



**Emergency Medical Services &  
Injury Prevention System Branch**

**State of Hawaii Department of Health  
Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee Meeting**

**MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, April 17, 2024  
TIME: 9:30 A.M.  
PLACE: Leahi Hospital – Trotter Basement. 3675 Kilauea Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96816 <sup>1</sup>  
& Online via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Sean Covant, DO; Peter Di Rocco, MD; Michael Hayashi, MD; Kyle Perry, MD; Michael Lam; Stacey Oho; Cody Bonilla; Maren Anka; Max Matias; Don Aweau (representing Major General Kenneth Hara, Adjutant General for the State of Hawaii, Department of Defense); John (Jack) Lewin, MD; Pradip Pant (representing Edwin Sniffen, Director of the State Department of Transportation)

Committee Member Absent: Jacob Minei; Darren Rosario

Staff Present: Brandon Loi

Guests Present: Marilyn Matsunaga; Cecily Wang; Harold Dias

I. **0:37 Call to Order/Roll Call** – Meeting was called to order by Debbie Kim Morikawa, DOH Deputy Director and Interim EMSAC Chair at 9:38 A.M.

II. **8:04 Approval of EMSAC Meeting Minutes from 11/20/23 and 01/24/24**

Motion to approve new November and January Meeting Minutes was made by Michael Hayashi, MD. Second by Kyle Perry, MD with voting members unanimously supporting.

III. **Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee (EMSAC) Members**

A. **8:43 Vacant EMSAC Member Positions** – Patrick Loeffler, MD has applied for a physician position and Harold Dias has applied for the Kauai Consumer position. Marilyn Matsunaga is currently undergoing confirmation processes and Cecily Wang will be reapplying.

B. **10:40 Nomination and Selection of EMSAC Chair** – Deferred until such time additional vacancies are filled.

C. **11:10 EMSAC members' term limits** – Per the Hawaii Revised Statutes, state board and commission members have a term limit of two consecutive terms for a total of eight consecutive years. The EMSAC members' term limits were discussed noting that some members have now reached their term limit while others may holdover for an additional year and/or reapply for the position they fill on EMSAC. Peter Di Rocco, MD will reach the term limit this June. Michael Hayashi, MD's term can hold over until June 2025. There is a vacancy for the Maui consumer position. Maren Anka is resigning from the allied health position for Maui and plans to reapply for the Maui MICT position. Kauai's paramedic position is currently filled by Cody Bonilla who will reach the term limit this June. Recommendations are sought for upcoming replacements for the Kauai paramedic position from Cody and Tito Villanueva. Additionally, Michael Hayashi, MD mentions he can look for a potential pediatrician candidate.

D. **18:30 Reminder for Sunshine Law Trainings and Quiz** – All members were reminded to complete their Sunshine Law training available on the Hawaii State Ethics Commission website.

<https://oip.hawaii.gov/sunshine-law-basic-training-videos-and-materials/>

#### IV. **Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch (EMSIPSB)**

- A. **18:55 Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), Section 11-72-31.5 (treat/no treat transport, and community paramedic visits)** – This proposed HAR change is to address fees emerged as a significant issue, with past rejections attributed to this concern. The 2019 drafted rules were revisited, with a focus on modifying them or adjusting fees.

Members were updated about Hawaii's alternative destination sites noting that only the Kapolei site had been officially approved by the state. Efforts are underway to prepare new sites pending authorization. The interim rules are expired and action regarding the new HAR is required.

Motion to approve new HAR 11-72-31.5 made by Michael Hayashi, MD. Second by Kyle Perry, MD with voting members unanimously supporting.

- B. **29:00 Patient Transfer Wait Times Discussion** – An issue highlighted in the media and legislative discussions revolves around ambulances being held up at emergency rooms due to overcrowding, preventing patient offloading and admission. Earlier in the year, Honolulu EMS reported concerns when wait times reach 2-3 hours. Statewide, 89% of ambulance turnaround times are under 30 minutes. Challenges in placement and treatment are exacerbated by the behavioral and homeless population as well as staffing shortages. Ron Kuroda, MD and Jack Lewin, MD underscores the importance of addressing the impact of the baby boomer generation on hospital admissions through the provision of high-quality home and community-based services.

#### C. **Legislative Update**

1. **57:30 HCR172 SD1 (Requesting the Director of Health to Convene a working group to address issues relating to patient transfer and ambulance services and evaluate potential solutions.)** – HCR172 SD1 proposes the formation of a working group to address ambulance ground transfer times. The DOH testified in support of the resolution but asked that the responsibility be shifted to the EMSAC for convening the working group. Members discussed options for fulfilling the intent of the resolution

with suggestions made that a community-based group may be a good fit.

Motion for a community group to convene a working group to address the issues contained in the resolution by Jack Lewin, MD. Second by Kyle Perry, MD with voting members unanimously supporting.

2. **1:14:04 SB3126 SD1 HD1 (Relating to emergency aeromedical services.)** – SB3126 SD1 HD1 allocates \$29 million in funding for a statewide air ambulance program. The bill is going to Conference Committee.
3. **1:16:04 HB1772 HD1 SD1 (Relating to fall prevention.)** – HB1772 HD1 SD1 appropriates \$100,000 for the Department of Health’s Senior Fall Prevention Campaign.

**D. 1:18:25 EMS for Children (EMSC): Informational Briefing on the National Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Assessment** – The annual pediatric readiness assessment for EMS will launch on May 1st. EMS agencies are advised to anticipate an email from the EMSC program Coordinator.

**V. 1:18:42 Establish a Permitted Interaction Group to make findings and recommendations on proposed Section 11-72-31.5, HAR regarding Fees for Treat / No Treat** – As members agreed to pass the rules (see above), the need for a permitted interaction group was vacated.

**VI. 1:19:16 Establish a Permitted Interaction Group to investigate and make findings and recommendations on Ambulance to ER Wait Times** – EMSAC is encouraging formation of a community working group – see above.

**VII. 1:19:35 Establish a Permitted Interaction Group to investigate, identify, and report on County Specific Issues.** – Members discussed creating a committee focused on county specific EMS issues. A list of proposed committee members and specific issues will be compiled and sent to Brandon Loi for further discussion at an upcoming EMSAC meeting.

**VIII. Department / Committee Updates**

**A. 1:27:00 Air Medical Committee Report** – Terrance Jones, MD provided a report for the Aeromedical Committee, noting that they haven't convened recently, with

the Maui Rotor particularly busy. Despite efforts to assess emergency transfer availability for Molokai and Lanai, they faced limitations due to busy schedules. Unfavorable weather conditions also impacted flight operations over the weekend, leading to a few flight cancellations. However, they managed to decompress some of the Hawaii Life Flight when they were not available. For example, there was a medical transport via the Coast Guard from Maui to Straub using a C-130 due to equipment unavailability.

B. EMS Medical Directors and County Provider Reports

1. **1:28:35 Hawaii** – Terrance Jones, MD addressed workforce challenges within their aeromedical division, primarily stemming from a shortage of pilots.
  2. **1:28:57 Kauai** – Eric Vaughan, MD reported that Kauai aeromedical is facing challenges related to transportation from Kauai as well.
  3. **1:29:11 Maui** – Elizabeth Char, MD reported the primary challenge for Maui County involves their rotor helicopters due to maintenance issues, resulting in both helicopters being out of service simultaneously.
  4. **1:30:17 Oahu** – Ron Kuroda, MD reported on the impact of the closure of Wahiawa General Hospital ED on Oahu. The closure has led to an average of 10 ambulances redirected per day to alternative facilities. Additionally analyzing ambulance data spanning from the end of March to April, the overall EMS call rate appears unchanged, but the transport rate is down.
  5. **1:33:41 Hawaii Life Flight** – Hawaii Life Flight is expanding its fleet with the addition of another aircraft, bringing the total to 10. Additionally, most of their aircraft will be equipped with the new G600 glass cockpit, enhancing their capabilities. Pilot training for the new cockpit is currently underway to ensure seamless integration and operation.
- IX. **1:35:24 Next Meeting** – The next EMSAC meeting is set for Wednesday, July 17, 2024, 9:30 A.M. at a location to be determined.
- X. **1:35:32 Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned 11:13 A.M.