



NASEMSO Government Information Committee

MEETING RECORD

May 16, 2017
3:00 PM EDT

Attending - Paul Patrick (UT) Chair, Keith Wages (GA), Carolina Roberts-Santana (RI), Carol Mays (MD), Juliet Altenburg (PA), Gary Brown (VA), Jim DeTienne (MT), Rich Wisnewski (SC), Dr. Ritu Sahni (NAEMSP), Mary Hedges (NASEMSO), Kathy Robinson (NASEMSO)

Call to Order / Call Roll / Approve Agenda – Paul Patrick, Chair, called the meeting order at 3:04 PM EDT.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes – The March 21st meeting record was approved.

HR 304, Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2017/ S 916 (*see [NASEMSO GIC website](#)*) - Dr. Ritu Sahni reported that S 916, the Senate version of the bill, was introduced last month. It went straight to mark up in Committee and is now waiting for action on the Senate floor. They do not feel it needs a strong advocacy effort and hope it will be hot-lined and passed on the Senate floor. The Senate version has a few key differences from the House bill, which NAEMSP likes. There was a 3rd section added to the bill relating to treatment of opioid addiction, which the DEA requested. The bill sponsors have asked supporters to lay low; if they have technical questions, they will ask for further information. Keith Wages added that NASEMSO reaffirmed its support of the bill.

Ritu also reported that NAEMSP has been discussing a bill relating to medical direction. NAEMT has asked them to hold off while they are working on SEMSA.

Strengthen EMS Act (SEMSA) – Mary Hedges reported that NAEMT has been working on a broad EMS bill (to replace the old Field EMS bill but without the controversial pieces) known as the Supporting EMS Act (SEMSA). Congressman Larry Bucshon, R-IN (an emergency physician who previously sponsored the Field EMS bill) will be the chief author. They are still working on the bill draft and are willing to discuss it with our committee once it is completed.

Federal Funding Affecting State EMS Offices (FY 2107)

- **Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant** – Mary Hedges reported that the Preventive Health and Health Services block grant was level funded through the end of the fiscal year (October 1, 2017).
- **HRSA's EMSC Funding** – Carolina Roberts-Santana said the EMSC Program Managers had a teleconference with T. Morrison-Quinata last week and were informed that they will receive their full funding for the remainder of the fiscal year. When awarded their

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grants in March, they received significant cuts since the budget had not been passed by Congress. Now that it passed, the funding amounts withheld will be restored for the grant awarded in March. The EMSC grant period is March 1 to February 28.

Air Ambulance Balance Billing Update – Kathy Robinson said that Consumer Reports published an informative article on the issue of air ambulance balance billing. See [Air Ambulances: Taking Patients for a Ride](#) (Consumer Reports, May 2017). The Consumers Union also issued its health policy paper on the topic in March 2017 [Up in the Air: Inadequate Regulation for Emergency Air Ambulance Transportation](#).

Senator Jon Tester (MT) introduced [S. 471 – Isla Rose Life Flight Act](#) on Feb. 28, 2017. The bill would authorize states to regulate air medical relating to network participation, reimbursement and balance billing. [H.R. 817: End Surprise Billing Act of 2017](#) was introduced by Rep. Lloyd Doggett (TX) with 34 Democratic co-sponsors on Feb. 2, 2017. It would end practices of balanced billing of health benefits for patients from out-of-network providers.

In the meantime, SOAR has contracted with a public relations firm in Washington, DC, making the argument that air ambulances are under-funded. AAMS is working with SOAR. AAMS recently commissioned a cost study. Links to this information are on the Air Medical Committee website at <https://www.nasemso.org/Projects/AirMedical/>

State Legislation Roundtable

- Paul Patrick reported that the Utah Legislature passed a bill to study air medical billing. Dr. Peter Taillac will be chairing the group. Paul suggested that Peter discuss this at a future meeting.
- REPLICIA – Keith Wages reported that Georgia was the 10th state to pass the REPLICIA bill, thus the threshold for the compact has been reached. The first meeting of the compact states will be in October immediately preceding the Fall Meeting in Oklahoma City. Alabama is likely to be the 11th state. Keith indicated the IAFF continues to oppose it in states where they have a strong base.
- Georgia’s Cardiac Care bill – Keith said Georgia enacted cardiac care legislation which mirrors their stroke and trauma systems in many ways. The plan is to designate cardiac care centers (3 levels) and establish a cardiac arrest registry. An office of cardiac care will be established within the state EMS office. Dr. Sahni said it would be nice to catalogue the various states systems (which have Stroke systems, trauma, etc.). Juliet Altenburg said the Trauma Managers Council completed a Trauma Monograph which contains this information. Carole Mays said she has a table which contains this information and will send it to Mary for distribution.

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- **S.967 — 115th Congress (2017-2018) Medicare Ambulance Access, Fraud Prevention, and Reform Act of 2017** was introduced on April 27. The bill's main purpose is to make permanent the urban and rural Medicare add-ons and super-rural bonus payments that have been temporarily added in past years but expire on December 31, 2017. It is the American Ambulance Association's bill. Keith said NASEMSO has not yet taken a position on the bill but previously supported a white paper on this issue. Paul Patrick asked if the Committee should make a recommendation to the Board to support the bill. Ritu Sahni said that NAEMSP has taken a position supporting the bill. Rich Wisnewski moved that the bill be placed on the agenda of the NASEMSO Board Meeting to consider NASEMSO support of S. 967. Ritu Sahni/Carolina Roberts-Santana seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 4:03 PM EDT.

Next Meeting – July 18, 2017

The meeting record was respectfully prepared by NASEMSO Program Manager Mary Hedges.