National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of the Chairman

JUN 19 2012

Kevin Yeskey, MD
Chairman, Federal Interagency Committee
on Emergency Medical Services
c/o U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Emergency Medical Services (NTI-140)
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Dr. Yeskey:

Thank you for your January 31, 2012, letter and the subsequent March 22, 2012, e-mail from Mr. Drew Dawson, Director, Office of Emergency Medical Services, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) regarding Safety Recommendation H-09-5, stated below. The NTSB issued this recommendation to the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS) on May 29, 2009, as a result of our investigation of the January 6, 2008, motorcoach rollover accident near Mexican Hat, Utah.

H-09-5

> Evaluate the system of emergency care response to large-scale transportation-related rural accidents and, once that evaluation is completed, develop guidelines for emergency medical service [EMS] response and provide those guidelines to the states.

The NTSB is encouraged by FICEMS' continued collaboration with the National Association of State EMS Officials, the Federal Highway Administration, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the state of Utah to address this recommendation. We note that the EMS Incident Response and Readiness Assessment tool and scorecard and a proof-of-concept version of the Model Inventory of Emergency Care Elements were developed and subsequently distributed to the states on March 15, 2012. As your committee's actions satisfy this recommendation, Safety Recommendation H-09-5 is classified "Closed—Acceptable Action."

Thank you for your efforts to improve rural transportation-related EMS response.

Sincerely,

Deborah A.P. Hersman
Chairman

National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of the Chairman

JUN 19 2012

Kevin Yeskey, MD
Chairman, Federal Interagency Committee on
Emergency Medical Services
c/o U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Emergency Medical Services (NTI-140)
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Dr. Yeskey:

Thank you for the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services' (FICEMS) January 31, 2012, letter to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) regarding Safety Recommendations A-09-102 and -103, stated below. During calendar year 2008, the deadliest year on record for the helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) industry, 12 HEMS accidents occurred, 8 of which were fatal, leaving a total of 29 people dead. Consequently, the NTSB conducted a 4-day public hearing to critically examine safety issues concerning this industry, and we issued these recommendations.

A-09-102

> Develop national guidelines for the use and availability of helicopter emergency medical transport by regional, state, and local authorities during emergency medical response system planning.

FICEMS indicated that (1) draft guidelines for the use and availability of helicopter emergency medical transport have been developed and (2) expert working groups are in the process of developing recommendations on governance and system integration. The NTSB notes that the draft guidelines will be revised based on HEMS stakeholder input and will then be submitted to FICEMS by mid-2012 for approval. We also note that FICEMS is exploring options for developing Evidence-Based Guidelines for all types of helicopter emergency medical transport requests. Pending our review of national guidelines that (1) reach regional, state, and local authorities, and (2) address the use and availability of helicopter emergency medical transport for all patients—including rescued trauma patients *and* those patients traveling from one hospital to another—Safety Recommendation A-09-102 remains classified "Open—Acceptable Response."

A-09-103

> Develop national guidelines for the selection of appropriate emergency transportation modes for urgent care.

The NTSB notes that a draft pre-hospital Evidence-Based Guideline on the utilization of helicopter transport for injured patients has been developed and submitted for review by the Protocol Review Committee of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, as part of Maryland's existing statewide protocol development process. We also note that the draft final report, which includes the model EBG guideline on helicopter utilization for injured patients, will be submitted to FICEMS by mid-2012 for approval. Pending our receipt and review of the completed national guidelines, Safety Recommendation A-09-103 remains classified "Open—Acceptable Response."

We encourage you to submit updates electronically at the following e-mail address: correspondence@ntsb.gov. If a response includes attachments that exceed 5 megabytes, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions. To avoid confusion, please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

Sincerely,

Deborah A.P. Hersman
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Michael P. Huerta
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration

Ms. Linda Lawson, Director
Office of Safety, Energy, and Environment
Office of Transportation Policy

National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of the Chairman

JAN 12 2012

Alexander G. Garza, MD, MPH
Chair, Federal Interagency Committee on EMS
c/o U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Emergency Medical Services (NTI-140)
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Dr. Garza:

Thank you for your February 17 and August 9, 2011, letters to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) regarding Safety Recommendations H-09-4 and -5, stated below. These recommendations were issued to the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS) on May 29, 2009, as a result of the NTSB's investigation of the January 6, 2008, motorcoach rollover accident near Mexican Hat, Utah.

H-09-4

> Develop a plan that can be used by the states and public safety answering points to pursue funding for enhancements of wireless communications coverage that can facilitate prompt accident notification and emergency response along high-risk rural roads, as identified under SAFETEA-LU criteria, and along rural roads having substantial large bus traffic (as defined by the criteria established in Safety Recommendation H-09-7).

The NTSB notes that FICEMS has developed a guidance document to assist the states in performing needs assessments and gap analyses for emergency communications and to provide information on available communication devices and lists of agencies that offer funding or could serve as collaborators. Although this document affords a wealth of communication information for states, it does not meet the intent of this recommendation, which asked FICEMS to develop a plan for the pursuit of funding. The NTSB encourages FICEMS to continue its good work by including a section of sample projects and/or case studies in this document to indicate possible directions states could take to pursue funding for enhancements of wireless communications coverage. Pending completion of the recommended actions, Safety Recommendation H-09-4 is classified "Open—Acceptable Response."

H-09-5

> Evaluate the system of emergency care response to large-scale transportation-related rural accidents and, once that evaluation is completed, develop guidelines for emergency medical service response and provide those guidelines to the states.

The NTSB is encouraged by FICEMS' continued collaboration with the National Association of State EMS Officials, the Federal Highway Administration, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the state of Utah to address the intent of this recommendation. We note that draft versions of an EMS Incident Response and Readiness Assessment tool and scorecard, as well as a Model Inventory of Emergency Care Elements, have been developed and are now ready to be finalized and distributed to the states. The NTSB would appreciate receiving periodic updates on these efforts as they continue. Pending receipt of this information and completion of the recommended actions, Safety Recommendation H-09-5 is classified "Open—Acceptable Response."

If you would like to submit an update electronically rather than in hard copy, you may send it to the following e-mail address: correspondence@ntsb.gov. If your response includes attachments that exceed 5 megabytes, please e-mail us asking for instructions on how to use our secure mailbox. To avoid confusion, please use only one method of submission (that is, do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response letter).

Thank you for your continued efforts to improve rural road emergency communications and emergency medical response.

Sincerely,

Deborah A.P. Hersman
Chairman

cc: Ms. Linda Lawson, Director
Office of Safety, Energy, and Environment
Office of Transportation Policy