

# Northern Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council Meeting Minutes

EMS/Pharmacy Committee  
Tuesday, October 22, 2019  
10:00 am



City of Fairfax Fire Station 403  
4081 University Drive  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Attendees: (Alphabetical Order by last name) \* indicates by phone

- Gill Abernathy – Pharmacy Manager, Inova Health System
- Adedayo Akinbi\* - Pharmacist, Virginia Hospital Center
- Scott Arft\* – EMS Training, Prince William County Fire & Rescue
- Diane Buckley\* – Pharmacist, Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center
- Cathleen Cowden\* - Pharmacist in Charge, Inova Loudoun and Fair Oaks Hospitals
- Millicent Deya\* – Pharmacist, Novant Health/UVA
- Karen Dunavant\* – Director of Pharmacy, HCA StoneSprings Hospital
- Sheila Ephraim\* – Pharmacist, Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center
- Craig Evans – Executive Director, Northern Virginia EMS Council
- Brian Hricik – EMS Battalion Chief, Alexandria Fire Department
- Anne Marsh – EMS Battalion Chief, Arlington County Fire Department
- John Morgan, MD – Operational Medical Director, Loudoun County Fire & Rescue
- Brian Orndoff – EMS Program Manager, City of Fairfax Fire Department
- Ana Ramon\* - Pharmacist in Charge, Inova Fairfax Medical Center
- Scott Weir, MD – Operational Medical Director, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue

## **Meeting Called to Order – 10:04 am**

The minutes from February 22, 2019, meeting were sent out by email for review. There were no questions, corrections or discussion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

## **Federal and State Updates**

- Dr. John Morgan advised that there was a recent drug diversion investigation in southwest Virginia that was discussed at their most recent State Medical Direction Committee in Richmond. It is believed that this was a long-standing diversion involving EMS and a pharmacy within the Carillion Health System in southwest Virginia. They were not given exact information on the location. The investigation determined that medications were being drawn up and removed from vials and replaced with saline. This is not just a concern that the medications were diverted but also the number of patients affected by receiving diluted medications or solely saline instead of the medication they were to receive. The diversion will likely bring changes to the one-for-one exchange processes in their area and may spread to other areas if not statewide.

## **EMS Pharmacy Policy**

**EMS/Pharmacy Committee**  
**Tuesday, October 22, 2019**

Anne Marsh from Arlington County advised she had a concern about the portion of policy related to accountability checks and only being required monthly. Gil Abernathy also advised she has concerns about this and reserve vehicles that could be in a garage off-site somewhere housing drugs that are not being checked but also subject to theft and the trail of how they'd determine who, when and where the theft or diversion occurred.

- All present agencies advised they do not keep medications in any vehicles that would be kept off-site in a reserve status
- Both Arlington County and Alexandria Fire Departments advised they check all vehicles at shift change and/or provider change, which would be, at a minimum, daily.
- Dr. Morgan from Loudoun County advised that one reason for it stating monthly checks are the requirement is for agencies that have an ALS license but every provider is not an ALS provider, such as the volunteer departments or stations.
  - They may have some ALS providers but that unit may be also utilized and staffed as a BLS unit most days of the week. The BLS providers are not capable of accessing those drug boxes to check the drugs, so as to not require an ALS provider to come to the station daily or even weekly just to check a drug box, they felt that monthly was acceptable.
    - Dr. Morgan also advised all providers have a unique PIN code to enter the drug boxes and are then required to swipe their badges as a two-factor authentication system. Every time a provider enters a drug box, it is recorded with a unit, time and date stamp.
  - Dr. Weir from Fairfax County Fire & Rescue also advised they have the same situation with their volunteer stations so he is in agreement with the monthly checks
  - Scott Arft from Prince William County Fire & Rescue advised it is the same situation for them because they have volunteer stations as well
    - He also advised that they have the same two-factor authentication drug box entry system in PWC
- The group agreed to **make no changes** to the policy as it affects some localities but not others

**Regional Forms Review**

**There were no changes/errors on the Northern Virginia Regional CSK Exchange Form identified.**

The Regional Drug Dispensing Form was discussed at length. There are concerns that not all hospitals carry all medications and or concentrations that may be listed on the form. Additionally, there are agencies that carry medications that are not on the form and would like to have them added. Finally, there are some drugs that no agencies use and could be removed from the form.

- Milly Deya from Novant Health/UVA advised that they carry diltiazem in a different concentration that is shown on the form. They carry the following:
  - 25 mg/5 mL
  - 125 mg/25 mL
    - Carole Tucker from Inova Mount Vernon Hospital advised there are national backorders of some sizes but this is a standard size

- Upon further discussion, most hospital pharmacies carry the same concentrations as well. **The form will be changed to reflect these two concentrations of diltiazem.**
- Anne Marsh from Arlington County Fire Department advised they use Celebrex and would like it to be added to the form. It is used as a non-narcotic option for pain management
  - Their protocol advises to use four 50 mg tablets by mouth for pain for a total of 200 mg
  - Inova and most other pharmacies only carry 100 mg and 200 mg capsules
  - Upon further discussion, there was no opposition to the addition of this drug. **Celebrex 100mg capsules will be added to the form.**
- Gil Abernathy asked if we could change the ketorolac dosages as listed on the form or remove it altogether.
  - Novant advised they no longer carry 60 mg/2 mL of ketorolac and only carry 15 mg now
  - Carole Tucker advised they only carry 30 mg/1 mL
  - **Upon further discussion, the group is in agreement to remove ketorolac 60 mg/2 mL from the form**
- Gill Abernathy asked if any agencies still use etomidate and if it could be removed.
  - Both Arlington County and Alexandria Fire Departments still use this drug
  - Virginia Hospital Center stocks both 20 mg/10 mL and 40 mg/20 mL
  - Both Arlington County and Alexandria Fire Departments advised that they do not use the 20 mg/10 mL and would be in agreement to remove this from the form
  - **Upon further discussion, the group is in agreement to remove etomidate 20mg/10mL from the form**
- Gil Abernathy advised that some drugs on the form do not have a volume listed or the volume is incorrect, such as metoprolol says 5mg/ml when it's actually packaged as 5 mg/5 mL. Additionally, some indicate "vial" and others do not. This will be corrected with this revision of the form. **The following drugs will be corrected on the form:**
  - **Metoprolol 5 mg/5 mL**
  - **Labetalol 100 mg/20 mL**
  - **Ondansetron 4 mg/2 mL**
  - **Magnesium sulfate 5 g/10 mL**
  - If anyone sees any changes needed to the form due to incorrect dosage, concentration, packaging, etc., please email any changes/discrepancies to northern@vaems.org
- This form will be emailed to all EMS agencies in the region to review and advise which of the medications on the form are actually being used by their agencies so we may remove any that no longer used. Any changes and revisions will be addressed at the next EMS/Pharmacy Committee meeting in the spring of 2020.

### Drug Shortages

- Anne Marsh advised they are experiencing shortages of epinephrine and lidocaine in the pre-filled syringes because they're keeping the pre-filled syringes in the hospital
  - It does not change the drug they're given or concentrations but they're receiving compounded drugs where they had previously received pre-filled syringes.

**Open Discussion/Roundtable**

- Brian Hricik asked if any pharmacists attend the NVERS Medical Supply and Pharmaceutical Working Group Meeting.
  - Gil Abernathy advised that they do not because NVERS has a pharmacy technician that works for them and keeps them all apprised of anything they should be aware of
- Brian Hricik shared with the group a recent near-miss with the Alexandria Fire Department.
  - During a recent code, the paramedic opened a medication and asked his partner to confirm that it was epinephrine. His paramedic partner identified that it was not epinephrine and was calcium chloride. They are in near-identical packaging except for the colored border on the label and the name. Thankfully they perform this two-person check as is recommended and caught it before administering it to their patient. Kudos to the team for catching it and reporting it!
- Craig advised that there is an Operational Medical Direction Committee meeting next week on Tuesday, October 29, 2019. If any pharmacists have any drug changes, questions, requests, etc., please feel free to forward them to Craig to be added to the agenda.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:31 am**

**CERTIFICATION OF PHARMACY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Northern Virginia EMS Council  
7250 Heritage Village Plaza, Ste. 102  
Gainesville, VA 20155

I, Craig Evans, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia EMS Council certify that the above minutes are a true and correct transcript of the minutes of a meeting of the Pharmacy Committees of the Northern Virginia EMS Council held at the City of Fairfax Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 on October 22, 2019, and that the meeting was duly called and held in all respects in accordance with the laws of the state of Virginia and bylaws of the corporation and that a quorum was present. The minutes were officially approved at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the Pharmacy Committee of the Northern Virginia EMS Council.

---

Craig A. Evans  
Executive Director  
Northern Virginia EMS Council

---

Date