

**Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, 15 January 2009**

Room 216  
 State Capital Building  
 Atlanta, Georgia

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
<p>Dr. Dennis Ashley,                      Linda Cole                      Dr. Leon Haley                      Ben Hinson                      Dr. Rhonda Medows                      Bill Moore                      Dr. Joe Sam Robinson                      Kurt Stuenkel                      Kelli Vaughn</p> <p>Others documented as present:                      Kelly McNamara                      Jim Sargent                      Alex Sponseller                      Regina Medeiros                      Lonice Barrett                      Courtney Terwilliger                      Keith Wages                      Josh Mackey                      Art Kellerman                      Mary Eleanor Wickersham                      Elly Dobbs                      Bill Burns                      Scott Maxwell                      Rebecca Greener                      Larry Lanier                      Paula Guy                      Rena Brewer                      Renee Morgan                      Randy Clayton                      Cherri Tucker                      Collette Caldwell</p>	

Marie Probst Jamila Pope Valarie Edwards Janet Schwalbe Fran Lewis Mary Lou Dennis Jim Pettyjohn	
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**Call to order:**

Dr. Ashley called the meeting to order at ~1005.

**18 December minutes approval:**

Dr. Joe Sam Robinson made a motion to approve the 18 December GTCNC meeting minutes as written and submitted. Motion seconded by Dr. Leon Haley. Motion passed unanimously.

**Administrative report:**

Jim Pettyjohn asked the Commission for action regarding past and outstanding GTCNC meeting minutes requiring Commission's approval; March, April, June, August, September and October 2008. Mr. Pettyjohn noted that the Commission members were sent these minutes by email and that printed copies were provided to them today. Dr. Joe Sam Robinson made a motion to approve the March, April, June, August, September and October 2008 minutes as written and submitted. Motion seconded by Kelli Vaughn. Motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Ashley spoke to the need of keeping the Georgia trauma system stakeholders informed of the Commission's business but not circulating the Commission meeting minutes before they are approved. Jim Pettyjohn suggested a process to meet that need. A "meeting notes" document for each GTCNC meeting will be developed soon after each Commission meeting and sent out to all stakeholders. This document will contain a "DRAFT" watermark clearly visible and the words "Meeting Notes." Meeting minutes for each GTCNC meeting will also be developed. Meeting minutes will not be disseminated unless and until the GTCNC votes to approve as such. Discussion ensued. Commission members spoke in agreement to the plan of developing and sending meeting notes to stakeholders and not disseminating Commission minutes until approved by GTCNC.

**DHR Report:**

Renee Morgan, trauma systems manager, provided DHR report as Dr. O'Neal was attending other official business elsewhere.

Renee Morgan stated she has received all the documentation necessary to move the trauma center capital grants program awards forward to the contracting step. Ms. Morgan has met with the DHR contracts department to identify the process to get the money to the hospitals ASAP and based upon the specific capital equipment or construction deliverables delineated in each grant

application and the recommendations by the hospital capital grant subcommittee and approved by the GTCNC.

Ms. Morgan continued to update Commission on recent staff losses within the Office of Preparedness. The State EMS director, emergency preparedness director, and preparedness grants' manager have all resigned within the last week. Billy Watson, regional director for EMS region four has been named interim State EMS director. Ms. Morgan emphasized that these staff losses were resignations and not a result of staffing cuts. Dr. Ashley asked if the recent loss of these key staff would put the Office of EMS in a "crisis situation?" Dr. Ashley stated he believes that the Office has had a history of understaffing and these losses are critical. Ms. Morgan stated that the Office of EMS is working to do "critical hires." Ben Hinson said that the office EMS was in crisis situation "last year." Mr. Hinson stated that the situation was beyond crisis. He referenced the recent American College of Surgeons consultation visit and the review team's finding that there was a tremendous lack of EMS and trauma program infrastructure at the state-level. He continued on saying that it is almost "counter-intuitive" that the legislature provides funding for the trauma system providers but that there is so little funding for the necessary infrastructure to manage the system. Mr. Hinson said it is crucial to get funding for EMS and trauma program infrastructure. Dr. Ashley asked Renee Morgan to clarify his understanding that there was a state-level EMS trainer position that has been vacant for some time. Ms. Morgan said that position has been vacant for almost five years. That position is responsible for overseeing training in the EMS regional offices helping to maintain the skills of the field medics and oversight of statewide EMS training curricula and record keeping. Dr. Ashley stated that addressing trauma program and system infrastructure including EMS infrastructure is a very important matter for the Commission.

Ms. Morgan informed the group of the recent American College of Surgeons (ACS) trauma system consultation visit during 04 through 07 January in Atlanta. She stated the event went really well and that the State had prepared well. ACS asked some very tough questions and seemed to be able to develop an understanding of the Georgia trauma system quickly. A full report will be available in about 6 to 8 weeks. Ms. Morgan stated the top ACS recommendations would include: building a better and more complete infrastructure for the State EMS Office and statewide EMS system to support trauma system development, monitoring and regulation. She added the recommendations would include that the state would need to readdress and modify the state trauma plan developed some time ago, but never approved, to reflect more of the necessary integration of the trauma subsystems. Dr. Ashley said the ACS visit was a great opportunity for the Commission whose work it is to develop a trauma plan for Georgia. He said the Commission must work to integrate the ACS recommendations into the state trauma plan. Mr. Hinson made a motion that the Commission pass a resolution commending the State Office of EMS for all the great work accomplished in the preparation of the ACS consultation visit. He went on to suggest that Dr. Ashley write a letter commending each of the state trauma program staff members for doing such a great job. Dr. Robinson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **GPS vehicle locater system update:**

Ben Hinson reminded the Commission that last year they voted to give \$996,000 via contract between DHR and the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) to create a GPS-based vehicle locater system that would be the starting point for the beginning infrastructure of the transfer center/system, vehicle locater system, and directional assistance to ambulances. The contract

between GTRI and DHR has not been signed. The GPS-based vehicle locator system concept is new, innovative and is getting a lot of attention and interest from many people. Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) is interested working with the Commission on this project. GEMA has \$2 million to \$3 million it could possibly contribute to the project at some point. The GEMA money would come from federal Homeland Security grants. Georgia State Patrol is also in the process of deploying a GPS mobile data terminal and data gathering systems in Georgia State Patrol vehicles across the state. The Governor has asked the State Patrol leadership to meet with the Commission and possibly coordinate activities and programs. Coordination of these efforts will make for a better system all around. Mr. Hinson went on to say that for GEMA and State Patrol to join efforts with the Commission, a more detailed and specific contract would have to be developed for GTRI, which would include a specific "statement of work," clear deliverables with firm delivery dates. GEMA and State Patrol has suggested to the Commission that the Department of Administrative Services (DoAS) write the improved contract with GTRI. DoAS is a procurement office and develops state contracts routinely. DoAS could write a contract for the Commission with GTRI that would be conducive to GEMA and the Georgia State Patrol's collaboration and support. Mr. Hinson made a motion that the Commission direct DHR to hold on the contract currently awaiting signature with GTRI. The Commission should then direct DHR to develop a contract or process with DoAS to receive the \$996,000 earmarked for the GPS-based vehicle locator system. The Commission should appoint a project manager to work out the coordination details and particulars between GTRI, State Patrol, GEMA and DoAS to ensure the system contracted for is the system the Commission requires. DoAS would be directed to develop and manage a contract with GTRI to do the work. Mr. Hinson suggested the particulars could possibly be worked out in a couple of weeks and an acceptable contract between DoAS and GTRI could follow quickly. Mr. Hinson has been in contact with the Governor's Office, which agrees with the change and the inclusion of DoAS. Mr. Hinson also stated Dr. O'Neal supports the change and believes it is the best way to go forward. Dr. Robinson seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. Linda Cole stated she wanted to comment on the need for a project manager. She continued that there are many stakeholders and players who are and should be involved with similar and associated supportive efforts such as the Georgia Hospital Association that is working on improving communications and hospital diversion issues. She inquired as to who Mr. Hinson had in mind as the project manager and reminded the Commission that there are many constituencies and stakeholders that could benefit from this work and that it is important that all are working together on this from the beginning. Mr. Hinson said he would like to use Dan Brown from the State Patrol and that Mr. Brown and Ben Hinson would work together on managing the project initially. Mr. Hinson went on to say that the biggest part of what is needed now is not the technology but addressing the politics and building the relationships necessary for success and getting a quality contract in place. Mr. Hinson stated that contract language is needed to direct GTRI to develop the system in such a way that allows for all the different stakeholders and potential users to have the capability to link with and use the system according to their needs. Mr. Hinson said he would like to be the Commission's official project manager for about a month or until the contract is ready. He went on to say that there might need to be a project manager identified within the contract and budgeted for to carry on and provide oversight to the GTRI for the Commission. Ms. Cole voiced her support and suggested there be a representative from one of the trauma center transfer centers included early on in the conversations to make sure that the initial build of the system includes both hospitals and EMS. Mr. Hinson agreed. He went on to suggest there would be a stakeholder committee established to provide insight to the system's

development needs. Mr. Hinson continued to say that what is needed now is to build a contract with GTRI so that as other funds are made available, there does not have to be new or additional or overlapping contracts developed and written. He said DoAS could build that kind of contract for the Commission. Dr. Ashley asked Mr. Hinson to report back to the Commission at the next meeting on the progress and ask Mr. Brown to address the Commission. Mr. Hinson agreed with Dr. Ashley and requested, if the motion is passed, that he be allowed to move forward with working on developing the contract between DoAS and GTRI. Dr. Ashley agreed. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Ashley asked Mr. Hinson to update the Commission on the status of the EMS vehicle replacement grant process. GAEMS is working with GEMA to get the grant application process moving. A letter above Dr. Ashley and Dr. O'Neal's signature was sent to all EMS services last week accompanying the application and explaining the purpose and process. There have been a lot of questions from the EMS services. Mr. Hinson is working with Courtney Terwilliger, president of GAEMS to get all questions answered and information to the EMS services. Mr. Terwilliger informed the Commission that the services had until 27 February to submit the applications. GEMA is working to locate an outside interest to review and score the applications. Mr. Terwilliger stated he wanted the Commission to agree to provide vehicle replacement dollars to awarded services based upon when a service issues a valid purchase order for the replacement vehicle rather than wait for the vehicle to be delivered to the local EMS service. Mr. Hinson asked Mr. Terwilliger to get with GEMA and develop the exact language to describe how and when GEMA would fund dollars to a vehicle replacement grant awardee. He suggested the Commission, at the February meeting, to hear and possibly approve that language.

### **Draft 2009 -14 Commission Plan For Georgia Trauma System**

Dr. Ashley asked Greg Bishop from Bishop + Associates to present the draft plan developed over the past year working with the Commission, including all day workshops conducted monthly during the Fall. Dr. Ashley stated the plan represents a rough draft of the Commission's plan, which will be reviewed by the subcommittees and finalized by the Commission as a draft to be sent out to the Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the House and Legislature and stakeholders for their comments. Dr. Ashley stated that the forthcoming American College of Surgeons Georgia trauma system consultation report would also inform the GTCNC's plan for Georgia. Mr. Bishop reported on the following 15 goals and objectives within the draft plan:

1. Maintain Stabilized And Strengthened Trauma Centers
2. Expand Number of Trauma Centers Focusing On South Georgia
3. Strengthen Emergency Medical Services Focusing On Rural Regions
4. Develop Statewide Trauma Transfer/Communications System
5. Pilot/Build Trauma Telemedicine System
6. Enhance Pediatric Trauma Subsystem
7. Strengthen Physician Support For Trauma Care In Rural Georgia
8. Expand System To Rehabilitation, Burn Care, & Interstate Transfers
9. Assist In Initiatives To Reduce Traumatic Injury
10. Integrate Trauma System With Disaster/Terror Preparedness

11. Expand System To Acute Emergency Care Needs
12. Develop Trauma System Regionalization In Georgia
13. Continue Developing Trauma System Policy/Stakeholder Structure
14. Build Trauma System Infrastructure Under Department of Health
15. Establish Mechanisms To Assure Exceptional Accountability

During Mr. Bishop's report Senator Cecil Staton arrived at the Commission meeting and Dr. Ashley acknowledged Mr. Staton's work with and for the Commission and asked Mr. Staton to address the Commission if he wished. Mr. Staton welcomed the Commission members and meeting attendees to the State Capital. He went on to thank the members for their service on the Commission. Senator Staton stated he believed Senate Bill 60 set Georgia on the road to developing something that will make a huge difference for its citizens. He recalled that on the second day of the current session he spoke from the floor of the General Assembly supporting the need for a trauma system in Georgia. He spoke that it will be difficult to find money for trauma system development during this legislative session; but asked the Commission to keep on working and moving forward on the plan under development to put the Georgia trauma system in place. Senator Staton pledged he would continue the good fight and find resources to help make progress to put the system in place to save lives.

Dr. Ashley also introduced and welcomed Mary Eleanor Wickersham from the Governor's Office. He stated Ms. Wickersham has been very supportive and has been attending the Commission meetings.

Dr. Ashley spoke to his plan to form subcommittees to prioritize goals and objectives listed in Mr. Bishop's plan.

**Other business:**

Dr. Ashley spoke to the need to include Georgia trauma system stakeholders in the Commission activities. He stated he wanted to charge a subcommittee to look into ways the Commission could broaden the stakeholder base, how a stakeholder's committee would be formed, what the stakeholder's role would be, and what the history is in the state regarding stakeholders groups. Dr. Ashley stated the Commission has the responsibility to design the trauma system, make sure the system works, develop policy but the Commission must have a way to monitor the pulse of the state and system...and that must include a role for the trauma system stakeholders. Dr. Ashley suggested Kurt Stuenkel, Linda Cole and Bill Moore be on a committee to study the stakeholder issue and take on the responsibility of developing bylaws for the Commission as well. Dr. Ashley also requested that Dr. O'Neal, Renee Morgan, and Marie Probst participate on the stakeholder and bylaws. Alex Sponseller from the Attorney General's Office will participate on the bylaws work. Ben Hinson requested that he also work on the bylaws and stakeholder subcommittee. Kurt Stuenkel will chair the subcommittee.

**Next meeting:**

The next meeting will be on 19 February in Atlanta at the State Capital building and hopefully in Room 216.

**Adjourn:**

Meeting was adjourned at 1158.