

State EMS Advisory Board

08/07/2026

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Full Board Meeting Minutes
Public Safety Training Center
7093 Broad Neck Road, Hanover Virginia 23069
August 7, 2026

Attendance

Members Present:	Members Excused:	VDH/OEMS Staff:	Others:
Dr. Paula Ferrada, MD, FACS, FCCM	E. Bryan Rush	Dr. Maria Beermann-Foat, Ph.D., OEMS Director	John H. Craig III
Lisa Baber		Matt Ahern, VDH Chief Operating Officer	Karen Owens
Joseph Williams		Sayed Sadaat	Ed Rhodes
Kim Craig		Michael Berg	Tasha Easley
Brian Frankel		Mohamed G. Abbamin, MPA	Kenneth Jordan
Dr. Joseph Lang, MD		Chad Mason	Bubby Bish
James Reynolds		Jacqueline Hunter	David Long
Melissa Meador		Julie Franchok	Kelley Rumsey
Marlon Rickman		Michael Berg	Drew DeHaven
David Hupp		Sam Burnette	Duane Garrison
Madison Blaska		Kari Magner	Greg Neiman
Dr. John Morgan, MD		Amber Moore	Dallas Taylor
Theresa Kingsley-Varble		Doug Layton	Colin Dean

Members Present:	Members Excused:	VDH/OEMS Staff:	Others:
Walter Bailey		Dr. Allen Yee, MD, State Medical Director	Heather Nelson
Beth Matish			Ali Akbar
R. Bruce Stratton			Abigail Stanley
Steve Higgins			Andy Neagle
*Jason Stroud			Eric Donley
*Dr. Rebecca Branch Griffin, Ph.D			Heidi Hooker
			Robert Trimmer
			Ray Whatley
			Kevin Dillard

*Remote participation - **

Opening Session

Call to Order

Chair Dr. Paula Ferrada called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair, Beth Matish led attendees at the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: Approve minutes from the May 1, 2026, meeting.

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Motion Carries

Approval of Current Meeting Agenda:

Motion: Approve the current August 7, 2026, meeting agenda.

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Motion Carries

Reports

Chairman's Report, Dr. Paula Ferrada, MD, FACS, FCCM

Topic: Chairman's Report

Dr. Ferrada announced creation of a work group to evaluate the efficiency and utilization of resources associated with State EMS Advisory Board meetings, including meeting time allocation and the Board's partnership with the Office of EMS. Kevin Dillard agreed to lead the work group. Mr. Dillard advised that workgroup members would contact Board members to gather input and develop recommendations for future consideration.

The Chair also highlighted a meeting satisfaction survey available by QR code. The survey is intended to gather feedback from meeting attendees and identify opportunities to improve future meetings.

Dr. Ferrada noted that Commissioner Dr. B. Cameron Webb and Deputy Commissioner Stephanie Dunkel were unable to attend. Dr. Maria Beermann-Foat introduced Matthew Ahern, the Virginia Department of Health's new Chief Operating Officer, who attended the meeting.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

Board efficiency and resource utilization work group to solicit feedback from Board members and develop recommendations. Continue collecting stakeholder feedback through the meeting satisfaction survey.

VDH OEMS Director, Dr. Maria Beermann-Foat, PhD, NRP

Topic: OEMS Executive Director Update

Discussion: Presented by Dr. Maria Beermann-Foat, PhD, NRP

Dr. Beermann-Foat provided an update on Office of EMS priorities, including student background checks, regulatory and governance process review, staffing, budget and legislative development, and broader internal operational improvements.

EMS Compact and Student Background Checks

Dr. Beermann-Foat reviewed the July 14, 2026 implementation of a portal requirement affecting student background checks and acknowledged that the two-day notice created significant stress and unintended challenges for EMS students, educators, and program administrators. She explained that Virginia participates in the Recognition of EMS Personnel Licensure Interstate Compact (REPLICA) which requires background checks associated with initial certifications, including advancement to a new certification level.

She reported that Virginia had received additional time from the EMS Compact to address compliance issues and that, following discussions with the Compact's executive director, additional grace had been granted while Virginia develops a workable solution. VDH Information Technology will pause the recent portal changes and work toward restoring the prior process while OEMS refines and validates future requirements. Stakeholders will receive guidance regarding the temporary process and advance communication before revised requirements are implemented.

Dr. Beermann-Foat apologized for the confusion and stated that OEMS accepts responsibility for not identifying and addressing the operational impacts before implementation.

Regulatory, Advisory Board, and Internal Process Review

Dr. Beermann-Foat addressed questions raised during the Rules and Regulations Committee meeting regarding the intended scope of Medical Direction Committee discussions related to Chapters 31 and 32. She stated that OEMS would review the meeting record and speak with participants before changing the direction of existing work, emphasizing that work already completed by the Rules and Regulations Committee remains valuable.

She also addressed stakeholder concerns regarding the future role of the EMS Advisory Board and its committees. Dr. Beermann-Foat stated that OEMS is reviewing how the Advisory Board, committees, work groups, and OEMS interact in the development of regulations and policy. The purpose of the review is to clarify legal authority, decision-making pathways, and appropriate opportunities for stakeholder input, not to disenfranchise the Advisory Board.

As an example, Dr. Beermann-Foat reported that legal review determined that authority for variances and exceptions rests with the State Health Commissioner unless formally delegated. OEMS is working with legal and regulatory partners to review historical practices and align current processes with applicable law, regulation, and guidance.

Staffing, Budget, and Legislative Priorities

Recruitment remains underway for two EMS Program Specialist positions within the Accreditation, Certification and Education Division. Dr. Beermann-Foat noted that prior recruitment attempts were unsuccessful after selected candidates accepted other opportunities, but OEMS continues to improve internal processes while rebuilding capacity.

Internal review of OEMS budget and legislative priorities for the upcoming cycle is underway, with proposals proceeding through the Administration's review process. Dr. Beermann-Foat referred members to the quarterly report for additional information regarding funding programs, including RSAF, Return-to-Locality, and EMS for Children.

OEMS Operations Update, Wayne Perry

Deputy Director Wayne Perry provided an operational update covering the Emergency Coordination and Health Operational Support (ECHO) Division, System Optimization, EMS data and epidemiology activities, regional EMS operations, and the Rural Healthcare Transformation Program.

Mr. Perry reported that the Operations Branch had devoted approximately 5,280 staff hours to projects, programs, and services since the May Advisory Board meeting. ECHO has assumed responsibilities that include OEMS fleet management, website modernization, surge planning resources, highly infectious disease transport resources, evaluation of regional medical operations coordinating centers, regional resource sharing, and inventory management.

The System Optimization Division continues to operate the ACE support ticketing system and maintain EMS data visualizations. Mr. Perry reported approximately 1,098,047 EMS calls through the end of July 2026, representing nearly a three percent increase over the prior year. The EMS repository contains more than 642 million patient data elements. Staff are conducting 14 EMS data repository workshops statewide and continue to support internships, practicum students, epidemiology projects, and statewide data requests.

All seven EMS regions were reported as fully staffed. Regional offices conducted 10 town hall meetings, supported Education Coordinator Institutes and Operational Medical Director workshops, delivered continuing education, and advanced special projects involving tactical emergency casualty care, peer support, mental wellness, prehospital blood, ultrasound, and other clinical initiatives.

Mr. Perry reported that the Rural Healthcare Transformation Program was officially underway as of July 31, 2026. VDH executed a contract with DMAS as an implementation partner for mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine initiatives. RFAs are being developed to obligate nearly \$5 million in first-year funding and approximately \$26 million in year two.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- VDH IT/OEMS to pause the recent background-check portal changes and provide guidance on the temporary process.
- OEMS to continue review of legal authority, regulatory pathways, and Advisory Board/OEMS roles.
- Continue recruitment for ACE Division EMS Program Specialist positions.
- Continue implementation of statewide EMS assessment, regional initiatives, and Rural Healthcare Transformation Program activities.

EMS Advisory Board Website Update, Sam Burnette

Sam Burnette presented an informational update on a redesigned EMS Advisory Board webpage intended to consolidate Board information and improve stakeholder communication. The proposed page will include the Board's purpose, membership, represented organizations, committee assignments, meeting schedules, governing documents, and direct links to Virginia Regulatory Town Hall meeting records.

Mr. Burnette advised that OEMS will no longer duplicate Advisory Board agendas and minutes on the OEMS website. Instead, the site will link to Virginia Regulatory Town Hall as the official repository, reducing the risk that outdated draft minutes remain posted.

The webpage will also include committee membership and liaison information and a contact form allowing stakeholders to contact the Board Chair, committee chairs and staff liaisons, or regional Board representatives without publicly posting personal email addresses or telephone numbers. Mr. Burnette also demonstrated the regional lookup feature that identifies an individual's OEMS region, regional coordinator, and applicable regional council.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- Continue development and implementation of the consolidated EMS Advisory Board webpage and stakeholder contact tools.

State Medical Director's Report, Dr. Allen Yee, MD

Topic: State Medical Director's Report

Discussion: Dr. Allen Yee, MD highlighted the recent FDA approval of freeze-dried plasma and noted its potential significance for prehospital trauma care, particularly because of storage and shelf-life advantages. He encouraged the EMS community to monitor emerging evidence and potential applications alongside ongoing whole blood initiatives.

State Board of Health EMS Representative Report, Kevin Dillard

Topic: State Board of Health EMS Representative Report

Discussion: Presented by Kevin Dillard

Mr. Dillard reported that the State Board of Health held its June quarterly meeting at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point. The most significant EMS-related action was the Board of Health's unanimous approval authorizing transition of Virginia's trauma center designation process to the American College of Surgeons verification model.

Mr. Dillard recognized Ashley Camper, Dr. Paula Ferrada, and members of the Trauma System Committee for their work supporting the recommendation and stakeholder engagement process.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Topic: Executive Committee

Presenter: Chair, Dr. Paula Ferrada, MD, FACS, FCCM

The Executive Committee met on August 6, 2026, with a quorum present. The Chair advised that committee chairs would present items approved, informational items, and matters requiring full Board consideration within their respective reports.

Financial Assistance Review Committee (FARC)

Topic: Financial Assistance Review Committee (FARC)

Discussion: Presented Chairman Robert Trimmer

Mr. Trimmer reported on the spring RSAF grant cycle. The committee received 69 applications requesting just under \$6 million. Applications included 67 EMS agencies and two nonprofit organizations. Sixty-three agencies were funded for slightly more than \$4.5 million.

FARC continues work groups focused on the grant application process, grant review, and funding tiers, including coordination with the Medical Direction Committee regarding clinical priorities. Mr. Trimmer thanked committee and work group members and recognized Michael Berg for his support.

Rules and Regulations Committee

Topic: Rules and Regulations Committee

Discussion: Presented by Kim Craig

Ms. Craig reported that the committee met August 6, 2026, with a quorum. The committee was informed that variance and exemption requests will be processed through the Office of EMS pursuant to delegation from the State Health Commissioner and will no longer be routed through the Rules and Regulations Committee.

Ms. Craig provided a detailed Chapter 32 work group update. The work group has met biweekly since March 2026 and had been working toward a final draft for Rules and Regulations Committee review in August, committee approval in November 2026, and Advisory Board consideration in February 2027. Proposed edits were received from Air Medical, the Medical Direction Committee, and the Training and Certification Committee; however, certain submissions were incomplete or received later than the established timeline. As a result, Chapter 32 will not be ready for the previously anticipated November committee review and February Board consideration.

Discussion focused on the need for clarity regarding the respective roles of OEMS, the EMS Advisory Board, the Board of Health, and the Commissioner in regulatory and policy development. Ms. Craig raised broader questions regarding the purpose and future function of the Rules and Regulations Committee and the Advisory Board, emphasizing the substantial volunteer time invested by members and the importance of ensuring committee work can move effectively through appropriate approval and implementation pathways.

The Chair acknowledged the concerns and indicated that additional discussion and strategy development would occur outside the meeting to determine how to proceed with Chapter 32 while honoring the work already completed.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- OEMS and Rules and Regulations leadership to develop a strategy for moving forward with Chapter 32.
 - Continue broader governance review to clarify Advisory Board, committee, OEMS, Board of Health, and Commissioner roles.
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Emergency Management Committee

Topic: Emergency Management Committee

Discussion: Presented by Joe Williams

Mr. Williams reported that the committee met August 6, 2026, but did not achieve a quorum. Discussion included development of a committee charter, committee goals, membership review, and formation of a work group focused on dispatch centers and public safety answering point (PSAP) issues previously addressed by the former Communications Committee.

The work group will seek representation from an operational medical director, large and small PSAPs, fire service stakeholders, and sheriff's office stakeholders, with the intent of supporting compliance with applicable Virginia Code and emergency medical dispatch requirements.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- Continue development of the Emergency Management Committee charter and goals.

- Review committee membership and participation.
 - Develop the dispatch/PSAP work group and associated objectives.
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EMS Workforce Resilience Committee

Topic: EMS Workforce Resilience Committee

Discussion: Presented by Brian Frankel

Mr. Frankel reported that the committee met August 6, 2026, with a quorum and had no action items requiring Board approval. The committee discussed development of the EMS Officer II and III programs and identified barriers including lack of dedicated curriculum development expertise, funding for in-person development work, administrative and program management support, a defined curriculum approval and maintenance process, an instructor development pathway, course coordination capacity, and adequate instructor reimbursement.

Following discussions between OEMS and the Virginia Association of First Responders (VAFR), the work group will collaborate with VAFR on program development while maintaining OEMS and stakeholder participation through the work group structure.

The committee also discussed peer support and related program approvals. Based on legal clarification, these programs may be approved administratively within OEMS and do not require committee approval. The committee requested annual updates regarding programs approved in the Commonwealth for transparency and awareness.

Additional discussion included potential EMS apprenticeship development and collaboration with the Recruitment and Retention Network. Mr. Frankel also expressed support for the concerns raised regarding Advisory Board purpose, effectiveness, and stakeholder participation.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- Continue EMS Officer II/III program development collaboratively with VAFR, OEMS, and the work group.
- OEMS to provide annual informational updates regarding approved peer support and related programs.

- Continue exploration of EMS apprenticeship and recruitment/retention initiatives.
-

Medical Direction Committee

Topic: Medical Direction Committee

Discussion: Presented by Dr. Joseph Lang, MD

Dr. Lang reported that the Medical Direction Committee met July 9, 2026, at ODEMSA with a quorum. The committee received an epidemiology presentation regarding prehospital whole blood use and documentation, reviewed the successful transition associated with DEA drug box compliance, and discussed changes to MDC membership to align with Advisory Board bylaws.

The seven regional medical directors have been selected. Together with the Governor-appointed Advisory Board member serving as chair and two at-large members, these positions comprise the 10-member committee. The Executive Committee approved three additional ex officio, non-voting positions representing pediatrics, trauma, and EMS operations.

Dr. Kevin Gutermuth presented a white paper on pediatric pain management in the prehospital setting, which will undergo final edits before future presentation. Dr. Charles Lane presented a Training and Certification request to endorse development of Education Coordinator Level I and II designations; the MDC approved the concept. The committee also discussed prehospital emergency custody orders in coordination with the Virginia Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Landing Zone Safety

The Air Medical Work Group presented a landing zone safety document. The MDC advanced the item for Board consideration and potential presentation to the Board of Health.

Motion: Approve the Landing Zone Safety document and advance it for presentation to the State Board of Health for adoption.

Vote: Approved by voice vote.

Action: Motion Carries.

Chapter 32 Feasibility Review

The MDC presented a motion requesting that OEMS evaluate the feasibility of a complete overhaul and rewrite of Chapter 32 rather than limiting the effort to additions and corrections associated with Chapter 31. Discussion clarified that the request is a feasibility review and may include consideration of a long-term Chapter 32 strategy together with short-term or transitional amendments as appropriate.

Motion: Request that the Office of EMS evaluate the feasibility of a complete overhaul and rewrite of Chapter 32, rather than relying solely on additions and corrections to Chapter 31.

Vote: Motion approved following discussion; opposition was recorded.

- 6 – No
- 10 – Yes
- 1 – Abstention

Action: Motion Carries.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- OEMS to evaluate the feasibility of a comprehensive Chapter 32 overhaul/rewrite, including potential interim or transitional approaches.
- Establish a timeline for reporting the feasibility review back to the Board.
- Finalize pediatric pain management white paper for future consideration.

Trauma Administrative and Governance

Topic: Trauma Administrative and Governance

Discussion: Presented by James Reynolds

Mr. Reynolds reported that the Trauma Administrative and Governance Committee (TAG) met on August 6, 2026, with a quorum present. The committee discussed the continued expansion of prehospital whole blood capabilities, the transition of Virginia's trauma center designation process to alignment with the American College of Surgeons (ACS), and review of the Virginia Trauma Center Fund.

Whole Blood Program Expansion

Mr. Reynolds reported that prehospital whole blood capabilities continue to expand into rural areas of the Commonwealth. He highlighted the following recent program launches:

- Goochland Fire and Rescue – December 2025
- Hanover Fire-EMS – July 2026
- Buckingham County Department of Emergency Services – July 2026
- Dinwiddie Fire and EMS – July 2026
- Mecklenburg Emergency Services – August 2026

Mr. Reynolds specifically noted that Buckingham County utilized whole blood within approximately 18 hours of launching its program. He emphasized that the continued expansion demonstrates the increasing availability of prehospital whole blood beyond Virginia's metropolitan areas and into rural communities.

Virginia Trauma Center Designation Transition

The committee discussed the transition pathway for aligning Virginia's trauma center designation process with the American College of Surgeons verification model. Mr. Reynolds emphasized that the transition would occur over several years, through December 31, 2032, and will require coordinated implementation rather than an immediate change in designation processes.

Mr. Reynolds recognized the trauma surgeons, trauma program directors, trauma program managers, and other stakeholders contributing to the transition planning process.

The committee also reviewed the need to update the Virginia Trauma Center Designation Manual to support implementation of the ACS-aligned model. Mr. Reynolds noted that the EMS Advisory Board and State Board of Health had previously approved the transition; therefore, the action presented to the Board was intended to allow OEMS to begin updating the manual consistent with that direction.

Trauma Center Fund Review

TAG established a work group to conduct a comprehensive review of the Virginia Trauma Center Fund. The work group will evaluate the fund and related issues and provide future recommendations as appropriate.

Motion: For the Virginia Office of EMS to update the Virginia Trauma Center Designation Manual to start the transition to align with the American College of Surgeons.

Vote: Approved by voice vote.

Action: Motion Carries.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- OEMS to begin updating the Virginia Trauma Center Designation Manual to support the transition to the ACS-aligned trauma center designation model.
- TAG work group to conduct a comprehensive review of the Virginia Trauma Center Fund.
- Continue implementation planning and stakeholder coordination associated with the trauma center designation transition through December 31, 2032.

Training and Certification Committee Report

Topic: Training and Certification Committee

Presenter: Melissa Meador

Discussion: Presented by Melissa Meador

Ms. Meador reported that TCC met July 8, 2026, at ODEMSA with a quorum. Vice Chair Brian McIntosh chaired the meeting in Ms. Meador's absence. The committee unanimously approved its draft charter.

A vacancy exists for representation of non-VCCS accredited programs following Matthew Snyder's resignation. The committee is seeking an interested replacement.

TCC discussed program quality concerns and the need for stronger quality assurance mechanisms for EMS education programs. The committee also discussed, without taking action, whether larger agencies may benefit from separate medical directors for operations and education.

The EC recertification exam work group submitted exam questions to OEMS for final approval; deployment remains delayed pending resolution of broader EMS Educator Institute discussions. The training/EMS regulatory change work group submitted edits to Rules and Regulations, though the edits were provided later than anticipated. The EC credentialing work group continues reviewing best practices, modern delivery models, the EC certification pathway, other state models, and possible peer-support/forum mechanisms for Education Coordinators.

Ms. Meador expressed support for the governance concerns raised earlier in the meeting and emphasized the need for a clear and efficient pathway for committee work.

Recommendation/Action Follow-Up:

- Continue EC recertification exam and credentialing work group activities.
- Fill the TCC vacancy representing non-VCCS accredited programs.
- Continue education program quality assurance discussions and coordination with Rules and Regulations.

Public Comment

Topic: Public Comments

Discussion: The Chair called for public comment. Brenda Butler had signed up to provide public comment but did not address the Board. No public comments were received.

Business Matters/ Unfinished Business

Discussion: The Chair asked whether there was any new or unfinished business. R. Bruce Stratton informed the Board of a recent fatal motor vehicle crash involving a deputy sheriff and asked members to remember the deputy's family and other public safety personnel affected by roadway incidents. No additional business was presented.

Next Meeting

Discussion: The next meeting of the State EMS Advisory Board is scheduled for Friday, November 6, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Training Center.

Adjournment

Discussion: With no further business or comments, Chair Dr. Paula Ferrada adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Prepared by: Mohamed G. Abbamin, MPA