



First responder class celebrated as success after four decades



From Left to Right: Ken Vannier, Hugh Rath, Oren Hardin, Wayne Olson, Ken Fulmer, Lee Huddleston, Harry Kilmeck and Dr. Joel Johnson at the 40th anniversary of one of the first classes of EMTs in the nation. Photo Courtesy: Kearney Hub.

Forty years later, the idea to try to train first responders in Kearney still seems like a good one.

From the fall of 1969 to the spring of 1970, 20 men signed up to take the emergency medical care course. The class was a test run of sorts, challenging its students with work in the emergency department and in surgery, as well as first responders in their local community. They also attended weekly class sessions led by Drs. Kenneth Kimball and Joel Johnson.

After the class's success in Kearney, it was used as a reference point for similar programs used by the national Emergency Medical Technician certification program. The Kearney trial made the town one of the first nationally to offer a training course for first responders.

"After everyone saw that you could take a guy and turn him into a first responder, it just spread like wildfire," said Johnson, according to the Kearney Hub.

Members from the original class gathered in late May for a lunch and open house in their honor. The event was full of reminiscing of stories about the thousands of calls they took and the countless instances of when they were able to help those in need.

Though students had to take an examination to be certified in 1970, Johnson said there was a greater life lesson to take away from the class experience. "It taught skills, but you have to have the mental capacity to execute those skills under stress," Johnson said. "You couldn't be fearful of being wrong. It was the quality of the individual that could just do it."

Though the backgrounds of each individual in the course varied – greatly, in some instances – Johnson recalled that one common thread was that each person had to balance time between their other jobs, their families and the class.

"It's a whole family commitment to what these guys did then and what they still do today," Johnson said.

CISM conference aims to help personnel – and now their families too



It only takes a quick glance at this year's Nebraska Critical Incident Stress Management conference schedule to see the event is broadening its appeal from years past. The two-day event, to be held in Kearney on Aug. 28 and 29, 2009, will mainly target Nebraska's first responders, including workers in law enforcement, EMS, fire, corrections, dispatching, nursing and mental health.

This year, CISM is widening its spectrum to include significant others and non-members interested in learning more about the organization.

"One of the new things that we want to try this year is that we don't just invite EMS people but also get their spouses involved," said CISM coordinator Debbie Kuhn. "We do family support."

Those in attendance in Kearney will be treated to three speakers, each with unique stories as to how job-related stress entered their lives and how they dealt with it. There will also be a CISM refresher training course and a program update during the weekend.

Friday's session will be highlighted by a quartet of first responders from Parkersburg, Iowa, who were present following a violent tornado disaster in the town in 2008. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 5**

CISM offers insightful class for first responders. See page 4.

Nebraska EMS-C undertaking big initiatives

Written by Thomas Deegan, M.D. Associate Director for Trauma Emergency Department for Omaha Children's Hospital and Medical Center



As part of the goal to improve emergency care of pediatric patients throughout the continuum of emergency medical services, the state of Nebraska EMS-C Grant Committee has been active on several initiatives.

Pediatric Protocols

To provide better access to off-line medical direction, the committee developed and implemented access to hard copies of the Pediatric Protocols on all EMS units. The protocols have been "color-coded" for quick recognition of appropriate interventions based on provider level of training. In addition, the plastic sleeve protector design, will allow for easy replacement of updated protocols. Given the infrequency of seriously ill or injured pediatric patients compared to adults, easy access to the protocols will prove to be a valuable reference for providers in the field. Thus far, the feedback has been extremely positive.

Pediatric Education

After a trial of teaching materials and format from the various courses for pediatric education courses for EMS providers during the "Pediatric Skills" workshop at Fire School in Grand Island this year, the EMS-C Grant Advisory Committee has agreed to utilize the PEPP course for pediatric continuing education for EMS providers. Now in its second edition, the Pediatric Education for Prehospital Professionals (PEPP) Course was developed and endorsed by both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). The course is a comprehensive resource for the pre-hospital emergency care of infants and children designed to give providers the education and skills necessary to better assess and manage the ill or injured pediatric patient. Stay tuned for further details on the roll out of both instructor training and provider training.

Pediatric Equipment for EMS Units

National guidelines have recently been released for equipment that should be available on each EMS unit to provide appropriate care for the pediatric patient. With endorsement by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and the American College of Surgeons (ACS), I anticipate that these guidelines will rapidly become the "Gold Standard" in each state. In an effort to be proactive, we are already exploring the best method to implement these guidelines throughout the state. Fortunately, the equipment list closely matches the equipment already provided in the "Kiwaniis Bag" that was previously developed.

Where Are They Now? EDDY WILLIAMS

Forty years after first getting involved with EMS, Eddy Williams is going back to school.

Williams spent upwards of two decades with EMS at the state level as an emergency medical services (EMS) specialist. After retiring from the full-time job in July 2001, he and his wife Rita moved to Martinez, Calif., to be closer to their grandchildren.

Though far from Nebraska, Williams' desire to help others has stuck with him – so much so that he's planning to attend classes in August to get licensed again as an EMT.

"There's no better feeling than walking away from helping deliver a baby or consoling somebody that needs it," Williams said.

"Saving a life – whether it be through CPR, car wrecks – there's no better feeling in the world than knowing that you and your team members worked together to do the best that you can to make somebody's life more comfortable and to save them if possible.

"Even if it's the littlest thing, to come away knowing that you made a difference in some family's life – the key to that is loving what you're doing."

Williams has been helping others since 1969, when he graduated from high school. He spent time volunteering for numerous rescue squads and EMS organizations and at the state level helped coordinate drills and exercises for medical personnel, among other activities.



As much as anything, he enjoyed listening to residents about how services could improve.

Said Williams: "EMS is my passion. That's me, just pretty simply."

Remembering GREG CHAMBERLAIN

Following 56 years of life – most of them spent serving others – Greg Chamberlain passed away April 20, 2009. An accomplished member of the Fremont Police Department, Chamberlain died in Omaha following a battle with pneumonia. Memorial services were held in Fremont four days later.

Chamberlain was in the original class for the State of Nebraska EMS Instructor training in 1979. He taught throughout the state for the last 25 years and also provided training for fellow police officers in Fremont. As a member of the Nebraska EMS Association, he received numerous awards highlighted by induction into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in 2003. He was employed by Heartland EMS in Fremont for 10 years.

In addition to his work with EMS and the Fremont Police Department, Chamberlain was president of the Dodge County Humane Society and director of security at Midland College for 20 years, among other activities.

Surviving Chamberlain is his wife, Lorrie, who he married in 1997. Also remaining are his two daughters, Ashley Chamberlain-Slegl and Meghan Chamberlain, as well as parents Greg and Betty, three brothers and a sister.



Administration Spotlight



Lei Zhang *Statewide Trauma Registrar*

Though he claims he's still working on his "people skills," Lei Zhang has made plenty of friends since joining EMS in December 2003.

Zhang officially serves as trauma registrar, coordinating and overseeing the gathering and exchange of statistical information between hospitals, EMS personnel and various trauma centers throughout the state.

To Zhang, that means he gets to make other people's jobs more efficient – and more enjoyable.

One of his most satisfying duties has been introducing hospital workers to a system he helped develop that easily transfers information from e-NARSIS (where data is stored by EMS personnel) to the trauma registry. Gone are the days of manually retyping patient observations into a separate database.

"The people are so nice," Zhang said with a laugh. "When

I show the new system, people say 'Oh, I like it.' That's the moment it's worth all the work."

Zhang, a China native, is also wrapping up his career in graduate school at the University of Nebraska, where he's putting the finishing touches on a master's degree in statistics to go with identical honors in meteorology and computer science. He lives in Lincoln with his wife, Yuan Li, and 5-year-old daughter Freya.

Zhang's goal– when he's not taking a fishing break – is to continue moving Nebraska's array of medical entities into compatible databases. That way, the information gathered is more accurate and useful for future use in areas like injury prevention and health programs.

"They're the real users," Zhang said. "If they're happy, I'm happy."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT e-NARSIS

E-NARSIS is a data collection system through which providers document patients' medical conditions and subsequent care procedures at a given time. The software – designed among other things to standardize medical records – updated to version 4.2 this summer.

What has changed with the implementation of version 4.2?

E-NARSIS has added a word-for-word electronic audit, so any changes made to a medical record – as well as what was changed – are made known to the user. Also, a 'Save and complete' option is now available, meaning users can save a page and move on to the next section of the medical record if questions are not applicable to the patient rather than manually cycling through each tab.

How do I use the new system?

As with past versions, e-NARSIS is split into State Bridge and Field Bridge distinctions. The former refers to the portion that only requires Internet access to enter and send encrypted patient data and remains largely the same following an overhaul nearly two years ago. The change to the State Bridge aspect is a flexibility that allows users to personalize settings and defaults when adding information. The Field Bridge component – which allows data to be entered remotely, like via laptops – has undergone a complete rewrite to be faster and more flexible with more options, though it looks the same as past versions.

Why should providers use e-NARSIS?

Unlike paper forms, e-NARSIS forces providers to at least consider the array of important medical questions when filling in patient data. The system can be accessed by providers anywhere, and recent enhancements have made record retrieval easier and faster than ever. Further, e-NARSIS provides a standard by which medical records can be viewed while also providing the flexibility to accurately portray each patient's specific story. The system is funded by the state of Nebraska and free to users.

Who can I contact to get more information about e-NARSIS?

Regional EMS coordinators are available to answer questions, led by Southeast EMS Coordinator Doug Fuller. Reach him at (402) 471-3578 or at doug.fuller@nebraska.gov.

EMS Leadership

Leadership conference to address array of daily challenges



All sorts of issues can arise for organizers within Emergency Medical Services. Volunteers and paid professionals alike will have a chance to talk them out at this year's EMS leadership conference. Held at the Midtown Holiday Inn in Grand Island on Oct. 9 and 10, 2009, the sixth annual event will feature multiple speakers addressing a variety of topics of interest to EMS personnel.

"We've got speakers who will talk to the major concerns of everybody that would be present," said Garry Steele, EMS education and training coordinator. "No matter what level you are, they're going to have a message for you."

Included in the talented six-speaker field is John Becknell, who has been involved in emergency services for more than 30 years, and Jay Fitch, a consultant for emergency services system development and operational leadership. Becknell will address the changing culture of rural emergency services, while he and Fitch will explore current EMS cases brought up by attendees. Other topics touched upon will include drugs and alcohol in the workplace, EMS organizational development and keys to effective legislative advocacy.

The conference will be entering its sixth year. Its goal, as always, is to help people become better managers of resources like time and people.

The cost for the combined two days is \$100 – or \$90 for one day. Classes run 8:30 to 4:30 both days, with an optional networking session from 5-7 on the first night.

Vendors from the Professional Ambulance Association of Nebraska will also be on hand. To inquire about having a booth at the conference, contact Deb Hayes at jdhayes@gpcom.net or Cathy Sigler at hcems.csigler@hamilton.net.

To register for the conference, go to www.cccneb.edu/commed and search "EMS Leadership Conference." Registration will be open by Aug. 17.

Class to offer tools for effective leadership

Being a leader is more than having a title. Even established professionals have plenty to learn when it comes to guiding others in a work environment.

The goal of this year's Nebraska EMS Leadership Program is to provide assistance for current and potential leaders within the organization. The class covers an array of concepts spread out onto four days in a six-week span. Tim Peterson teaches three out of the four days of the training. Tim was employed for several years by a Nebraska Hospital to teach Leadership skills, thus, he has extensive experience in the leadership field. Various other EMS Professionals, including Dean Cole and Diane Hansmeyer, assist in presenting on one of the days of the EMS Leadership Program. The first two sessions are Sept. 19 and 20, 2009, at the Fremont Area Medical Center in Fremont. The final two – which build off the first classes – are Oct. 3 and 31 and each run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The uses for a leadership class are innumerable, said Cole, EMS program administrator. Often times, individuals just need a lesson in simple tasks like handling meetings and conflicts, or to work on listening to others.

"We've found that a lot of people didn't know how to be effective leaders," Cole said. "We've found we need to get a program to just teach the basic skills."

The end result, Cole added, is a better experience for supporting EMS members and volunteers and, consequently, a longer retention rate among those people with the program.

Among other topics, the class will also address how to smooth personality differences between workers, how to foster better communication and ways to better manage meetings. The Sept. 20 session will focus on the larger mission of Nebraska EMS, providing updates on rules and regulations that shape leadership practices. The overall course cost is \$150, which will be reimbursed upon successful completion of the course. The classes also count for a varying number of continuing education hours.

For more information about the class or registering, contact Sharon Steele at sharon.steele@nebraska.gov or Garry Steele at garry.steele@nebraska.gov.

CISM conference boasts list of national speakers, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Saturday will include two national presentations, led off by Clarke and Tracie Paris, who work in law enforcement and nursing, respectively. They strive to bridge the gap between law enforcement officers and the help that their respective agencies provide. The afternoon speaker will be Susan Farren, a former paramedic and comedian who will discuss the experience of nearly losing her husband, a firefighter.

Cost is \$75 for both days, or \$40 for a single day, if one registers before August 14, 2009. For more information, visit www.cism.nebraska.edu or www.hhs.state.ne.us/ems/emscalendar.htm.

'Basic Training' to give crash course in stress management

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Nebraska Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team will have two chances to begin the process this fall.

Nebraska Emergency Medical Services will be offering two different opportunities to attend a two-day "Basic Training" course in 2009, one in Fremont on Sept. 25 and 26, the other in North Platte on Oct. 16 and 17. Eight hours of class time will be conducted each day, thus, the combined 16 hours will focus on preparing first responders on how to deal with the mental and emotional stresses that can arise in the line of duty.

As the CISM program's slogan says, the main goal is to help those who help others.

Within the broader scope of stress management, the class will identify helpful tips for what to do before an incident occurs, during an incident and how to handle small- and large-scale debriefings afterward. Other elements include recognizing the symptoms of stress and the psychology behind a disaster victim's response.

The two-day training costs \$75 per person and gives graduates the opportunity to apply to join the state's CISM team. The Nebraska CISM team assists emergency responders who have experienced unusual work-related stress.

Trainers are Jack Wineman, Jan Fitts and Jon Kayne. For updates on times and location for courses in each town, visit www.cism.nebraska.edu or www.hhs.state.ne.us/ems/emscalendar.htm.



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