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JANICE K. BREWER, GOVERNOR
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May 22, 2012

Dear Arizona Emergency Medical Care Providers:

I would like to take this opportunity during our annual celebration of EMS week to thank you for what you do for the citizens of Arizona. About 500,000 times a year in Arizona, a call goes out from someone that finds themselves in a crisis. Our prehospital and hospital providers step up to the plate to answer that call. I am proud and appreciative of what you do for our citizens, friends, co-workers and families. You make a difference! I want to highlight some important practices, achievements and initiatives from our EMS and Trauma System this past year.

Performance Improvement: I am often asked why we work so hard to recruit EMS agencies into the Premier EMS Agency Program or to recruit hospitals into the Arizona Trauma System. The answer is because both require that the agency or hospital adopt a Performance Improvement (PI) Program.

On paper, one EMS agency looks much the same as another; the same can be said for hospitals of similar size. But there is a huge difference when one agency or facility commits to a comprehensive PI program - a program that involves evaluation of clinical and operational practices, develops plans to overcome shortfalls, tracks initiatives to ensure the intended goal is achieved and continues to monitor and identify new opportunities for improvement. In short, agencies or facilities that commit to PI programs add tremendous value to the patient and to the community by reducing the impact of illness and injury. That is why we are so focused on recruiting these key partners into our system.

Achievements and Initiatives:

New Legislation: This past year has been eventful for the emergency care community. Our stakeholders were successful in passing legislation to update training, testing, certification and practice of Emergency Medical Care Technicians. Thank you all for your hard work.

New Initiatives: Continuing our partnership with EMS agencies across the State and with the University of Arizona, the SHARE program has launched two initiatives.

- The first is a landmark effort to convince EMS agencies to implement guideline therapy and monitoring when traumatic brain injury is suspected. We anticipate that our data analysis downstream will show dramatic improvements in the recovery from this all too common injury. Unlike cardiac arrest, TBI disproportionately impacts the young, so improvements in outcomes last a lifetime!
- The second initiative is to extend our success in increasing survival from cardiac arrest by asking 9-1-1 centers to undergo a short training session and perform some basic data collection. If we can decrease the time it takes to begin continuous chest compressions by 1 minute we will increase survival rates by another 10%. This initiative provides training and monitoring of emergency dispatchers in rapid recognition of cardiac arrest and rapid instructions to begin bystander CPR.

New Registry: Our Statewide EMS Registry and e-PCR system (AZ-PIERS) has more than 30,000 records from 26 EMS agencies. AZ-PIERS will allow BEMSTS to support the data collection efforts of SHARE and to also provide EMS agencies with valuable benchmarking reports. Agencies can obtain this e-PCR system for FREE – just drop a line to anne.vossbrink@azdhs.gov.

In closing, let me repeat my appreciation for your service to our State and express our appreciation for your leadership as we seek out innovative ways to improve the care we provide to those in need.

Thank you,



Will Humble
Director