

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
of the NEBRASKA
BOARD OF Emergency
Medical Services
Friday, February 6, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, & DECLARATION OF QUORUM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Nebraska Board of Emergency Medical Services was called to order by Dr. James Smith, Board Chairperson, at 10:34 a.m., 2/6/2026, at the NSOB in Lincoln NE 68508. Copies of the agenda were emailed in advance to the Board members, emailed to interested parties, and posted on the Department of Health and Human Services website on 2/05/2026. Smith announced the location of an available copy of the Open Meetings Act within the room.

ROLL CALL

The following board members were present to answer roll call:

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|------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Ryan Batenhorst | • Linda Jensen |
| • Dr. Noah Bernhardson | • Jonathan Kilstrom |
| • Karen Bowlin | • Brent Lottman |
| • Joel Cerny | • Carolyn Petersen-Moore |
| • Dr. Shaila Coffey | • Dr. James Smith |
| • Todd Hovey | • Leslie Vaughn |

The following Board members were absent: Dr. Prince Harrison and Dion Neumiller

The following staff members from the Department and the Attorney General's Office were also present during all or part of the meeting:

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| • Regan Blackwell | • Trevor Klaassen, <i>Investigations</i> |
| • Tonja Bohling | • Evon Koeppen |
| • Christy Duryea | • Diane Schoch |
| • Michelle Eutsler | • Sharon Steele |
| • Teresa Hampton, <i>DHHS Attorney</i> | • Tim Wilson |
| • Darla Hopwood | • Sherri Wren |
| • Milissa Johnson-Wiles, <i>Assistant Attorney General</i> | |

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present, and the meeting convened.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Petersen made the motion, seconded by Bowlin, to adopt the agenda for the 2/6/2026, Board of Emergency Medical Services meeting. Made change to the agenda for open session start time changed from p.m. to a.m. Change was accepted by Petersen and Bowlin. Motion is reflected with this change.

These minutes have been approved by the Board of EMS on May 8, 2026.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Petersen-Moore, Smith, and Vaughn. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison and Neumiller.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: Bowlin made the motion, seconded by Hovey, to approve the minutes of the 12/12/2025 meeting.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Hovey, Lottman, Petersen-Moore, Smith, and Vaughn. Voting No: None. Abstain: Jensen and Kilstrom. Absent: Harrison and Neumiller.

Motion carried.

CLOSED SESSION

MOTION: Jensen made the motion, seconded by Kilstrom, for the Board to go into closed session for the purpose of reviewing and discussing investigative reports, licensure applications, and other confidential information, and for the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of the individuals.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Petersen-Moore, Smith, and Vaughn. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, and Neumiller.

Motion carried.

10:38 a.m. Meeting went into closed session.
 11:05 a.m. Dr. Batenhorst left.
 11:15 a.m. Dr. Batenhorst returned.
 11:18 a.m. Meeting returned to Open Session.

LICENSURE RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

AGENDA ITEM: OFFICE OF EMERGENCY HEALTH SYSTEMS

Program reports were submitted for Board review prior to the meeting and were in the portal.

- a. Licensing: Duryea gave an update on Licensing. No additional updates from the report submitted in the agenda packet. She reviewed that turn around time is typically 10 business days and an application is closed in 90 if information is not give back. Wilson added the Licensing system is still in the process of getting updated. The update should be completed in 2027.
- b. EMS Program: Wilson gave an update on the EMS Program. There has been staffing turnover. He introduced Darla Hopwood, the EMS Program Manager, Evon Koeppen, the SE Area EMS Specialist, Candi Beed, the NE Area EMS Specialist.
- c. Education and Training Agency Compliance: Wilson gave an update on Education and Training. The Passrate Report cannot be run due to the National Registry site being down. Nebraska's average is on of the lowest in the states.
- d. Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Program: Blackwell gave an update on EMSC. National Pediatric Readiness Assessment on the hospital side and initiative that starts March 3, 2026. She reviewed the list of resources available. Funding is still in limbo.z
- e. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program: Wilson gave an update on CISM. Changes are coming. The last legislative cycle the CISM Management Council was removed. The partnership between Fire Marshal's Office and the Nebraska State Patrol is all still within statute to work with the Department.
- f. Stroke Program: Wilson gave an update on Stroke. Becka is working on the Annual Stroke Training.
- g. Trauma Program: Wren gave an update on the Trauma program. There are fourteen visits scheduled this year. Draft regulations are in process.

- h. EHS Data Systems: Steele gave an update on the EHS Data Systems. They are continuing to work on the rollout of 3.5, Hospital Hub, and they Trauma System/Registry. QA side Elite, Trauma, Dr. Coffey to meet with Sharon Steele.
- i. Statewide Physician Medical Director Update: No report was given. Wilson commented Protocol updates will be transitioning from Dr. Ernest over to Denell Rhinehart.

The Board took a short break to get lunch and then work through lunch at 11:51 a.m., resumed at 12:05 p.m..

AGENDA ITEM: EMS COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee reports were given by committee members.

- a. Legislation/Rules and Regulation Committee Update – Coffey gave an update. This group discussed peer support and CISM. Legislature is in short session this year that ends April 17.
 - i. Opening Rules and Regulations – Wilson updated the Board that a request to open the Rules and Regulations was sent through, but have not heard anything back, yet. Ashley Newmyer was selected as Director of DHHS and her appointment hearing has backed things up in the Legislature due to this.
- b. Scope of Practice Committee Update – Bernhardson gave an update. There were no requests for SOP other than EMR Protocols. Bernhardson asked Board members to get on the ShareFile and take a look at the EMR Protocols before the next meeting. If board members notice anything needing changed, get ahold of a member of the SOP Committee. Legislation has made changes to Conceal Carry law so a permit is not needed as of 2023.
- c. EMS Research Committee Update – Batenhorst gave an update. This group discussed the strategic plan for the upcoming year. The following goals were shared: Finding more opportunities for collaboration between training agencies directors group, NEMSA, and NIS; focusing on data and research, (i.e.: what to provide, being more evidence based, work with the Legislative Committee in providing data to the Legislature, looking at instructor education; making sure the gaps are closed in the training agencies).
- d. Workforce Committee Update – Cerny gave the following update: This committee is looking for ways to help retain emergency responders by supporting their mental health. One way to do this is by making sure they all have access to mental helplines by placing reminders in their license renewal paperwork. Another way is by making resilience training mandatory when Rules and Regulations open by adding the training to Chapter 12.006.10. The committee discussed social media posts that some departments are using to help with the recruitment of EMS providers. It would be great to have digital Public Service Announcements that Regional Specialists could share within their areas. There needs to be a survey of EMS providers who have renewed their EMS licenses on why they stay, and survey those that don't renew on why they didn't. Leslie is still working with a TV station to get information out on EMS as an essential service.

AGENDA ITEM: Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP)

Tim Wilson spoke about the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). Nebraska did submit and was awarded a grant of 218 million. The Department is working on/waiting on finalized numbers to work with. Rural Health Transformation Program is the public facing RHTP website for DHHS. The OEHS Program will receive a significant amount of funding from RHTP. Highlights are looking at community paramedicine in rural areas looking at the education, training, and implementation of that; regionalization efforts trying to plan regional response within EMS in collaboration of services for survivability and be able to pool resources within those regions. Bring educational opportunities regarding skills and competencies. More information should come out by the end of February, when the CMS budget is approved. Funding awarded is to be spent within that fiscal year it is awarded, ending October 30. The question of how this can be sustained was asked. The answer was, we have five years to find a sustainable funding stream.

12:30 p.m. *Bowlin left.*

12:31 p.m. *Bowlin returned.*

12:30 p.m. *Coffey left.*

12:31 p.m. Coffey returned.

AGENDA ITEM: NEBRASKA STATE VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION (NSVFA)

Joel Cerny gave an update on the NSVFA. The Nebraska Fire Chiefs Association will be holding a leadership symposium in York on March 21, 2026. Doug Cline, a nationally known speaker, will be the guest lecturer with an emphasis on leadership.

The NSVFA Fire School Committee and the Board of Directors will be meeting on Saturday to finalize plans for the 2026 Fire School. There will be a segmented EMS class available May 16-17, 2026, and there will be a leadership training class by Doug DeBest.

There was a Legislative Stance Meeting on Jan. 31, 2026. The NSVFA's stances on the legislative bills that are currently in the unicameral system were shared with the EMS Board's Legislative Committee. During the committee meeting, it was found that the NSVFA and NEMSA boards agree on their stances on the bill that affects EMS in Nebraska.

The NSVFA's Annual Fall Meeting will be taking place in the Dakota City/South Sioux City area the weekend of October 18, 2026. Hopefully, Tim Wilson or one of his staff members will be able to join us for our EMS House of Delegates.

AGENDA ITEM: NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION (NEMSA)/NIS

Amy Santos gave an update on NEMSA/NIS. The NEMSA Conference is March 13-18, 2026. NIS Day will be on March 12, 2026 with Governor. Pillen to speak about rural EMS from 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. EMS Medical Director Training will be on Friday with Dr. Shaila Coffey speaking. The Legislative Breakfast is on March 24, 2026 at the Lobbist Office. Mid-winter Fire School is next weekend and there will be two EMS tracks. Amy Santos asked for people to promote the Medical Director Training on Friday and come to the Legislative Breakfast.

AGENDA ITEM: TRAINING AGENCY DIRECTORS

Fuehring gave an update on the Training Agency Directors. The Training Agency Directors just had a meeting. It has been brought to their attention that there is no EMS voice. They want to present unified talking points regarding EMS to the Legislature so that EMS has a voice. They are working together with NIS and the Educational Resource Committee to draft a hand out. The draft will be available on NIS Day and at the Legislative Breakfast. A copy of the draft can be provide to the EMS Board members. Election of officers will happen at the next meeting in a couple of weeks.

AGENDA ITEM: BOARD ATTENDANCE

Dr. Smith reminded board members of the importance of attendance at meetings. With three vacancies on the EMS Board, it is important for the current members to attend. The three vacancies are an EMR, an EMT, and a general member. Dr. Smith asked everyone to promote being a member of this board.

AGENDA ITEM: 2026 BOARD MEETINGS

The next EMS Board meeting will be May 8, 2026 in Lincoln at the Nebraska State Office Building. The July 10, 2026 meeting will be an in-person meeting held in conjunction with the EMS Statewide Conference out in Kearney. The September 11, 2026 will be in-person in Lincoln. The December 4, 2026 meeting will be in person in Lincoln.

AGENDA ITEM: PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Smith presented Linda Jensen with a certificate of accomplishment for fifty-five years of nursing. Michael Dwyer spoke on the current Legislative Session. There are a total of forty-nine Legislative Bills he is watching, twelve Legislative Bills he is watching diligently and three specifically to do with EMS.

CONCLUSION AND ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nebraska Board of EMS
Minutes of the 2/06/2026 Meeting

Tonja Bohling

Tonja Bohling

OEHS Administrative Technician