

Broward Regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council
June 5, 2025
1:30 p.m.
MINUTES

Call to Order

Dr. Frederick Keroff, Chair, called regular meeting to order at 1:33 pm.

Roll Call

Alison Zerbe called roll and quorum established.

Announcements:

Approval of Minutes from March 6, 2025

MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes of March 6, 2025

Motion made by: Chief Julie Downey

Seconded: Dr. Wayne Lee

MOTION passed unanimously

Presentation – Pulsara

Presented by Chief Thomas DiBernardo (flHealth.gov), with Yolanda Falcone (brhpc.org), Nicole Cohen (brhpc.org), and Jorge Ginzo (hsahospitals.com)

Florida has a great relationship with Broward Regional Health Planning Council and Florida has contracted with all the health planning council around to help implement this setup faster.

From December 2024, Pulsara was an idea until where they are today. Pulsara is the State's initiative to provide alternate means of communication to the hospitals. A seamless way to do it with modern technology. The volume of calls going through Broward's central station operator is getting timed out. The Legislature initiated this, and they are funding the basic package for everybody. Everybody can talk to hospitals.

Pulsara has all the elements inside (basic management, EKG, Video telehealth, MIH, community paramedics, etc.) and for rural health this is helping tremendously. It integrates into your system.

Today they have more than 110 EMS Agencies. Emergency Management, EMS Colleges to train, some medical controls, etc. These are contracted and live. Sixteen trauma centers are taking an active role; seven are live. Broward has 14 of 19.

Health planning councils are helping with rural facilities. For disasters Broward uses ReadyOp. ReadyOp is an operational software and Pulsara is a patient-management-tracking software. They work together. Pulsara is very easy to learn. They did 750 patients within four days, and no patients were lost. One of the largest FEMA evacuations, the DOH moved 5200 patients/eight hospitals/nursing homes in two weeks.

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Tracked the vulnerable population through Pulsara to be seen.

The PowerPoint Presentation is available upon request.

Recommendations for Appointment/Reappointment:

- Matt Hughes, Broward Regional Health Planning Council, Inc.
- Stephen Demers, Hospitals: Memorial Healthcare System Administration 8-24-25
- Samantha Whitehorne, Transport: County Fire, 8-24-25
- Shawn Swain – Advanced Life Support (ALS) Private Provider

MOTION TO APPROVE these appointments and reappointments.

Motion made by: Chief Bruce Caruso

Seconded: Candace Pineda

MOTION passed unanimously

Approved Appointment by Commission on January 28, 2025

- Dr. Mario Gomez, MS,DO – Broward County Trauma Advisory Panel
- Chief Samantha Whitehorne – Transport: County Fire

Vacancies:

American Heart Association, Broward County Chapter

American Red Cross, Broward County Chapter

Appointee of Commissioner: Robert McKinzie – Dist. 8

Law Enforcement, Union Representative

Nurses: Emergency Room

APPLICATION FORM FOR BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

<https://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BoardsCommittees.aspx>

Contact/email Alison Zerbe with nominations/recommendations for vacant positions.

Committee Reports:

Legislative Session – Alison Zerbe

The legislative session started March 4, 2025 – May 2, 2025.

- Alison will send updates as items related to EMS come through.

<https://www.legiscan.com/FL>

- **HB 1487 – PASSED**

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/1487/BillText/Filed/PDF>

- **HB 425 – PASSED**

Mandates health insurers and HMO's to reimburse out-of-network ambulance transportation. Caps the amount that people can be charged for those

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transports with those insurances.

- HB 1531 – DID NOT PASS
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/1531/BillText/Filed/PDF>
- HB 35 – DID NOT PASS
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/35/BillText/Filed/PDF>
- SB 332 – DID NOT PASS
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/332/BillText/Filed/PDF>
- HB 1211 - DID NOT PASS
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/1211/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Executive Committee – Dr. Frederick Keroff

- No Report.

Public Information, Education – Currently no Chair

- No Report.

EMS Conference – Chief Cinque for Chief Caruso

- 2025 First There First Care Gathering of Eagles conference, *EMS Soaring to New Heights*, June 9-13, at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.
- Opening is on Tuesday
- Gathering of Eagles will be Thursday and Friday
- Training, presentations, competitions, Fire Chiefs EMS, and State meetings
- Website: FirstThereFirstCare.com
- Year 2026 will be at the Broward County Convention Center

Medical Issues – Dr. Randy Katz

- Dr. Katz had to leave early.

EMS Subcommittee

BHAP/Behavior Health Assistance Program – Chaplain Barnabas Johnson not present

- No Report.

EMS Review – Alison Zerbe

- In December, they had two applications for new COPCNs. Both were recommended not to be approved. One applicant decided to regroup and come back later. The other applicant went to Commission and there was much discussion. Alison sent out the time-stamped Commission meeting.
- At the meeting, the Commission decided to continue the application.
- They also put forth this Motion which passed:
 - *MOTION to DIRECT the County Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance amending Chapter 3½, the Broward County Code of Ordinances pertained to creating a Class 6 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to address application made by certain small businesses. (That was from Commissioner Davis's office).*
- Alison will share the Motion via email. *What was underlined they were adding, and*

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what's stricken through was deleted.

- There will be no more than three Class 6 active certificates in the county at one time. Two to five ambulances and they are prohibited from corresponding to 9-1-1 and other emergency calls. They would be BLS only .
- Dr. Lee showed concern about Commission saying patients can go to the hospital of their choice. Alison said it was two separate things, but the Class 6 is happening first.
- What Dr. Lee mentioned was about the:
 - *MOTION to DIRECT the County Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance requiring emergency medical transport of non-trauma patients to their preferred medical facility with any additional cost at the patient's expense subject to any legally required, medically required and other appropriate exemptions and limitations.*
- This was brought up by Mayor Bogen. This Motion passed.
- The Commission directed the County Attorney to respond to a Motion of Class 6. But they did not reject the applicant from Class 3, at this time.
- Later, the County Attorney will make some improvements to Chapter 3½.
- Javier Navas, County Attorney, said that the County Attorney on May 6, was directed to draft an ordinance. He said they'd like EMS Council input be ultimately the Commission would make those drafting decisions.
- Dr. Frederick Keroff said that EMS Council does want to have a session today to give recommendations before the attorneys construct language so they can contribute to the construction of the language rather than attorneys doing the language and coming back to EMS Council.
- Chief Caruso asks Attorney Navas that basically he's making EMS Council aware of this change to Chapter 3½ because it's been directed by the Commissioners, but EMS Council really doesn't have a say in any of this language if they're not comfortable with it?
- Attorney Navas said he wouldn't agree with the latter. If EMS Council has any input attorneys would like to hear it. For example, if the Commissioner(s) ask why they drafted a certain thing the attorneys could say with support, they brought it up on June 5, EMS Council and it was discussed. It gives the attorneys more support. It's not limited to today's meeting because this is a work in progress. He said the Commissioners do hear EMS Council. There's a Motion to set a public hearing and then there is the public hearing to voice their opinions.
- Dr. Keroff wanted to know the purpose of all this because what business would get involved if there was a \$3 million cap on their gross, and who was going to monitor this over the years? Javier Navas said this was the Commission meeting that came because of Angelet's Class 3 recommendation to deny by EMS Council.
- The Board of County Commissioner passed the Motion to Direct. Commission hasn't decided what they are going to do with Angelet's Class 3, They continued it. They wanted to have this Class 6 option. Consumer Protection would oversee the cap on their gross.
- Dr. Lee said this Class 6 was a way for a smaller business to get into the market. Dr. Lee suggested watching the video.
- At the Commission meeting, they deferred to Sandy Michael McDonald, director of

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economic development and small business, for language that was to be included.

- The attorney, Alex, with Javier Navas, said that EMS Council's practical field knowledge is helpful for the attorneys. They must measure what small business means to the community.
- Dr. MacDougall said you must go to the public meeting. That's where you get your chance to voice your opinion.
- Alison Zerbe said the applicant must fit the criteria for Class 3. Angelet's applications said they did not fit the criteria, and they were missing information. That was part of the reason her application was recommended for denial.
- Dr. Roach said he thinks 100 percent Broward County has a problem with interfacility transfers.
- Alison said the ordinance says you must have Class 1 answer rescue calls. If they are pre-admitted that's different.
- Chief Downey said they reviewed a survey that Alison had asked all the hospitals if they were experiencing any delay.
- Dr. Lee said the counter argument was if they have too many people doing the same thing they can't stay in business.
- Alison mentioned that hospitals sometimes only contract with one provider which could be part of the issue. That ambulance company they contract with may give an extended ETA and they don't call one of the other 3 providers. Instead, the hospital gets impatient and calls 9-1-1. It's the whole system that can be reformed. A nurse may know the patient is getting released at 5 p.m. but waits until 5 p.m. to call the ambulance. Then, everyone's getting the 5 o'clock rush. The whole system needs to work together for maximum efficiency.
- Chief Caruso said that one of the commissioners said the data was old because it was from 2020. Should they do another study? Another commissioner mentioned the increased population. How many private providers are enough.
- Dr. Keroff says asking the hospital if they are satisfied with ambulance company is faulty. Because if they have a problem with the interfacility transfer, they will call EMS who will solve the problems. Until EMS stops coming and they are stuck with the patient, they will say they don't have a problem.
- Dr. Roach witnessed an incident when it was not a hospital emergency, but the doctor called 9-1-1. They may do it for financial benefit to call 9-1-1. This is a real problem. Dr. Keroff said that Class 6 may address some of this, in a small way.
- In the past some EMS providers stopped responding to hospitals on bypass (diversion). Diversion caused other hospitals to become overwhelmed with patients. Alison reminded them of the County's diversion policy. Hospitals are not granted diversion unless it is a severe infrastructure issue, threat to patient or staff, or serious extenuating circumstance.
- Dr. Boyar said with the other ordinance they must rewrite Chapter 3½. There are a million things they can discuss but at the end of the day, attorneys will write it. They don't know what that means to be a small business in the ambulance world. It's arbitrary when talking about a revenue cap, and 2 or 5 ambulances. He said he'd like to read this before they send it out. Alison said she would send it out.

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- Javier Navas said there are two Commission meetings in which the public can argue for it or against it.
- Dr. Boyar asked about timeline. The commission doesn't meet until August 21. Alison said the EMS Council could vote to move the next EMS meeting to August 7.
- Dr. Keroff said that if we moved the meeting up would that give the attorneys enough time to write this motion language, as well as the second motion language of the patient-directed emergent non-trauma transport? Javier Navas said the second motion was assigned to Attorney Adam Katzman. Dr. Keroff and the EMS Council think the second motion could have serious issues and needs feedback from the EMS Council.
- Chief Downey said the Medical Directors say where the patients go, not a Broward County ordinance. Dr. Roach agreed and said that he would never supersede a battalion chief in a jurisdiction.
- Javier will talk to attorney Katzman about the patient-directed non-trauma transports.
- Alison suggested that maybe the Medical Directors should schedule an appointment with their commissioner and educate them about the system before the public hearing. Chief Downey said Fire Chiefs and Medical Directors should go together for that common goal.
- Dr. Keroff said send EMS comments on the first motion to Alison Zerbe by June 30 and Alison will distribute the comments.

MOTION TO MOVE the next EMS Council meeting up to August 7th.

Made by Chief Julie Downey

Seconded by Dr. Wayne Lee

Motion passed unanimously

Grants – Alison Zerbe

- No Report.

Old Business – Dr. Frederick Keroff

- No Report.

New Business – Dr. Frederick Keroff

- No Report.

Good of the Order

Next Meeting Dates

August 7, 2025

December 4, 2025

Adjourned

3:04 p.m.