

## EMS Question of the Month

Each month, BEMS Pulse will pose an EMS Question of the Month. Test your knowledge about this important topic:

**When is an EMT required to report a DUI arrest to the Bureau of EMS?**

See answer on page 2



### Location and Regional Contact Information:

150 North 18th Avenue  
Suite 540  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(800) 200-8523  
www.azdhs.gov/bems

Gene Wikle  
Bureau Chief  
wiklee@azdhs.gov  
(602) 364-3150

Rhonda Montgomery  
Northern and Central Regional Liaison  
montgor@azdhs.gov  
(602) 364-3189

Rita Weatherholt  
Southeastern & Western Regional Liaison  
weather@azdhs.gov  
(602) 364-3191

## Bureau Teams Up During Katrina Response



EMS Bureau Chief Gene Wikle, pictured with Deputy Director Rose Conner, served as the ADHS Incident Commander during Katrina relief efforts.

On Sept. 1, with the Labor Day weekend approaching and many staff already away on holiday, Arizona Department of Health Services was called on by the Governor to implement Operation Good Neighbor in support of Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Ultimately, the ADHS OGN team would provide clinical support for 15 days to more than 600 Hurricane Katrina evacuees housed at Veteran's Memorial Coliseum.

By the time the ADHS onsite clinic shut down on Sept. 17, more than 260 ADHS staffers worked as part of a multi-agency team to assist with 1,176 clinic visits from evacuees.

"This was historic," said Gene Wikle, Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services who served as ADHS Incident Commander. "For the first time, ADHS ramped up a 24/7 fully-operational Health Emergency Operations Center while providing major staff support to a 24-hour medical clinic."

BEMS and other emergency medical services professionals took a front-and-center role in the efforts. While Wikle served as Incident Commander, eleven other BEMS staffers worked both the EOC and the clinic alongside medical teams from many area hospital systems, as well as PMT Ambulance Company.

"Through years of preparedness training and planning, ADHS has developed good relationships within the response community, and Operation Good Neighbor gave us an opportunity to work together in an important, life-saving mission," said Niki O'Keeffe, ADHS Assistant Director of Public Health Services.

### Teaming Up to Support Evacuees

Early on the morning of Sept. 3, ADHS learned that up to 1,200 evacuees would be housed at Veteran's Memorial Coliseum. ADHS was charged with supporting the American Red Cross to provide medical and behavioral care, as well as sanitation oversight at the Coliseum.

"We knew little about how many evacuees would arrive, when they'd be arriving, what their needs were, or what equipment was available at the Coliseum," said O'Keeffe. "Given the variables, ADHS quickly began recruiting local hospital teams that had already worked together, and contacting partners in the responder community."

"We put out a request on the EM System® (the emergency medical system used by hospitals in the state), and within thirty minutes, the screen lit up," said O'Keeffe of hospitals' quick response to deploying medical teams to the Coliseum. Over the next two weeks, teams would work around the clock in 12 hour shifts tending to evacuees whose needs ranged from dehydration and mild infections to substance addiction, mental health, and chronic illnesses like

*(continued on page 2)*

## Employee Profile — Lynn Snyder

Lynn Snyder began her new job as the Bureau of EMS Certification Manager on Sept. 6, and she's thrilled about the opportunity.

Formerly the Enforcement Representative under Enforcement Manager Susan Nicolas, Lynn has spent the past three years at the Bureau working with EMTs with criminal histories or complaints.

As Certification Manager, Lynn now manages a staff of five Administrative Assistants who work with more than 12,000 EMTs seeking initial or re-certification annually throughout the state. Certification staff must check each application for accuracy and completeness. "I think my background is helping us do more thorough, efficient

record-keeping, which gives our EMTs better service overall," Lynn said.

The Pittsburgh native is no stranger to Arizona, healthcare or customer service. Arriving in the state in 1978, Lynn went to school in Tucson. Her career spans customer service with Sears, as well as a stint with Tenet Healthcare.

A self-avowed people-person, Lynn is in regular contact with her three grown children, granddaughter, and three "grand dogs." She takes time out for bridge and reading, as well.

"I enjoy the interaction with people at the Bureau," said Lynn, adding, "I'm so happy to be part of the positive changes this Bureau is making, and I'm a real believer in the customer service focus."

Lynn will continue to be part of the change process, as she searches for two new Administrative Assistants in the weeks ahead.



Lynn Snyder  
Certification Manager

(continued from page 1)

diabetes, dialysis needs, and heart conditions.

A good working relationship with area hospitals was one reason teams were able to come together so well, according to O'Keeffe. Hospitals statewide had been working diligently with ADHS since 9/11 to increase surge capacity in anticipation of just such an event. According to Emergency Preparedness Response Bureau Chief Jane Wixted who helped lead initial clinic set-up, relationships were integral in bringing together a continuum of services, beginning with triage and continuing through long-term services like Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System. "Our first mission was to address acute needs, then connect people to more long-term services," said Wixted.

ADHS staff also recruited family, friends, and neighbors active or retired from health care to provide initial support. "This was a great example of how working together, a group of committed people can overcome whatever challenges might occur," O'Keeffe said.

### Clinic Coordination and Response

Dr. Frank Walter, Medical Director for ADHS Bureau of Emergency Preparedness Response, was the first Medical Director at the Coliseum. Walter focused on putting the patients' needs first as he considered details like placement of the on-site pharmacy and lab, critical care equipment, behavioral health needs, and good medical records. Within the first hour, critical care equipment provided by the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) was in place. Triage was carefully thought out, with a pre-triage nurse in the waiting area assisted by EMTs staged at the clinic's entrance. Behavioral health needs of evacuees were addressed by a team of two psychiatrists and other mental health professionals who volunteered through Value Options.

By the end of the first two shifts, 261 of 600 evacuees had been seen in the clinic. "We saw 40% of the people who arrived, which is a huge accomplishment," Walter said, adding, "the preparation, trust and camaraderie of working with people you knew and trusted was so gratifying."

Medical teams of three doctors and seven nurses rotated through 12 hour shifts. "I was amazed at how quickly we were able to mobilize an eight-bed on-site medical clinic," said BEMS Enforcement Chief Ron Anderson, who served as night shift clinic chief, adding, "It just kept getting more refined and cohesive as we went along."

The list of medical considerations was updated continually, and included nutritional concerns, methadone treatments, psychotropic medications, wheelchairs and other equipment, and how to report a death should the need arise.

Dr. Ben Bobrow, Medical Director for BEMS, also managed the clinic for several days. "It was a great collaboration between local hospitals, healthcare workers, fire departments, the MMRS, and ambulance services," said Bobrow, noting that ADHS' coordination role was greatly aided by the other entities working in concert. Everyone did their part."

### Successful Operation Comes to a Close

Little more than two weeks after their arrival, evacuees were leaving the shelter to more permanent housing. ADHS closed the clinic Sept. 17, in conjunction with the closure of the Coliseum shelter.

According to State Epidemiologist David Engelthaler, "We've met the acute medical needs of the evacuees, and can comfortably shut down the on-site clinic. Thankfully, there were no deaths or outbreaks identified, even though many of the evacuees came in with serious and potentially life-threatening health conditions."

While ADHS continues to have teams on stand-by to be deployed to the Gulf Coast region, Operation Good Neighbor is completed. After-action reports and lessons-learned discussions were carried out the week following the mission's end.

"This is an unprecedented success," ADHS Director Susan Gerard said. "We set up a full service triage center and began seeing patients within 24 hours. Our team saw a need, and we responded. Because of the excellent staff and the resilience of the evacuees, all of the major medical needs of the evacuees were able to be met."

## **Quick Beats**

### **Bureau of EMS News in Brief**

#### **Proposed Air Ambulance Service Licensing and Registration Rules**

ADHS has filed proposed rules for Air Ambulance Service Licensing and Air Ambulance Registration (proposed rules) with the Office of the Secretary of State, for publication in the *Arizona Administrative Register* (AAR) on Sept. 30, 2005. ADHS has also filed a proposed rulemaking to repeal the rules for ambulance service licensure, ambulance registration, and miscellaneous that are now found in 9 A.A.C. 13, Articles 10-12 (repeal rulemaking).

The public comment period for the proposed rules and repeal rulemaking is from Sept. 30, 2005, to 5:00 p.m. on Nov. 18, 2005. ADHS will accept written comments during the public comment period and will hold the following public proceeding to accept oral comments and allow for an adequate discussion of the proposed rules and repeal rulemaking:

Date:	Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2005
Time:	10:00 a.m.
Location:	Arizona Department of Health Services 150 N. 18th Ave., Room 540A Phoenix, AZ 85007

Links to the proposed rules and repeal rulemaking will be available on the ADHS website at [http://www.azdhs.gov/diro/admin\\_rules/proposed.htm](http://www.azdhs.gov/diro/admin_rules/proposed.htm) shortly after their publication in the AAR on Sept. 30, 2005.

For more information on the proposed rules or the repeal rulemaking, or to provide written comments on the proposed rules or repeal rulemaking, please contact either of the following:

Ed Armijo, Ambulance Services Section Chief  
Arizona Department of Health Services  
Bureau of Emergency Medical Services  
150 N. 18th Ave., Suite 540  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
Phone: (602) 364-3150  
Fax: (602) 364-3568  
E-mail: [armijoe@azdhs.gov](mailto:armijoe@azdhs.gov)

Kathleen Phillips, Rules Administrator  
Office of Administrative Rules  
1740 W. Adams St., Suite 202  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
Phone: (602) 542-1264  
Fax: (602) 364-1150  
E-mail: [phillik@azdhs.gov](mailto:phillik@azdhs.gov)

### **Computer-Based Testing Report**

Computer Based Testing (CBT) will be available to Arizona's EMS community in 2007. According to BEMS Training Coordinator, Michelle Johnston, "This is a great opportunity to test a medic's talents, as the testing is designed to be adaptive. The more knowledge a person has, the faster the test will go. It truly moves EMS to the same level as the large allied health community."

### **Answer to EMS Question of the Month**

(Continued from page 1)

This question is a follow up to last month's story about the growing incidence of alcohol-related problems in the EMS profession. An EMT who has been arrested for DUI must report the fact to the Bureau of EMS upon conviction in a court of law.

### **Certification Notice**

As a certified EMT in the State of Arizona, it is your responsibility to complete the required training courses in order to maintain your certification. Furthermore it is your responsibility to submit all required application materials to the Bureau, not your training instructor or employer. You will be held accountable.