FICEMS

Federal Interagency Committee on EMS

October 5, 2010

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Department of Defense
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs

Department of Homeland Security
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs/Chief Medical Officer
U.S. Fire Administration

Department of Health & Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
Indian Health Service
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Health Resources and Services Administration
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Federal Communications Commission
Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau

Pursuant to Section 10202(a)(7) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users (SAFETEA-LU, Pub. L. No. 109-59), the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS) is pleased to provide you with the annual letter report on its activities, actions and recommendations. As you are aware, Congress created FICEMS to ensure coordination among Federal agencies involved with emergency medical services (EMS) and 911 services; identify EMS and 911 needs; recommend new or expanded EMS and communication technologies; identify ways to streamline the process through which Federal agencies support EMS; assist State, local, tribal or regional EMS in setting priorities; and, advise, consult, and make recommendations on matters related to implementation of coordinated State EMS programs. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in cooperation with other participating Federal agencies, provides administrative support to the Committee.

The Committee has made progress in all areas identified by Congress through meetings held in June 2009 and January 2010 and regular committee meetings of its Technical Working Group (TWG). In December 2008, Dr. Kevin Yeskey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response for the Department of Health and Human Services, was elected as the FICEMS Chairperson and served throughout 2009. In January 2010, I was elected as the FICEMS Chairperson.

Based on work at the 2008 Evidence Based Practice Guidelines (EBG) conference, our Medical Oversight Committee developed an initial model for a national EMS evidence-based guidelines system. The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Emergency Medical Services for Children Program conducted an initial pilot test of the EBG Model, focusing on pediatric seizures. In late 2009, NHTSA awarded a contract to Children's National Medical Center to further pilot test the EBG model.

In June 2009, FICEMS approved a comprehensive EMS Research Gap Analysis that was prepared through our Data & Research Committee. This Research Gap Analysis included a full literature review, focused on the EMS research priorities identified in the *National EMS*

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Research Agenda for the Future (NHTSA 2001), the *EMS for Children Research Agenda* (HRSA) and the *CDC Acute Injury Care Research Agenda: Guiding Research for the Future* (CDC 2005), and identified existing gaps.

In November 2009, FICEMS approved the enclosed report, "State EMS System Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: A Report of the FICEMS". This report recommends five strategies to improve EMS system pandemic influenza preparedness nationally: (1) improve Federal financial and technical assistance to support EMS and 911; (2) ensure the personal protection and safety of EMS personnel; (3) improve medical oversight; (4) coordinate community mitigation strategies, and (5) enhance continuity of operations and surge capacity.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued two sets of recommendations to FICEMS in 2009:

The Mexican Hat, Utah Motor Coach Crash –

- Develop a plan that can be used by 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 NTSB Safety Recommendation H-09-07). (H-09-04)
- 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. (H-09-05).

The FICEMS Preparedness and 911/Communications Committees are overseeing projects that have been initiated with the National Association of State EMS Officials and with the Institute of Medicine in response to these recommendations.

Helicopter Emergency Medical Services –

- 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. (A-09-102)
- Develop national guidelines for the selection of appropriate emergency transportation modes for urgent care. (A-09-103)

The FICEMS Medical Oversight Committee is overseeing projects which have been initiated with the Children's National Medical Center and the Division of Injury Response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in response to these recommendations.

In the fall of 2009, a contract was awarded to the University of North Carolina EMS Performance Improvement Center to conduct an initial National EMS Assessment and create a model for ongoing periodic assessments to aid FICEMS in identifying future EMS system needs.

Recognizing that an EMS system is essential to the Nation's preparation for the initial emergency medical response to catastrophic incidents, in June 2009 FICEMS prepared and submitted comments to the Secretary of Health and Human Services on the role of EMS systems in the National Health Security Strategy.

In order to foster greater coordination with the national EMS community, FICEMS and the National EMS Advisory Council held concurrent meetings in June 2009 and initiated plans to sponsor a National EMS Stakeholders Meeting in spring 2010.

A coordinated Web portal (www.EMS.gov) was established as a single location for EMS information from all Federal agencies.

FICEMS and its TWG continue to ensure Federal EMS interagency collaboration and coordination and identify opportunities for enhanced support of emergency medical services.

A similar letter has been sent to the enclosed list of Congressional Committees.

Sincerely yours,

David L. Strickland
Chair, Federal Interagency Committee on EMS
Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

Enclosures