



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

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

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, October 16, 2024
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
PLACE: DOH Conference Room at Kinau Hale 1250 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu, HI 96813 & Online via Zoom

Recording Link: N/A

Committee Members Present: Patrick Loeffler, MD; Thinh Nguyen, MD; Cecilia Wang, MD; Michael Lam; Maren Anka; Marilyn Matsunaga; Darren Rosario; Harold Dias, Max Matias; John (Jack) Lewin, MD; Edwin Sniffen rep. Pradip Pant; and Kyle Perry, MD

Committee Member Absent: Stephan Logan rep. Don Aweau; Anne Young, MD

Staff Present: Robert Lau; Kristy Luke; Andrew Yonemura; Alika Ke-Paloma; Toni Naone; Debbie Kim Morikawa

Guests Present: Aaron Mitchel; Anthony Young; Audrey Johnson; Cody Bonilla; Danny Kao; Dory Christian; Dwayne K. Lopes; Elizabeth Char, MD; Garret Hino Jr; Jason Lopez; Jeff Zuckernick; Corey Chock; Mona Arcinas; M. Morua; Meiko Arai; Michael Brook; Stacey Oho; Tito Villanueva; Vaughan; William "Speedy" Bailey; Tiffany Allen; and Zoom Members

I. **9:09 AM Call to Order/Roll Call (0:00:00)** - called to order by Marilyn Matsunaga, EMSAC Chair.

II. **9:12 AM Approval of 04/17/24 and 07/17/24 Meeting Minutes (VOTING ITEM)** –

Chair Matsunaga indicated that approval of the meeting minutes would be done separately by date because there are current EMSAC members who were not members in April. She asked for a motion to approve the April 17, 2024, minutes. The Motion to approve the April meeting minutes was made by Thinh Nguyen, MD, and seconded by Cecilia Wang, MD. The motion to approve passed with Marilyn Matsunaga abstaining. Chair Matsunaga then asked for a motion to approve the July 17, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion to approve the July meeting minutes was made by Thinh Nguyen, MD, and seconded by Cecilia Wang, MD. The motion to approve passed with Patrick Loeffler abstaining.

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

A. **9:13 AM Sunshine Laws – all current and incoming board members should take the following courses and subsequent quizzes**– Marilyn Matsunaga reminded members to take the courses and the links for the courses are located on the agenda.

B. **9:13 Recommendations of Individuals for Vacant EMSAC Member Positions** – Debbie Kim Morikawa, DOH Deputy Director for the Health Resources Administration, reported that several individuals have applied for the vacant positions and are currently awaiting the Governor’s appointments. The vacant positions include: Consumer (Maui), Allied Health Professions (Honolulu and Maui), and MICT/EMT (Kauai). Committee members are encouraged to submit any recommendations to Andrew Yonemura (andrew.yonemura@doh.hawaii.gov) or Alika Ke-Paloma (alika.ke-paloma@doh.hawaii.gov). A reminder will be distributed shortly. Cody Bonilla recommended Michael Taboniar and Sam Evans for the Kauai MICT positions. Member suggestions will be forwarded to the Governor’s Boards and Commissions Office.

IV. **Old Business**

A. 9:14 Adoption of Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), Section 11-72-31.5 (treat/no transport, and community paramedic visits) – Debbie Kim

Morikawa indicated that this matter will be placed on hold until a new Branch Chief for the DOH's Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch is hired.

B. 9:17 Update on status of wait times for patients transferred from ambulance to emergency rooms– Korey Chock, Assistant Chief of

Professional Standards, with the Honolulu Emergency Services Department, emphasized that the average wait time for patient transfers is between 20 to 30 minutes, although longer wait times are occasionally observed. From the EMS perspective, the primary reason cited is that multiple ambulances often arrive at the same location simultaneously. Jack Lewin, MD from the State Health Planning and Development Agency commented about workforce issues. Danny Kao from AMR operations noted improvements in the situation, aligning with Assistant Chief Chock's observations. Kyle Perry, MD, from the Queen's Health System Emergency Department, addressed the issues related to space constraints and the simultaneous arrival of multiple ambulances, clarifying that there are no staffing shortages and that patient distributions are appropriate. Michael Lam from the Hawaii Fire Department on the Big Island, representing Chief Chris Honda of the Big Island HFD, reported an increase in admissions but indicated that there had been no corresponding rise in wait times.

C. 9:20 County specific EMS issues permitted interaction group – Maren

Anka, EMSAC Maui County Mobile Intensive Care Technician (Paramedic) / Emergency Medical Technician committee member, shared that they held a meeting. They talked about coverage issues with other islands except for Maui and highlighted that transfer ambulances seem increasingly taxed and communication systems need attention, noting that Kauai has upgraded, while Maui is still pending. Maren talked about the need for resources to accommodate bariatric/larger patients, which are currently available only on Oahu. She also talked about, standardizing protocols for Interfacility Transfers (IFTs) with Big Island State Medical Director Terrance, Jones, MD,

to ensure proper documentation. Maren mentioned a need for both air and ground bariatric transport support, because IFT patients require additional resources due to a lack of equipment and additional staff support.

Debbie Kim Morikawa asked that the PIG present a report or recommendations that can then be voted on at the next meeting. Maren reported recommendations verbally, so action could be taken during the next meeting. She mentioned better documentation, updated Physician Certification Statement (PCS) for all facilities, and additional funding to address air and ground bariatric issues.

Cody Bonilla corrected Maren's earlier comment that Kauai radios have been updated. He shared that they have not yet been upgraded.

Maren mentioned that the PIG is missing Kauai MICT representation and Debbie Kim Morikawa stated that only EMSAC members can be on the PIG and must be limited to the members that were named when the PIG was established.

V. New Business

A. 9:35 Marburg Virus in Rwanda and High Consequence Pathogen

Preparedness Presentation, Disease Outbreak and Control Division (DOCD), State Department of Health (DOH) – Garret Hino Jr., PharmD, BCIDP, from the Disease Outbreak and Control Division (DOCD) of the Department of Health, presented on the Marburg Virus outbreak in Rwanda. He outlined the virus's history, transmission, and the increased risk to healthcare staff, particularly those with unprotected exposure. The 2024 Marburg Outbreak in Rwanda, as of October 15th has 62 confirmed cases and 15th deaths. He stated there are no suspected or confirmed cases in the United States and the CDC and Hawaii DOH assess the current risk level for the general public as low, as it relates to the Marburg Virus Outbreak in Rwanda. A copy of his PowerPoint presentation along with the Hawaii State Department of Health's media release about it are added to the agency reports on the EMSAC website.

B. 09:58 Overview of the current structure of the Paramedic training program and update on students currently enrolled – Stacey Oho, Assistant Professor

of Emergency Medical Services, from the Kapiolani Community College (KCC) reported that the current KCC MICT program is an Asynchronous Hybrid format, featuring online lessons supplemented by one or two in-person lab sessions and clinical experiences starting in the second week of the fall semester. Internships commence in the spring semester. Previously a two-year, 2,200-hour program, Kapiolani Community College has streamlined it to a one-year program due to increased call volumes, resource limitations, and the need to backfill 20 positions. The program now comprises 1,600 hours, with the reduction supplemented by videos. The pandemic accelerated the transition to online learning, enabling a statewide curriculum that aligns timelines for Maui, Hilo, and Oahu, although Kauai still lacks certain training resources and must travel to Oahu or Maui for certain training components.

In response to Elizabeth “Libby” Char, MD’s inquiry about the impact of changing the hours required for the program, Stacey noted that the program's national registry pass rate remains around 98%, ensuring quality. Feedback is gathered through a questionnaire sent by the program director. Currently, KCC has 21 students enrolled: 12 from Oahu, 5 from Maui, and 4 from the Big Island. KCC conducts national skill registry testing, which is integrated into the program.

C. 10:11 Use of the Paramedic Stipend Fund to address EMS workforce shortage – Debbie Kim Morikawa addressed the Paramedic Stipend Fund, originally established to support Kauai and Maui in covering travel and related expenses, while also aiming to mitigate workforce shortages. She inquired specifically about the paramedic workforce situation in Maui and Kauai.

Speedy Bailey, Regional Director, AMR Hawaii, commented that the stipend program has helped alleviate shortages in those areas, though an overall paramedic shortage persists that may require additional strategies. Maren Anka, a stipend recipient, noted its significant assistance during her training.

Debbie clarified that to avoid the appearance of supporting a for-profit entity, one direction she would like to pursue is to modify the contract. The modification would require private contractors to provide the additional funds for stipends, making them responsible for supporting training costs. However, she emphasized that these expenses (training cost) would be reimbursable, through the state to

encourage continuing education and career advancement, changing it from an up-front payment to a reimbursement payment. The discussion of this topic will be deferred until the next meeting.

- D. 10:25 Procedures for activation of the Maui Air Ambulance for interfacility transfers** – Elizabeth Char, MD, Maui Medical Director for Department of Health, presented on behalf of Big Island Medical Director for Department of Health, Terrance Jones, MD, detailing the operations of the Maui Medevac Rotor Ambulance. This resource serves as a 911 asset specifically for Maui County, including Lanai and Molokai, and can be activated from the field.

When a physician determines that a patient requires care at a different location, they will contact Life Flight to obtain an Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA). If Life Flight is unavailable and specific criteria are met, the physician may reach out to the Physicians Exchange, which connects them to the State Medical Director to assess the appropriateness of utilizing the Maui rotor. If deemed appropriate, Maui PD dispatch will then activate the rotor for the case.

Elizabeth Char, MD also noted that the contract governing these operations is set to change in January of next year, which will include enhancements such as certified flight paramedics and certified flight nurses.

- E. 10:29 Recommendations for agency report submissions** – Debbie Kim Morikawa inquired about the type of information EMSAC members would like included in meeting reports. Thinh Nguyen, MD emphasized the importance of reporting interagency collaborations and community benefits. Topics discussed included turnover rates, emergency room wait times, and bariatric transport requests. Agencies requested to submit reports include air services, anyone that responds to 911, Federal Fire, City and Counties.

Members are encouraged to submit suggestions or comments regarding the report format to Andrew Yonemura (andrew.yonemura@doh.hawaii.gov) and Alika Ke-Paloma (alika.ke-paloma@doh.hawaii.gov).

Mark Leggett, Hawaii Life Flight Director of Service and Delivery commented that data is essential for reporting, noting that they provide information to the Branch for report generation. Hawaii Life Flight Quarterly report includes operations,

training, community outreach, and volume. They have not been reporting on transport declines.

As a consumer, Marilyn Matsunaga mentioned she is interested in knowing the performance of the system – and the point at which each piece of the system connects with each other – and how the system performs over time. This will let us look at system efficiencies and resource needs.

Mark Leggett, from Hawaii Life Flight, said he is open to sharing the data. He also stated that what needs to be identified for the reports is what pertinent data is needed and can be transparent for agencies to share.

VI. 10:39 Department Reports

A. 10:39 EMSIPSB Report

- 1) 10:39 ESO Data Tools** – Kristy Luke from the Emergency Medical Services Injury Prevention System Branch (EMIPSB) at the Department of Health highlighted the history of the EMS system as beginning with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA) and concerns about traffic accidents.

Kristy presented an overview of the NHSTA-funded Health Data Exchange (HDE) project, aimed at establishing data flow between EMS, hospital data, and trauma data. She noted that Hawaii agencies transitioned to the new data system called NEMSIS v3.5 in October 2023. Training sessions are coordinated and continuously ongoing for providers. Kristy shared examples of the data visualizations and dashboards, including EMS utilization (call volume by county and month), EMS Unit Average response time by unit and month, and performance improvement measures (time between hospital arrival and first CT scan). She stated that these dashboards can be shared between agencies or facilities which will be a useful feature for county-specific data. Kristy's PowerPoint presentation is attached to these minutes.

- 2) 10:55 Legislative Proposals** – Debbie Kim Morikawa reported that the Molokai air ambulance is included in the legislative proposal. Funding to increase two medical directors' positions from .35 FTE up to .75 FTE.
- 3) 10:56 Status of EMSIPSB Branch Chief Position** – Debbie Kim Morikawa

reported that the Branch Chief position was redescribed and returned to an administrative position, instead of a physician position. As an administrative position it will be supported by the proposed .75 FTE medical directors. The Branch Chief position is open for recruitment.

4) 10:56 Air Medical Transport Report – Deferred. State Medical Director Terrance Jones, MD not present.

5) 10:56 Trauma & Hawaii Trauma Advisory Council – Reports deferred to next meeting.

VII. Agency Report Highlights – No reports given; out of time.

VIII. 10:53 Future Meeting Date – Because the third Wednesday in January is also the Opening Day of the 2025 Legislative Session, members discussed moving the EMSAC meeting to the fourth Wednesday of January. The meeting is tentatively set to be held in the Hawaii State Department of Health’s Kinau Hale conference room.

IX. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 10:56 AM.