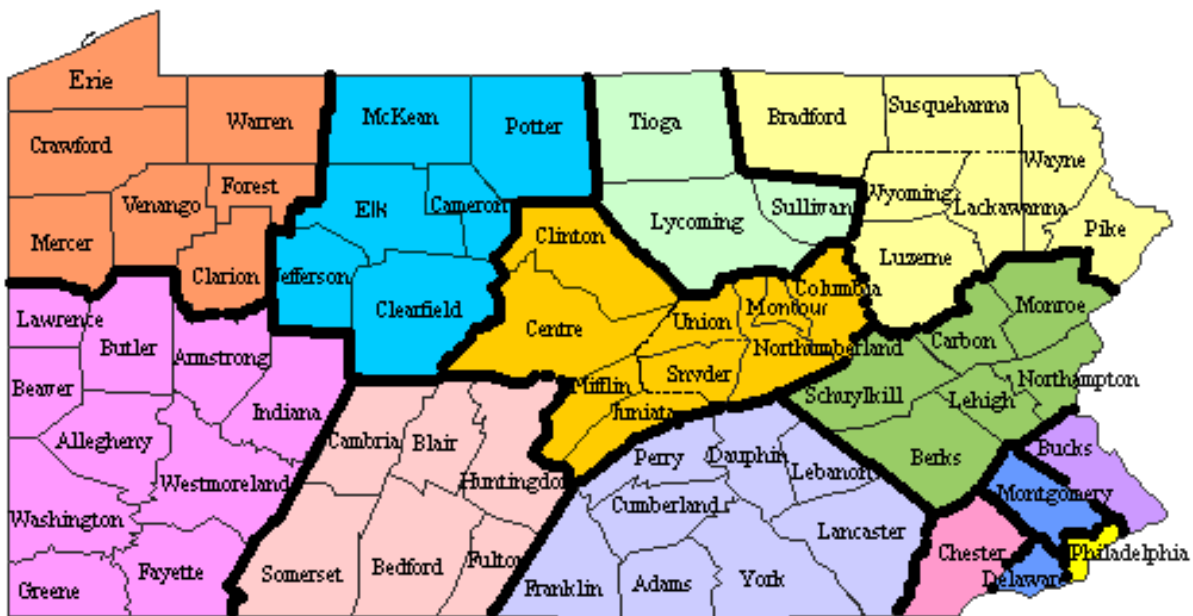


Figure 1

Seven Mountains EMS Council assists the Department (through the Bureau of EMS) with EMS agency licensure & inspection, provider training & certification, receiving facility & training institute accreditation, data collection, continuous quality improvement initiatives, complaint investigations, and EMS preparedness along with system maintenance & development issues throughout our nine counties. With two locations – Bellefonte (Centre County) and Selinsgrove (Snyder County) – and a staff of eight – seven full time employees and a part-time, independently contracted medical director – Council serves as the information sharing conduit between Regional EMS agencies/providers and the Bureau of EMS.

ORGANIZATION

Not to diminish any of the other accomplishments; but I consider the successful merger of Seven Mountains EMS Council with Susquehanna EHS Council as one of our most beneficial accomplishments for the Regional EMS system. When Director Gibbons left the Susquehanna EHS Council to become Director of the Bureau of EMS, the Boards of Seven Mountains EMS and Susquehanna EHS were asked to form a working group to investigate ways the councils could cooperate more fully, up to and including a merger if the group felt that was in the best interest of the regional EMS system. The Boards formed a joint committee whose work culminated into the July 1, 2014 merging of the two organizations to operate as Seven Mountains EMS Council. The final step was in October 2014 when Seven Mountains EMS Council officially revised our by-laws to allow for additional delegates and conducted the first joint Board and officer elections. Though there have been a few bumps in the road, the actual merger and integration of regional procedures/ processes has gone very smoothly. I consider this significant because the Boards have voluntarily cooperated in decreasing “overhead” which in-turn increased “direct support” that is benefitting the regional EMS system as a whole. For example, ‘provider equipment’ line item has increased from \$45,712 in fiscal year 2012-13 to \$99,973 in 2014-15¹ without a decrease in customer service or staff accessibility². Other examples of increased direct support are found throughout this report.

Part of the merger process, which we have been refining throughout the grant period, is the integration of operational procedures and guidelines throughout the Region. We get a lot of “that’s not the way it’s been done” (on both sides of the Region) and explain why the change was put into effect. Along with this is the re-alignment of staff duties to allow for ‘position specialties’; make sure the work plan is accomplished; and not over work any person or persons. Still a work in progress; but, going extremely well, due in large part to the cooperative attitude of the regional agencies and providers.

¹Not to infer that the merger was the ONLY factor in this change of budget allocations.

²Director’s opinion based on direct observation and polling within the Region. I anticipate distributing a questionnaire throughout the Region to verify this finding during 2014-15.

CERTIFICATION

- Coordinated efforts throughout the Region in assisting BEMS with the roll-out of the EMSVO process and the VFIS training materials for EMSVO con-ed.
- Council registered 3 EMR and 13 EMT classes within the Region with 43 and 170 students respectively.
- Regional Education Coordinator conducted 6 final practical examinations on behalf of the BEMS using the National Registry exam framework. Five Basic Vehicle Rescue written exams were also conducted & forwarded to EMS of NorthEastern PA for processing.
- Council processed 622 certification re-registrations for providers using the continuing education process. Twenty three new provider certifications were issued.
- Regional Education Coordinator has been working with BEMS staff on the 'piloting' of the new registry system.
- Council is entering the testing phase of a process to allow the paperwork, information flow output of a practical exam to be handled electronically. We have already instituted the process of providing exam candidates with their examination results through electronic media which we feel is both cost & time saving.

LICENSURE

- Worked with Regional agencies in instituting the "Transfer of Care" documentation.
- 30 EMS agency inspections were conducted throughout the Region in grant cycle 2014-15. Fifteen were agency re-licensure with the other 15 being QRS initial licensure (12 going from recognitions; 3 new agencies) As required, regional EMS agencies received reminder letters ninety, sixty, and thirty days prior to expiration as needed. NOTE: Not all agency inspections were within the Region as our Licensure Coordinator & other staff have been assisting other regions as requested/needed.
- 16 new vehicles (including one air) were inspected along with two temporary license documents being issued.
- Four Medical Command facilities were inspected and licensed – three were re-licensure, one was an initial licensure.
- A little over 71,000 PCRs were validated and forwarded to the Bureau from within the Region during this period. A large majority of our services are in compliance with PCR submission requirements.
- Council continues to provide access to EMS Charts, for PCR processing, to any EMS agency within the Region who wishes to participate. This expenditure takes a large amount of our available 'Provider Equipment' funds; but, it is a well-received program in that everyone has the opportunity to participate and it helps in the gathering and processing of monthly PCR data to the Bureau.

- Council is currently working on a program to provide one I-Pad to each transporting EMS agency within the Region who wishes to participate. This is to assist with PCR completion, access to reference material such as the EMS protocols or Emergency Response Guidebook; and to allow for completion of any agency specific forms which the service wishes to make available – such as maintenance logs, stocking/supply sheets, etc. I-Pads have been purchased and the program should be operational by October 2015.
- Council continues to provide – using Prehospital Provider funds – CO detectors for a first-in bag on all regional, licensed EMS vehicles. We have received reports of incidents where the detector alerted incoming providers to potentially hazardous environments.

PREPAREDNESS

- Took possession of additional preparedness assets including a light-tower, generator, cargo trailer, and power washer.
- Assisted in planning & preparations for large scale events including the Centre County Grange Fair, Bloomsburg Fair, and Creation Fest
- Continued the rollout of Knowledge Center (KC) throughout the region and its application within the patient tracking program.
- Assisted the Department in preparing for and coordinated information flow concerning Ebola response throughout the Region.
- Instituted the inclusion of a “preparedness” day to our pre-conference offerings.
- Participated in several exercises including SouthCentral Mountains Task Force, University Park Airport, and Allenwood Federal Correctional Facility (not all inclusive).
- Participated in the response to the Bradford PA waterline break by delivering unmet needs requested items (sinks) to the Bradford hospital.
- Assisted the Bureau in conducting CDP ‘PPE for biological incident’ training program at CPI in Centre County.

CISM

- Maintained operations of the Seven Mountains/Susquehanna Valley CISM team, in cooperation with LTS EMS Council.
- Cooperated with Southern Alleghenies EMS Council & the Blair County Behavioral Health Dept. in offering a CISM conference at the Blair County Conference Center.
- CISM team conducted a minimum of nineteen (19) defusings/debriefings within this grant cycle. Most were conducted within our nine county region; but, several were conducted for and to assist other regions in providing this service.

RECRUITMENT/RETENTION/RECOGNITION

- Instituted a recognition program for individuals who participate in a regional SCA save and/or Prehospital delivery. Recognition pins & certificates are awarded.
- Re-instituted our regional provider recognition awards program which is conducted in conjunction with the annual spring conference.
- Continued providing EMS Honor Guard services including PFESI dinner & PSU basketball game. Also supported another region with LODD assistance.
- Encouraged EMS Week proclamation passage by all County and municipal governments throughout the Region. All Counties signed proclamations and Council participated in all but one of the signings.
- Continued the Regional 'Years of Service' recognition program as part of our EMS Week activities. Pins were forward to participating agencies throughout the Region.
- Council is participating in the Centre County Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation being sponsored through Centre LifeLink EMS.
- Participated in the annual 9-1-1 EMS Memorial in Harrisburg.
- Council authorized funding to be used in a recruitment billboard project which will take place during the summer/early fall of 2015. There will be a total of nine billboards – one in each of our counties. Figure 2 is the design being used:



Figure 2³

PUBLIC INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Participated in discussions within Centre County to become involved in the PulsePoint Program – through Physio-Control.
- Maintained an active American Heart Association, Community Training Center to help assure course availability throughout our nine counties. Currently have 138 instructors

³Picture taken of the billboard in Mifflin County along US Rt. 322 just before the Juniata narrows.

who are affiliated with us and have issued approximately 3800 course completion cards during this fiscal year. Both professional rescuer (2002) and community (509 CPR; 1352 First Aid) courses were offered throughout the Region.

- Participated in the annual Centre County Law Enforcement Camp Cadet program by offering Hands-Only CPR training to the cadets.
- Assisted BEMS with the Hands-Only CPR training conducted at the PA Farm Show.
- Attended numerous PI&E events – both Hands-Only CPR & ANDY the Ambulance.
- Maintain current Web page and Facebook identity in a continuing effort to maintain a continual flow of important information.

MISCELANIOUS

- Reinstated publishing of a quarterly newsletter which is widely distributed throughout the Region. Contains information on changes that services need to be aware of as well as problem areas we see or are receiving questions concerning.
- Working with the Regional Medical Director and Communications Committee, we reviewed and revised, as needed, the regional EMD cards to bring them up-to-date and consistent throughout the new nine county region. Regional cards are expected to be utilized by eight of the nine member counties upon their receipt.
- Assisted the Regional Task Forces by:
 - SouthCentral Mountains – assisting in the distribution of active shooter training CDs to all regional EMS agencies.
 - NorthCentral – assisted in their Triage exercise conducted during EMS Week.
 - SouthCentral Mountains/NorthCentral/Eastern – maintain active participation in the joint “Keystone IMT”. Participated in several exercises.
- Upon recognition of a regional need, coordinated the scheduling of several Infection Control Officer training programs to be conducted within the Region. The initial Basic Infection Control Officer course will be held in August 2015 by Katherine West.
- Worked with BEMS in promoting the Naloxone program throughout the Region and shared information with regional agencies concerning the free Naloxone available.
- Participated with the State Fire Commissioner’s office by attending the “Taking care of our Own” training program offered in Harrisburg. Council continues to be interested and involved in LODD issue and preparation.
- Staff continue to assist the Department, through the Bureau, in the receipt, submission, and subsequent investigation of EMS related complaints received. We have been working diligently in clearing up as many, in as expeditious of a manner, as possible.

FINANCES⁴

- Council Income includes:
 - \$742,226 in support through the PA Department of Health grant. \$855,126 of that is EMSOF funds with the remainder (\$112,900) being federal grant funding for preparedness.
 - \$2,868 support donation from member County
 - \$22,355 from the annual spring conference
 - \$1,702 from sale of surplus equipment⁵
 - \$28,453 from AHA CTC activities
 - \$4049 from other Council activities
 - \$516 in interest income⁵

- Council Expenses include:
 - \$372,961 in staff salaries & fringe
 - \$23,272 for Spring Conference
 - \$25,088 for AHA CTC & other Non-DOH projects
 - \$112,900 for Emergency Preparedness Activities
 - \$101,765 for Direct support/supplies to regional agencies
 - \$11,842 for subcontracted services
 - \$15,093 in travel costs subsequent to council operations
 - \$125,821 in operational costs for Council

⁴Council financial records for grant cycle 2014-15 are currently unaudited; therefore changes may occur due to auditor findings and/or recommendations and this is not to be considered a financial report of Council operations for the 2014-15 grant.

⁵We received BEMS approval to expend this income on EMS provider recognition items/supplies in support of our Honor Guard/LODD activities