

Office of EMS Trauma Systems
Texas Department of State Health Services
dshs.texas.gov/dshs-ems-trauma-systems



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

When faced with an emergency, you want the system to work well!

From this Side

EMS/Trauma Systems leadership team and staff share their experiences and perspectives to spark conversation on issues important to the EMS and trauma system in Texas.

Updates

The Office of EMS/Trauma Systems provides the latest regulatory changes, important programmatic data, and relevant funding information to keep you informed.

News and Links

Access current news, initiatives, and publications from national EMS and public health organizations, as well as links to GETAC, rules, and enforcement actions.

Human Trafficking: Red flags when treating patients

EMS Instructor Suh Hughart, EMT-P explores the indicators that someone you are treating may be a victim of human trafficking.

Opioids and EMS: Resources to help fight the fentanyl crisis

Help support the Texas initiative to fight opioid dependency. We provide resources, and course information to help spread the word.

GETAC committee member selections

The Governors EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) Committees welcome new members.

FROM THIS SIDE

Insight • Inspiration • Ideas



DSHS Announces 2022 Texas EMS Award Winners

The Texas Department of State Health Services EMS-Trauma Systems Program presented its annual emergency medical services awards on Nov. 22, 2022 at the Texas EMS Conference in Austin with special guest speaker, Dr. Jennifer Shuford, DSHS Commissioner.

Each of the award categories honors a person or organization that exemplifies the highest standards of the Texas EMS/Trauma System.



EMS Medical Director

Casey Patrick, MD – Spring, pictured with DSHS Commissioner, Dr. Jennifer Shuford

EMS Citizen

Joseph Wenske – Waelder

EMS Provider

Titus Regional Medical Center EMS – Mount Pleasant

EMS Person of the Year

Gentry O'Connor, EMT - Kingwood

GETAC Journey of Excellence

J. Neal Rutledge, MD – Austin

EMS Public Information/ Injury Prevention

Chief Lee Richardson – Sachse

EMS Educator

Roy Hunter, LP – Friendswood

EMS Telecommunicator

Alexis Perez – Austin

EMS Administrator

Xavier De La Rosa, LP – Spring



Lifetime Achievement Award

John Hellerstedt, MD – Austin, pictured with GETAC Chair, Dr. Alan Tyroch



EMS Air Medical

Travis County STAR Flight – Austin, pictured with State EMS Director, Joe Schmider

When faced with an emergency, you want the system to work well!

Community Health Improvement Division, Maternal and Child Health Section's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Trauma Registries ([EMS/TR](#))
Consumer Protection Division's [EMS and Trauma Systems](#)

During the pandemic, virtual collaboration was a challenge across many industries. This was especially true for emergency medical and hospital services. Even now, there are major procedural changes to emergency medical care and lasting impacts to first responders. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Trauma Systems Section (located in the Consumer Protection Division) and the Office of Injury Prevention's EMS and Trauma Registries (located in the Community Health Improvement Division) meet weekly to analyze these impacts and improve the continuity of emergency medical care across the state of Texas.

Although the two program names sound similar, each supports Texas' EMS and trauma responses differently.

EMS and Trauma Systems:

- Oversees EMS certification and licensure;
- Assigns hospital trauma designations;
- Works with over 80,000 agencies and personnel to improve Texas' emergency medical care; and
- Monitors the quality of emergency care by working closely with the emergency services stakeholders.

The EMS and Trauma Registries handles over 4 million records a year to track:

- Public health trends;
- Ambulance responses; and
- Hospital trauma patients.

Internal and external stakeholders use this data to detect trends, allocate funding, and enhance emergency care. Together, the two programs provide critical EMS and trauma data analysis to emergency care leadership. EMS and Trauma Systems provides field experience to help explain the data that EMS and Trauma Registries provides. When the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC), regional advisory councils, (RACs), or hospitals submit questions, the two programs rely on each other to develop the most appropriate response.

As Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success!"



EMS/Trauma Registries Branch and EMS/Trauma Systems Section also work with the National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) to include data in national datasets and analyses. Regular communication from all levels of federal, state, and local administration is key to the success and longevity of the state's EMS/Trauma system. It is estimated that every 10 seconds in Texas an ambulance is dispatched to an emergency call for help. Over 73,000 dedicated personnel operating over 5,000 vehicles are prepared to respond, no matter the time of day or weather condition. As a coordinated team using the statewide data, we provide invaluable information back to decision makers, including when to staff an ambulance, the type of equipment to carry on the vehicle, and historic information on the type of patients and injuries the responders could expect to see.

EMS/Trauma Registries and EMS/Trauma Systems Section staff are not physically in the ambulance, but the data given to stakeholders is having a lifesaving impact on patients that are treated and transported to the correct healthcare facility. By our two teams working together, Texas is a safer, healthier state, and as Department of State Health Services Team members, we are proud to provide this service!

Human Trafficking: Red Flags When Treating Patients

By Suh Hughart, EMT-P, EMS Instructor



January 11th is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Education and awareness are your best tools to combat human trafficking. As awareness about human trafficking increases, the number of victims found will continue to rise.

Human trafficking is a phrase you've probably heard with increasing frequency over the past few years. Human trafficking cases have increased globally. While it may be easy to think that it only happens in other countries or during largely glamorized events, the reality is that it is happening right in front of our eyes.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 made human trafficking a federal crime. According to the Department of Homeland Security's "Blue Campaign," human trafficking is defined as using force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act.

As a healthcare provider, have you ever cared for a victim of human trafficking? According to a 2014 study by Leander and Wetzel, you probably have and may not have recognized it. Their study revealed that 87.8% of all victims of human trafficking interacted with healthcare professionals at some point while being trafficked. They further showed that 68.3% of victims accessed emergency services while being trafficked.

Here are some indicators that your patient could be a victim of human trafficking:

- Your patient has no identification.
- Your patient is unsure of their whereabouts.
- Your patient is escorted or monitored by another person. If they do not speak English, their trafficker could be the one translating for them.
- Your patient is called by a name other than their legal name.
- Your patient has inconsistencies in their story.
- Your patient seems to have a general lack of healthcare.

Some physical signs of sex trafficking can include:

- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Complaints of pelvic pain
- Rectal trauma
- Pregnancy
- Branding or tattoos in places that are not hidden on the body. Sometimes traffickers will tattoo or brand victims to show ownership.

When you encounter a victim of human trafficking here are a few things to be aware of:

- Your patient may not know they are a victim.
- Your patient may have been psychologically manipulated. Traffickers go to great lengths to control their victims; psychological torture is not uncommon.
- Certain wording can make a victim shut down. The victim is possibly being trafficked by someone they love, such as a spouse, significant other, or family member. They may take offense to words like "perpetrator" or "abuser."

If you encounter a victim of human trafficking, there are various resources that can be utilized.

Transport the patient to a hospital with an on-site social worker and notify the hospital of your concerns before you arrive. Contact law enforcement. If your patient admits to being a victim of human trafficking and consents, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline. One-hundred percent of all cases and calls are investigated.

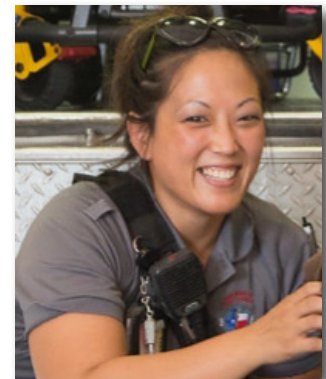
To reach the National Human Trafficking Hotline, call 1-888-373-7888, or text HELP to 233733 (BEFREE).

References:

1. Lederer L. and Wetzel C. The health consequences of sex trafficking and their implications for identifying victims in healthcare facilities. *Annals of Health Law*. 2014;23(1):77-78
2. Recognizing the Signs (n.d) In National Human Trafficking Hotline from <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/human-trafficking/recognizing-signs>
3. Indicators of Human Trafficking (n.d.) In U.S. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign from <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/indicators-human-trafficking>

Resources:

Allies Against Slavery
International Labor Organization
Polaris Project
Blue Campaign



Suh Hughart

BE THE ONE
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Please call the 24-hour hotline
to report suspicious activity
1-888-3737-888
OR
text: **233733**

PREVENT ★ RECOGNIZE ★ REPORT



Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Resources

Texas Human Trafficking Resource Center

The Texas Human Trafficking Resource Center connects Health and Human Services staff, health care providers, stakeholders and those who have experienced human trafficking to resources needed to locate services, help prevent trafficking, and recognize and respond to potential trafficking situations.

Health Care Practitioner Human Trafficking Training

House Bill 2059, 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, requires Health and Human Services to approve training courses on human trafficking, including at least one that is free of charge, post the list of approved courses on the HHS website, and update the list of approved courses as necessary.

Use January to help spread the word that human trafficking is not tolerated in Texas.

Participate in the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11 by wearing blue and sharing your picture on social media.
#wearblueday #TexansAreNotForSale.

Watch the [Be the One](#) video. Educate yourself about how to watch for signs of trafficking by watching our video, *Be the One*.



Opioids and EMS: Resources to help fight the fentanyl crisis

Much attention has been given to the abuse/misuse of fentanyl and other opioids nationwide. With many EMS providers supplying fentanyl for pain management on ambulances, reliable and accurate narcotic storage, administration, and waste tracking are paramount. Vigilance and recognition are the responsibility of EMS Provider management and the members of our EMS family.

The EMS and Trauma Systems' [Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Resources](#) webpage provides information on the [Texas EMS Peer Referral Program](#) for substance misuse or mental health support for our Texas EMS workforce, such as the [UTHealth and Trauma Resilience Center](#) and the [Heroes First Responders Program](#). These resources provide helpful and much-needed information when a member of our EMS family needs help. The Heroes Helpline is specifically for first responders and is available for immediate, **anonymous** support by calling **1-833-EMS-inTX**; the department receives NO identifying information about those who need help or treatment.

Non-fatal Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) [Non-Fatal Opioid Overdose Tracker](#) looks at data submitted by emergency medical services (EMS) nationally to track non-fatal opioid overdoses in the pre-hospital setting. Users of this dashboard can filter by state and county to view the average time it takes for EMS to reach overdose patients, the average number of opioid overdoses, the rate of non-fatal overdoses per 100,000 population, and the average number of Naloxone administrations per patient.

For more information regarding how to use this dashboard, please see the [companion document](#).

To see how Texas EMS compares to the nationwide average response to non-fatal opioid overdoses, visit the surveillance dashboard on the National Emergency Medical Services Information System ([NEMSIS](#)) website.

Texas Fights Back

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine, and it contributes significantly to accidental drug overdose deaths in Texas. There are many efforts in Texas aimed at fighting the fentanyl crisis.

[Texas Targeted Opioid Response](#) provides valuable information on fentanyl and other opioids, the dangers of counterfeit drugs, and an explanation of how prescription opioids affect the brain. Video resources are also available to help viewers have life-saving conversations about prescription drugs.

The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston has launched several behavioral health training modules through its HEROES program, and they are specifically designed for first responders. These courses can be completed online and at your own pace; additionally, you can earn one continuing education (CE) credit hour for each completed course. While they offer a variety of mental health and wellness topics, there are four opioid-related learning opportunities.

- [First Responders' Guide to Opioid Overdose](#) offers an overview of opioids, overdose, and overdose reversal drugs.
- [Medication for Opioid Use Disorder](#) provides information on opioid use disorder and medication-assisted treatment.
- [Opioid Crisis in Today's Youth](#) discusses current trends, risks, and prevention programs available for adolescents.
- [Treating Opioid Overdose: How to Use Narcan](#) demonstrates how opioid overdose occurs and gives guidance on using Narcan to reverse it.

Click below to access messaging resources developed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to increase awareness about the fentanyl crisis. Download **#onepillkills** social media posts, graphics, and flyers.



TOGETHER
Texans can fight
the **fentanyl crisis.**

 TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

#OnePillKills

National Registry Representative Course Coming in April

The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) is holding a National Registry Representative Training Course on April 13, 2023, during the Texas EMS Educators Summit in Corpus Christi, TX.

Requirements: Applicants must,

- have at least five years of Texas paramedic licensure or at least five years of licensure from another designated approval authority (DAA), including those for physicians, nurses, and advanced practice providers, and
- hold current National Registry paramedic certification or have the ability to gain certification within 12 months (state officials exempt).

Those willing to serve in rural areas will be given priority.

Cost: Course registration \$50, includes lunch and breaks.

Application Process: By January 27, 2023, nominees must,

- complete an [application](#) and
- email resume to emseducation@dshs.texas.gov

You must receive approval from the EMS Trauma Systems office to register for the course.

Selection: Applicants who meet the course criteria will be notified by February 1, 2023. View more information at [Texas EMS Educators Summit](#).

Texas EMS Compact 101

Texas enacted the EMS Personnel Licensure Interstate Compact (Texas Health and Safety Code Sec. 778A.001) by signing into law House Bill 2498 in 2015 and is currently entered into the compact with 21 other states. The purpose of the EMS Compact is to protect the public through verification of competency and ensure accountability for patient care-related activities involving all state-licensed emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, such as emergency medical technicians (EMTs), advanced EMTs, and paramedics.

This compact is intended to facilitate the day-to-day movement of EMS personnel across state boundaries during the performance of their EMS duties as assigned by an appropriate authority (EMS Provider Medical Director), authorizing states to afford immediate legal recognition to EMS personnel licensed in a member state.

What does this mean?

Currently, certified EMS personnel from Compact states can come to Texas and begin working or volunteering with an EMS Provider immediately with the Medical Director's approval. EMS Providers shall maintain written documentation that the Medical Director has approved and authorized the person to perform EMS treatment and transport skills under the physician's delegated practice authority. No documentation needs to be submitted to the State office; however, it must be available upon request. For more information on the National EMS Compact, please visit [emscompact.gov](https://www.emscompact.gov) or contact your State [regional](#) EMS staff.

GETAC Committee Member Selections



The Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council mission is to continuously enhance our EMS and Trauma system for our stakeholders in Texas as we meet the emergency health care needs of all Texans. This mission is met by the GETAC council members' continued support through the endless work of dedicated professionals serving on various committees.

We welcome the newest committee members and express appreciation to the outgoing members for their commitment of time and service to fulfill our vision of a unified, comprehensive, and effective Emergency Healthcare System.

Air Medical and Specialty Care Transport Committee

Reappointed:

Randall Scott Christopher, Joshua Cools, Michael Mock

Newly Appointed:

Adam Gallagher, John Hamilton, Dr. Lesley Osborn, William Solomon

Cardiac Care Committee

Outgoing:

Dr. Ben Bobrow, Lisa Fox, Dr. Lloyd Tannenbaum, David Wampler

Reappointed:

Krista Knowles, Karen Yates

Newly Appointed:

Heather Bidy, Nancy Huard, Suzanne Mewis, Pedro Palacios, Casey Rauschuber, Dr. Alan Taylor

Disaster Response and Preparedness Committee

Outgoing:

Dr. Neil Gandhi, Michael Nofzinger

Reappointed:

Joe Fowler, Wanda Helgesen, Scot Leatherwood, Ronald Nichols, Rene Perez, Candice Smith, Kenneth Webb

Newly Appointed:

Lisa Spivey, Chase Wheeler

EMS Education Committee

Outgoing:

Jamie Praslicka, Dr. Lesley Osborn

Reappointed:

Lee Gillum, Christopher Nations

Newly Appointed:

Brian Ayres, Miranda Hagans, Shirlinda Savahl

Emergency Medical Services Committee

Outgoing:

Jason Dush, Pedro Palacios, Paul Pulley, Edward Turner, Keir Vernon

Reappointed:

James Campbell, Aaron Clouse, Kevin Deramus, Steven Dralle, Terry Hazlett, Dwayne Howerton, Don Janes, Ricky Reeves

Newly Appointed:

Sheri Adams, Gerardo Garcia, Teresa Gardner, Angela Prather, Kelly Sears

EMS Medical Directors Committee

Outgoing:

Dr. Richard Bradley, Dr. Javier Cortinas, Dr. Yagnesh Desai, Dr. Robert Hancock, Dr. Renee Johnson

Newly Appointed:

Dr. Elizabeth Fagan, Dr. Neil Gandhi, Dr. Mark Sparkman

Injury Prevention and Public Education Committee

Outgoing:

Nisi Bennett, Enoc Espinoza, Dr. Mark Sparkman, Dr. Shabana Yusuf

Reappointed:

Marisa Abbe, Jennifer Northway, Veronica Silva

Newly Appointed:

Sharon Cheatum, Amanda Morlock, Amber Tucker

Pediatric Committee

Outgoing:

Dr. Timothy Ruttan, Dr. Roger Timperlake

Reappointed:

Sondra Epley, Dr. Erin Lincoln, Dr. Jessica Naiditch, Karen Rhodes, Christi Thornhill, Samuel Vance

Newly Appointed:

Crystal Bassham, Dr. Prashant Joshi, Dr. Kathryn Kothari

Stroke Committee:

New Chair

Dr. Robin Novakovic

Outgoing:

Dr. J. Neal Rutledge, Chair
Dr. Lee Birnbaum, Dr. Adam Borowski, Dr. Elizabeth Fagan, Jennifer Skinner, Gilberto Torres

Reappointed:

Allison Capetillo, Dr. Avni Kapadia, Dr. Saud Khan, Janine Mazabob, Dr. Sean Savitz

Newly Appointed:

Katherine Bissell, Juan Delgadillo, Sarah Hancock, Remedios Morris, Dr. Arash Shadman, Amanda Webb

Trauma Systems Committee

Outgoing:

Dr. Daniel Bonville, Rebecca Crocker, Rosemarie George, Kelle Harrison, Dr. Josephine Livingston

Reappointed:

Dr. Raul Barreda, Dr. Timothy Nunez, Shawn Patton, Kate Schaefer

Newly Appointed:

Jennifer Carr, Dr. Aileen Ebadat, Dawn Koepp, Dr. Elizabeth Scherer

Updates

Regulations • Programs • Funding



Maternal Rules Adopted (H.B. 1164 and S.B. 749)

The [maternal rules](#) were published for adoption in the Texas Register on December 13, 2022, and are effective January 1, 2023. The EMS/Trauma Systems section's designation unit has contacted all designated maternal facilities whose designation expires before September 2023 and provided the option of delaying or rescheduling their survey as needed.

Surveys that occur after April 1, 2023, will follow the new maternal rules. This process continues to be discussed during the monthly perinatal calls with the department to provide clarification and guidance and answer any questions.



Neonatal Rule Amendments (S.B. 749)

The proposed neonatal rule is scheduled for review by the Executive Council on February 16, 2023. The formal public comment period will begin mid-January and will be open for 31 days. The anticipated adoption of the proposed neonatal rules is May 15, 2023. If this rule packet remains on track, the implementation date for these rules to be effective is January 1, 2024. After January 1, 2024, all neonatal surveys will follow the new designation requirements.

Trauma Rule Amendments

The proposed trauma rule amendments will enter the Rules Coordination Office (RCO) on March 10, 2023. The anticipated formal public comment period is July 21, 2023, to August 21, 2023; the department and the defined workgroup members representing GETAC, trauma systems committee, and RAC leaders will review all formal public comments. The anticipated adoption date is November 2023. Trauma facilities will be held accountable to the revised designation requirements beginning June 2024. It is important to note that the American College of Surgeons (ACS) will implement its 2022 Verification Standards on September 1, 2023. The RAC contracts will align with the new rules in August 2024.

RULES

Updates

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EMSCERTIFICATION

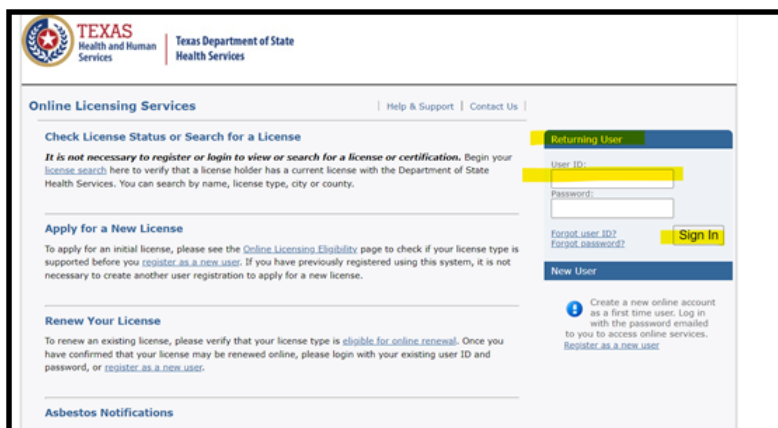
Certification documents available online

Emergency medical services (EMS) certificates and wallet cards for EMS personnel and educators are now delivered to your Department of State Health Services (DSHS) [online account](#). Look for the section Secure Mailbox within your account. Certificates are processed overnight and sent to online account mailboxes on Wednesdays and Fridays each week, allowing you to print your certificate or wallet card.

As a reminder, DSHS encourages online verification of an EMS certification or license rather than accepting copies of certificates or cards. [Online verification](#) is free and ensures you have the most accurate information concerning the certification or license status of EMS personnel.

Locate your EMS Certificate or ID card in your [DSHS Account](#)

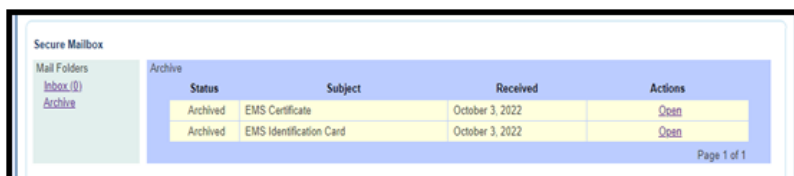
Log into your DSHS Account



In the Quick Start menu, look for Secure Mailbox.



Look in your inbox and you can open your certificate or card, in pdf format, and you may print or save your document.



Updates

Regulations • Programs • Funding



SENATE BILL 8

Are we making progress?

From the early data, it truly looks like we are going in the right direction due to the strong support from our EMS Stakeholders and the Regional Advisory Councils.

- 45.97% of the currently certified license EMS personnel have completed at least one patient care record as of December 22, 2022. That's up from 43.18% in 2020.
- 95.42% of currently licensed EMS Providers are submitting patient care records, up from 77.27% in 2019.
- As of November 2022, there are 73,817 certified EMS personnel in Texas, up from 68,461 in 2019 but down from 75,733 in early 2021.
- On December 15, 2022, the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) reported that 476 scholarships have been processed or are in the course of being processed.
- In 2021, there were 481 initial EMS education course applications submitted to DSHS between September 1 through December 31. In 2022, there were 538 initial EMS education courses applications submitted to DSHS from September 1 through December 31.

Watch for a media campaign starting the first quarter of 2023!



Out-of-Hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate form available in Spanish

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has released a Spanish version of the current Out-of-Hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate (OOH DNR) order. Both the English and Spanish versions can be downloaded on the [EMS/Trauma Systems website](#), along with "Frequently Asked Questions About OOH DNR," also in both languages.

For questions related to OOH DNR orders, please email EMSInfo@dshs.texas.gov.

DNR

NEWS AND LINKS

Local • National • Resources

NHTSA's EMS Update

Learn more about current projects and efforts in EMS from NHTSA and its Federal partners.

[Learn more](#)

CDC Newsroom

View the latest CDC public health news and press releases.

[Learn more](#)

The Bulletin

The Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons.

[Learn more](#)

Washington Update

Bi-monthly newsletter of the National Association of State EMS Officials.

[Learn more](#)

EMSC Pulse

A digest of information about the pediatric emergency medical care community.

[Learn more](#)

Integrated Healthcare

Focuses on improving the patient experience of care through inter-professional collaborations.

[Learn more](#)

EMS/Trauma Systems Links

GETAC

Visit the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council web page to view council, committee, and meeting information.

Rules

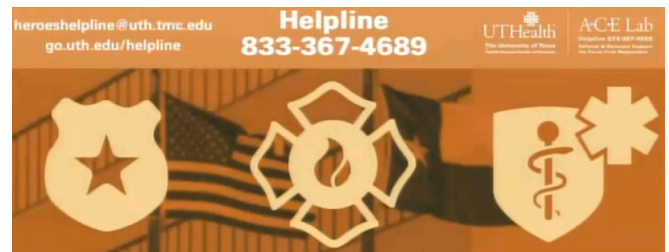
Links to the Texas Administrative Code rules pertaining to EMS/Trauma Systems.

Disciplinary actions

Public notice of disciplinary action by the Department of State Health Services and the Consumer Protection Division, Consumer Safety Unit.

Staff Contacts

Contact information for the Office of EMS/Trauma Systems staff and programs.



Texas Department of State Health Services



Questions, comments, or suggestions about *Texas EMS Trauma News*? Contact us at EMSTraumaNews@dshs.state.tx.us.

External links to other sites are intended to be informational and do not have the endorsement of the Texas Department of State Health Services.