

Broward Regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council
December 4, 2025
1:30 p.m.
MINUTES

Call to Order

Dr. Wayne Lee, Vice Chair, called regular meeting to order at 1:35 pm.

Roll Call

Alison Zerbe called roll and quorum established.

Announcements:

Approval of Minutes from August 7, 2025

MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes of August 7, 2025

Motion made by: Chief Julie Downey

Seconded: Dr. Rebecca MacDougall

Motion passed unanimously

Presentation

Alison reported that at the Broward County Commission meeting on November 13th there were items regarding the Broward County COPCN process. Items previously reviewed by the EMS Council that coincide with Presentation 1.to 5.

1. **Proposed Class 7 Ordinance** – Sponsored by Commissioner Steve Geller. It has an ambulance that transport from airport/seaport to a medical facility. Only Class 1 can answer 911 calls. These are patients already admitted to a facility.
2. **Proposed Class 6 Ordinance** – EMS Council, at the last meeting, heard language regarding small business enterprise's ability to have them participate in Broward's COPCN process.
3. **Current Ordinance Hospital Exemption** - This is our current ordinance which says if they are a hospital and they are going between their facilities and not charging the patient they are not required by Broward to go through the COPCN process. They are required to have a State license which requires them to have a COPCN.
4. **Chapter 3½ Ordinance Revision** – Because of the discussion about the COPCN process Commissioner Alexandra Davis decided EMS Council should take a look at the entire Chapter 3½ Ordinance with possible revisions. They want to have EMS Council recommendations on what that would look like.
5. **Needs Determination** – Part of #4. Currently in the ordinance it indicates they do a survey and present those results to the EMS Council and County Commission to determine if there is a need for more COPCN's in Broward County. They did a survey in 2020, and:
 - Current providers have a five-year contract.
 - The plan is to do another survey before five years to determine a need in Broward County by means of the survey process, ambulance population, or ambulance call volume.

Dr. Lee mentioned Broward County meeting that discussed these five items. Commissioner Geller suggested combining all items into one to see if they can come up

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with something that addresses all items.

At that Commission meeting they mentioned EMS Council's expertise and prehospital care. They mentioned that EMS Council should be front and center, but the Commission does not have to follow what EMS Council recommends. The Commission has another meeting December 9th. The Commission adopted Commission's Geller's proposal to put it off (at least until late January) and have a comprehensive study.

Because of the complexity of the Commission proposal, Dr. Lee suggested that they schedule an afternoon workshop (early January) to address these items. Prep what are the questions they have in front of them, what they know about, what they should answer, and come up with some solid recommendations to present to the Commission.

Public Speakers:

Charlie Maymon, MCT Express

This is probably the most comprehensive thing that the EMS Council has to look at. Creating a Class 6 small business enterprise and Class 7 air ambulance.

The hospital's side is problematic because in 1983 there was a revision to address the hospitals, At that time they didn't need a COPCN. Addressing these items could potentially put 20 additional BLS ambulances on the road. With Class 6, Class 7, and the hospitals. He estimates between 20-25 vehicles.

Today, in Broward County the private sector is extremely stable. It's taken many years to get there. The public sector does a phenomenal job between city and county entities, and the private sector does a great job on the interfacility, certain hospitals, and all healthcare entities in Broward County that utilize Broward's services. He said they have a great County Commission, although, Commissioner has a hard time grasping how the private sector *integrates* with public safety in Broward County. They must keep *private sector healthy* and available to work when needed. Keep public and private sector integrated.

Services in the public and private sector don't come together every day. When there's a hurricane that's when it happens. He said to focus on that when going through it.

Drew Tyler, CEO of HCA Florida Hospital

Chapter 3½ revision for COPCN process directly affects the private ambulance companies operating in Broward County and the hospitals that rely on them. *It is important that healthcare seeks to obtain a COPCN in Broward under the existing language of Chapter 3½ including the long-standing hospital exemptions. He supports preserving this provision,* Not only because it benefits one system, because it maintains an essential operating tool available to all hospitals in Broward today. It ensures safety and timely patient movement. HCA would operate under the current framework and operate in full compliance under Chapter 3½ and COPCN as written for hospitals, specifically.

They are interested in transporting patients only within HCA's healthcare system. They would not be using this to transport to other healthcare system, or they would not be billing patients or insurers.

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This model is solely to support hospital operations, improve patient flow, and maintain clinical continuity. It's not the intention to compete. This model is not theoretical. HCA operates hospital-based medical programs throughout Florida and throughout the country. There are more than 20 counties in Florida.

COPCN framework more broadly was to balance access, quality, and competition among private ambulance providers. However, when outcomes are examined warning signs are evident. Concerns to get the patient to the hospital timely for care.

Information compiled by the county trauma agency:

- 2021 – 63,000 transports
- 2022 – 75,000 transports
- 2023 – 71,000 transports. During that same period average response time increased from 23 minutes in 2019 to nearly 50 minutes in 2023

DISCUSSION:

Q: What is 20 additional vehicles percentage for Broward County?

A: Alison said there are 122 private ambulances for Broward County, currently.

- Ordinance has definition of ALS and BLS
- Routine transfers are something governmental providers don't do
- Non-emergency medical transport services
- Class 1 – Rescue; 911 providers
- Class 2 – ALS transfers medical facility to another
- Class 3 – BLS transports. Patient that require ambulance go to special rehabilitation centers, special doctors, or dialysis centers.
- Class 4 – Air rescue from BSO
- Class 5 – Specifically requested Cleveland Clinic at the time. They made this specialty transport, but it was never applied for, and they never used Class 5..
- COPCN process purpose is a necessity and maintain quality and integrity of Broward County's medical transportation system.
- The current ordinance says they have an EMS Review Committee, EMS Council and assigned by the ordinance. They review the applications. They have to give a recommendation, as well as, Trauma Services, and the County Administrator or designee give a recommendation to the Commission who ultimately makes the decision to approve or not approve.
- The county has four providers currently with two owned by the same parent company.
- Call volume for last 6 years with 2018 at bottom and 2024 at the top.
- 122 private ambulances, average 70,000 calls per year, 191.7 calls per day, 1.57 calls per ambulance for a 24-hour period.
- Broward's private ambulance providers have a five-year Emergency Backup Agreement and most expire December 2026.
Broward's current providers have a 100% response on time when we asked them. They have responded to such things as mass shooter, building collapse in another county, hurricane evacuation and covered EMS at the shelters., COVID vaccinations and testing, power outages, boat explosion, pandemic

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response. Think of these when moving forward on the items.

Q: Dr. Roach asked what are the arguments for the status quo not to increase coverage? Why is it always a negative rather than positive improvement?.

A: Mark Ellis, National Health Transport, stated private ambulance companies are not tax funded. They are based on profit. With 1.57 calls per ambulance per day, adding 20 more ambulances to Broward County will be less calls per ambulance. With more COPCN's it will cause some companies to fail. He doesn't think the Commission realizes the potential ramifications. Bigger companies have more ambulances in other counties and can be there within an hour.

Dr. Lee said this discussion needs to be in great detail. The companies basic concern is good patient care but there are other considerations such as financial, etc. He thinks they should prep and understand the questions given to them. He hopes this many people will come to an afternoon or morning workshop. They have a lot of data but may need to do another survey which can take several months.

Michael Ruiz, Assistant County Administrator, said the Board of County Commissioners are interested in reviewing the entire Chapter 3½ and get an idea how long it's going to take to get information for the EMS Council and others, process and discuss, and eventually make recommendations. *He recommends watching the Commission meeting (November 13th)*. Commissioner Geller changed some questions after talking to the hospitals. A lot of the items are driven by the business and private sector. They perceive the COCPN process as not an open and closed process. It's far more complex with variable data and to process it. The Commission wants EMS Council/others to engage with all stakeholder: talk to hospitals, ALS, people not in this room, etc. *Most important:*

1. What next step would be.
2. In order of magnitude timeline, you might need to go through the process. If they think it may take three months, they should say, "three months." Commission wants EMS Council to report to them December 9th. with realistic expectations. .
3. Stronger data, updated data, and well-reasoned recommendations from EMS Council. Commission meets on January 22nd. He wants to tell County Attorneys at least three or at least six months and bring them updates as the process goes forward.

Bruce Caruso, retired District Fire Chief, BSO. He also had been EMS Chief in BSO and Dania Beach. He said there was a revision on Chapter 3½ a number of years ago which started with EMS Council. That revision took a lot of time, more than three months. This process will take a lot of time, and we can't set a timeline today. They will set a meeting in January to set a timeline..

Javier Navas, County Attorney, said any workshop would be for the purpose of fact-finding. Adam Katzman, County Attorney, said at a workshop you cannot make recommendations. They need to come back as a board and make recommendations.

Adam Katzman informed that the State removed COPCNs for hospitals. Now hospitals and free-standing ED's can open up anywhere in Broward County. That changes the paradigm for moving patients.

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Adam Katzman said data showed the response times have doubled. They are underutilizing their resources with 1.57 calls per ambulance in a 24-hour period. He asked what was the explanation for that? Dr. Lee said that sounded like fact-finding.

Dr. Lee mentioned that after the workshop the next meeting is in March. Javier said the board could vote on a special meeting in the interim. Chief Vincent Cinque said since they have to gather stakeholders' data do they know what timeframe that will be?

Alison Zerbe replied that the last survey they only received about 26-30 responses, and it took several months to get that many. Dr. MacDougall suggested that they go to the hospitals in person to complete the hospital surveys to receive a good response. (Maybe each take 20 surveys.)

(Motion was amended from MOTION to have a workshop in January) to:

MOTION to have a workshop in January followed up by an emergency EMS Council meeting..

Made by Chief Downey

Seconded by Chief Vince Cinque

Motion passed unanimously

Alison will write a letter to the Commission before December 9th

*****(Workshop date: Thursday, January 15th at 2:00 p.m. to 5 p.m., at the Medical Examiner's Office)*****

Recommendations For Reappointments/Appointments Needed

- Jenna DiPlacido, EMS Dispatch, County or Municipal
- Dr. Paula Thaqi, Physicians: Public Health
- Reverend Forest A. Willis, Jr., Behavior Health Assistance Program
- Sabine Delouche, American Heart Association, Broward County
- Jordan Shaver, Advanced Life Support (ALS), County Provider

MOTION TO APPROVE these appointments and reappointments.

Motion made by: Chief Bruce Caruso

Seconded by Chief Julie Downey

Motion passed unanimously

Alison Zerbe announced that these were recommendations. It will go to County Commissioner for final decision to approve or disapprove.

Committee Reports:

Legislative Session – Alison Zerbe

- Session goes from January 13, 2026, to March 13, 2026. Alison will provide email updates on EMS-related topics.

Executive Committee – Dr. Frederick Keroff

- No Report.

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Public Information, Education – Vacant

- No Report.

EMS Conference – Chief Caruso

- The 2026 theme ‘*Charting the Course for Excellence in EMS*’. Conference will take place at the Convention Center June 1-5, 2026. Three-year contract with the Convention Center. The conference will increase courses and showcase EMS vehicles inside the Convention Center.

Medical Issues – Dr. Randy Katz

- No report

BHAP/Behavior Health Assistance Program – Vacant

- Reverend Forest A Willis, Jr. was recommended by EMS Council for the position of BHAP. He says the first thing is to survey county agencies and to see what they are doing about mental health.

EMS Review – Alison Zerbe

- EMS Council received application for COPCN Class 2 and 3. She will be getting the EMS Review Committee together in January to review that application.

EMS Grant Committee – Alison Zerbe

- She is waiting for final documentation to reimburse the Fire Chiefs’ Association for last year’s conference. They also have the BSO grant. She is not sure what the amount is for 2026 EMS Grant. They changed the process. They will be receiving the funds in quarterly payment instead of annual. She wants to get more information before she gets the Grant Committee together.

Old Business – Dr. Frederick Keroff

- No Report.

New Business – Dr. Frederick Keroff

- No Report.

Good of Order

- Nothing

Meeting Dates

- January 15, 2026, Workshop
- Emergency meeting (TBD)
- March 5, 2026
- June 4, 2026
- September 3, 2026
- December 3, 2026

Adjourned 2:37 p.m.