Welcome to the year round flu season!
I am sure that you have been following the news on how the Novel H1N1 may result in both an increase in the number of folks that become infected with influenza virus and changing the normal flu season from a fall/winter event to a year long event. Informed opinion suggests that when the kids head back to school in August we may see a pretty big increase in the number of folks suffering from the flu.

This will probably translate to higher call volumes and busy emergency departments – something that is largely outside of our control. More important though, is the potential impact associated with a greater absenteeism with your staff experiencing the flu, or missing work to take care of loved ones. The good news is that you CAN reduce the impact this has on your organization. With that in mind, it is appropriate to take this time to review some prevention strategies.

An ounce of prevention ….
Most of us have no residual immunity to this new influenza virus, and as noted above the vaccine will take a while to develop (the CDC says not until at least October), so the best way to prepare is to practice good prevention.

• **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and warm water while singing the Happy Birthday song – twice. Hand sanitizer works just as well if there is no visible substance on your hands. Keeping your hands clean will reduce the likelihood of person to person transmission.

• **Get your seasonal flu shot.** If your staff has the flu – they won’t be working. While the new virus is not affected by the current vaccine, it will certainly help with the seasonal flu.

• **Cover your cough** by using a disposable tissue or the crook of your arm. If you cover your cough, you will reduce the likelihood of transmitting the virus into the air where others can be exposed.

• **If you have a fever and feel ill - stay home.** Given that most of us have no immunity to this new strain of flu, there is a pretty good chance that we or someone in our family will catch it. Don’t expose others by coming to work if you feel ill.

• **It’s everyone’s responsibility to not spread it.**

An ounce of preparation ….
All of us have been through lots and lots of training to help us deal with the impacts of really big events like a scary virus that causes really bad outcomes. Our experience earlier this year suggests that the Novel H1N1 strain is not THAT virus, but that doesn’t mean that we can’t use what we have learned and apply it as we get ready for what looks like a hard and extended flu season.

• **Staffing** is likely to be a little more challenging this year, so refer to your plan to see what is intended to augment your workforce if you have a lot of folks out ill.

• **Inventory** is pretty easily augmented if you have some lead time. Make sure that you have adequate personal protective equipment. The consensus is that EMS providers are very well protected from exposure to the Novel H1N1 virus by the use of gloves and surgical masks. These items have a pretty long shelf life so consider getting some extra boxes. You may need to purchase some additional N-95 masks and eye protection for ALS staff performing invasive airway procedures.

• **Refresher training** for your folks on recognizing the signs and symptoms of influenza is a good idea, as is making sure you have a robust vehicle decontamination process. There are lots of good resources available through the links below.

• **Surgical mask or N-95? Eye protection or face shields?** Take a look at the resources linked below to see the most up-to-date information on how to be safe while you care for influenza patients.
Trauma System Development

Trauma Referral Tool

Working with the EMSSystem Administrator from the Bureau of Emergency Preparedness and Response, the Bureau has developed a Trauma Referral Tool available to all emergency departments through the web-based EMSSystem. The purpose of this tool is to collect information from all health care institutions concerning the trauma patient transfer process to the state’s designated trauma centers. We are seeking this information to help us improve the transfer process for all trauma patients.

In addition to the referral tool, the EMSSystem Trauma pages have been updated with the more current contact information for each Level I trauma center.

For more information, please contact the Bureau’s trauma section.

Trauma Center Designation - Update

The Bureau has now designated six Level IV trauma centers with another application pending at this time. The following hospitals have been designated as Level IV trauma centers:

- Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center - Show Low
- Banner Page Hospital - Page
- Northern Cochise Community Hospital - Willcox
- Little Colorado Medical Center - Winslow
- Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation - Tuba City
- La Paz Regional Hospital - Parker

These hospitals have met specific criteria based on their ability to care for injured patients and are participating in the Arizona State Trauma Registry. Each of these hospitals plays a key role and is a critical link in the chain of survival for trauma patients in Arizona. For more information about the Arizona Trauma System, please refer to [www.azdhs.gov/bems/trauma.htm](http://www.azdhs.gov/bems/trauma.htm)

Trauma System Development - Workgroups

Three workgroups were formed under the direction of the State Trauma Advisory Board. These workgroups and a brief description of each are as follows.

- **Trauma Triage and Transport** - To develop guidelines for prehospital providers for transporting patients to Level II, III, and IV Trauma Centers in Arizona.

- **Air vs. Ground Transport** - To develop guidelines for prehospital providers, nurses, and physicians concerning when to request air ambulance transport vs. sending trauma patients by ground ambulance.

- **Quality Improvement and Training** - To educate and train on approved recommendations from the other two workgroups and to track and trend after education and training are provided to see if changes are successful.
Save Hearts In Arizona Registry & Education (SHARE) News

EMS Participation List Growing
There are now 89 Arizona EMS agencies participating in SHARE—all playing a role in accomplishing our mission of increasing the survival from sudden cardiac arrest in the state. To see a list of participating agencies, go to www.azshare.gov. Click on Info for EMS Providers.

Arizona Cardiac Arrest Center Consortium Also Growing
Twenty-five hospitals throughout Arizona are now recognized as Cardiac Arrest Centers. This consortium of hospitals is providing post cardiac arrest guideline treatment resulting in an increase in neurologically intact survival. For more information about cardiac arrest centers and to see a list of recognized hospitals, go to www.azshare.gov. Click on Info for Cardiac Arrest Centers.

Mission Lifeline – Promoting STEMI Systems of Care
The Bureau is teaming up with EMS and hospitals throughout the state to participate in Mission Lifeline, the American Heart Associations’ initiative to advance the systems of care for patients with ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI). The overarching goal of the initiative is to reduce mortality and morbidity for STEMI patients and to improve their overall quality of care. A "STEMI system" is an integrated group of separate entities focused on reperfusion therapy for STEMI within a region that typically includes emergency medical services (EMS) providers, at least one community non-percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) hospital, and at least one tertiary PCI center. The system may include one or more of the following components: leadership teams of EMS, emergency medicine, cardiology, nursing and administration; standardized communication (i.e., STEMI alert system); standardized transportation; and data collection and feedback.

Data & Quality Assurance

Premier EMS Agency Program
There are currently eight agencies enrolled in the Premier EMS Agency Program, these agencies include First Responders, CON holders and Air Ambulance providers. For information on how to participate go to www.azdhs.gov/bems.htm.

EMS & Quality Assurance Conference
The Bureau of EMS & Trauma System will be hosting an EMS & Trauma Quality Assurance Conference October 29 and 30, 2009. The conference will be at the Radisson Hotel in Flagstaff. Please check our website for details on registration and conference topics. We will be featuring speakers from Arizona as well as from around the country. Plan on attending!

Trauma Data
The Data and Quality Assurance Section has recently had an abstract accepted for display by the Arizona Public Health Association at its annual meeting and conference. The abstract quantifies the use of air ambulance resources throughout the state.

The Arizona State Trauma Registry data for 2008 has been significantly improved and production of the Annual Report is underway. This is largely due to the efforts of Anita Ray Ng, Trauma Data Manager, who will be on maternity leave beginning the middle of August. We wish Anita and her husband Ray the best health and happiness as they welcome their first child! We look forward to Anita’s return with her child.

During Anita’s absence, Anne Vossbrink, MS, will be performing the duties of Trauma Data Manager. Upon Anita’s return, Anne will be working with the data to produce effective reports. Please join me in welcoming Anne to our team!
Ambulance Services

81                      Year-to-date ambulance control files opened
36                      2009 open ambulance control files

Certification

16,075                  Total number of Current Arizona EMT Certifications
10,908                  EMT Basics
50                      EMT I-99s
5,117                   EMT-Paramedics
5626                    Total number of EMT applications processed YTD

Enforcement

Number of Investigations opened by June 2008 compared to June 2009
71                      Number in 2008
70                      Number in 2009

Meet Lynn Snyder

Lynn Snyder is the Certification Manager for the Bureau of EMS & Trauma System. Many of you have interacted with Lynn as she helps provide information concerning EMT certification and re-certification. In her role as Certification Manager Lynn oversees the certification department comprised of Maria Dominguez and Sandy Hoaglin in Phoenix, Esmeralda Chiquete in Tucson and Linda Barreras in Flagstaff. Together they are responsible for certifying over 15,000 people every two years!

Lynn has been employed by the Department of Health Services since 2000 and came to BEMSTS in 2003. She has three grown children and one grandson who is the “apple of her eye”. When she is not doting on her grandchild, Lynn takes care of her two pets, a ShiTzu Yorkie and a Himalayan cat. Lynn enjoys playing bridge with her friends as well as spending time reading horror novels with Stephen King being one of her favorite authors. Lynn also looks forward to relaxing by her pool when she does not have to clean her house and yard and says that the most enjoyable part of her job is interacting with people of all types throughout each day. Lynn meets the challenge of dealing with the public by always having a smile and being considerate to people.

The next time you call or see Lynn please stop and say hello!

Upcoming Trauma Conference:

The Arizona Trauma & Acute Care Consortium (AZTrACC) is sponsoring the First Annual Southwest Trauma & Acute Care Symposium November 5-6, 2009 at the Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. For more information, please refer to www.aztrace.org.