

---

# It's always good to know where you stand – especially with a trauma system

The American College of Surgeons came to town in May, at the request of DSHS, to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Texas Trauma System and let us know where we are as our system matures. We think the survey went very well – and we were very glad when it was over! It was an intense week for staff and stakeholders. DSHS staff had spent a couple of months putting together the approximately 6500-page supporting documentation for surveyors before they arrived, then surveyors spent two days questioning stakeholders before sequestering themselves to try to make some sense of it all. Surveyors gave an exit presentation before they left, which is posted on our website. The final report will arrive September 1. For more information on the visit, turn to page 42.

GETAC decided on meeting dates for 2011 and now we are in the Process (and I do mean Process with a capital P) of getting bids from all the Austin hotels and sending them to our purchasing department. The tentative dates for GETAC meetings are February 22-25, May 11-13 and August 17-19. However, until the purchase order is signed, sealed and delivered and we know we have meeting space lined up, nothing is final.

Thanks to everyone who submitted presentations for Texas EMS Conference 2010. We received nearly 300 presentations but had slots for fewer than half that number. It is always difficult to choose – and even more so, it seemed, this year. A list of the classes is on page 20. And speaking of the conference, don't forget that we've expanded the exhibit hall hours into Tuesday morning this year.

The state budget is on everyone's mind these days – especially when numbers like \$18 billion are mentioned in the same sentence with “budget shortfall.” We won't know about the shortfall or what the Legislature will do about it until next year, but we are already preparing at DSHS. State agencies were directed to cut five percent from their proposed budgets a few months ago and now must trim an additional ten percent. In addition, the agencies under the Health and Human Services Commission are under a partial hiring freeze, which means many vacancies will not be filled in the near future. (Certain positions, such as direct care jobs at the state school and positions that are funded by federal dollars are exempt from the freeze.) Each time we have a vacancy in EMS/trauma, we must petition the Health Commissioner and justify why the position must not go unfilled. We've been given the green light to hire some positions, while others will have to remain vacant. We'll keep you updated.

And finally, our hearts sank when we heard that a CareFlite helicopter had crashed on a maintenance flight in June. Killed were chief pilot Guy Del Giudice and mechanic Stephen Durler (see page 7 for details). Our thoughts go out to the families of these men, including their CareFlite family.

## FROM THIS SIDE



**Kelly Harrell**  
Editor

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Kelly".