

Siren

SUMMER 2009

A PUBLICATION OF THE CALIFORNIA AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION

*Highlights from
Annual Convention*



**Sierra Ambulance
Has All the
Right Stuff**



2009 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Thank You Sponsors



Care West
Insurance Risk Management

intermedix



BoundTree
medical
Making Precious Minutes Count.™



Critical Care
Platforms



PHILIPS
sense and simplicity



stryker®
EMS





Chairman's Message



61st Annual Convention a Hit!

by Dana Solomon, Chairman of the Board

The California Ambulance Association was formed in 1948; the Association serves as a voice and clearinghouse for the industry. Its goals are to advocate and assist in the development of private enterprise, prehospital emergency medical treatment, and medical transportation services as a viable, cost-effective alternative to publicly operated services. The Association views prehospital care not only as a public service, but also as an essential part of the total medical care system. It concentrates on the quality of medical care the patient is receiving.

CAA Leadership

Board of Directors

Chair

Dana Solomon

Vice Chair

Bob Barry

Secretary/Treasurer

Leslie Jessop-Watkins

Directors

James H. McNeal, Jr.

Helen Pierson

Fred Sundquist, Jr.

Richard Angotti

Sgt-at-Arms

Alan McNany

Staff

Executive Director

Brenda Staffan

bstaffan@the-caa.org

Legislative Advocate

Chris Micheli

Siren Editor & Website

Administrator

Mark Corum

mark@corum-communications.com

Accountant

Tricia Schrum

tschrum@the-caa.org

Membership Services

Kim Ingersoll

kingersoll@the-caa.org



Dana Solomon

As I begin my second term as your Chairman of the Board of Directors, I want to thank you all for the vote of confidence. I can assure all of you I will continue to work hard for this wonderful organization and our Industry. The challenges we face can only be won if we remain strong as an association. I want to personally thank each and every one of our members for their continued support of CAA events. I'm so thankful for the continued sponsorships from our members. We would not have successful events without everyone's support.

Our sixty-first Annual Convention was a huge success! We had a respectable number of attendees considering it was held in Southern California. I'm happy to report that our workshops received very high marks from our attendees. A big thank you goes out to Helen Pierson and her education committee, Brenda Staffan E.D, Kim Ingersoll and Stephanie Schoen from California Advocates Management Services. I am so excited about the Team that we have assembled! They are all courteous, hard working professionals who will only make our organization continue to flourish. Thanks again, Team!

The Chairman's Ball was very well attended with some special guests present to pay tribute to David and Cathy Nevins for the years of hard work and dedication on behalf of CAA & AAA. There were tears, hugs and big smiles during their recognition. David and Cathy were made honorary members to the CAA. David received the Life time Achievement Award from CAA and the J. Walter Schaefer award from the American Ambulance Association. Congratulations David and Cathy - you deserve it.

Your Board of Directors and Committee Chairs will be conducting the annual Strategic Planning session on August 18 & 19. If you have any concerns or suggestions please email them to Brenda.

Thank You and God Bless!

Editorial Information:

The views and opinions in the articles herein are not to be taken as official expressions of the publishers unless so stated. The publishers do not warrant, either expressly or by implication, the factual accuracy of the articles herein, nor do they so warrant any views or opinions offered by the authors of said articles. Manuscripts and queries should be directed to Editor, the Siren at the address listed below.

© Copyright 2009 California Ambulance Association. No material can be reproduced without the express written consent of the publisher.

Circulation among California's private ambulance providers, elected officials and EMSA administrators.



California Ambulance Association
2520 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 150
Sacramento, CA 95833
(877) 276-1410 (toll free)
(916) 924-7323 (fax)
www.the-caa.org



Executive Director's *Message*

Are you a small fish in a big pond?



Do you feel as if your billing concerns and questions go unanswered? Is your billing company too busy with larger clients to deal with your reimbursement issues?

Critical Care Specialty Billing has been doing EMS billing for over 15 years. Our experience and ability to get the best reimbursement possible can be a great asset to your EMS services. We specialize in tailoring our billing services to each client, making it easier for you, and easier on the

patients. In these tough times, you can't afford to not get the best reimbursement possible. Our representatives are experts in Medicare/Medi-Cal reimbursement issues as well as Commercial reimbursement and will treat each and every patient with care. Consider if your current billing company is taking advantage of each reimbursement opportunity for you. If they aren't or if you feel you aren't getting the customer service you deserve, *call us for a free estimate and consultation*. Professional billing, means professional results.



800/498-6911

3156 Vista Way Suite 405 ■ Oceanside CA 92056 ■ ccsbinc.com

Is this the new normal?



Brenda Staffan

environmental and technological? This new era of uncertainty is being driven by critical trends where the paths are not clearly delineated.

Of course, there are certain activities that a state-wide trade association like the CAA is uniquely positioned to deliver. The CAA's advocacy program represents the interests of members on California legislative and regulatory issues. The CAA's information outlets – website, membership alerts, Siren newsletter – keep members abreast of important news and intelligence. The CAA's educational programs provide the knowledge and networking that are vital to our membership.

Yet, it's the complex strategic issues where an effective response benefits from rational analysis, sound leadership – or a crystal ball. As your

A stagnant economy. The state fiscal crisis. A complicated national health care reform effort. A new generation of workers with very different expectations. Often significant political disagreement about the path forward. All of these external forces are creating challenges and opportunities. All of these factors are or will affect the delivery of quality patient care in your community and your organizational effectiveness. How can your ambulance service achieve its organizational goals in the face of such turbulent change – social, economic, political,

leadership team carries out its fiduciary responsibility to represent the interests of the organization's membership as a whole, careful consideration of the options is critical. Can we analyze the trends and develop a strategic action plan that is not just responsive, but proactive. Can we create our future? These are the challenges your association will tackle in the next year including an effort to prioritize all the financial and volunteer resources the association's members can muster on those issues that are most relevant.

While the CAA will soon be developing a strategic plan, this will not be a one-time stand-alone activity. The process of scanning the external environment will be ongoing and our responses to the challenges and opportunities facing the association will be regularly evaluated and renewed because the environment is continually and rapidly evolving.

We invite you to contribute to this process. We want your feedback on the products and services your association develops and provides. We also want your engagement – as members of the CAA you are our customers, our workforce (especially on volunteer-supported projects) and our owners/shareholders.



In Memoriam

New CAA Website Goes Live at www.the-caa.org



Siren newsletter? Don't worry, you simply visit the Publications link on the navigation bar. From there you will find an the most current editon as well as an archive of previous issues of the Siren.

Within the password protected Members Area, you will find Member Alerts and Updates, California Legislation, an electronic copy of the CAA Membership Directory, Pending Membership Applications and our work in progress on an extensive Resource Library.

Making plans to attend the upcoming Reimbursement Conference? Finding the dates, location and hotel information is a snap. Simply go to the Meetings tab. In addition, this section will also include a listing of sponsorship opportunities for upcoming meetings.

Lastly, if you are looking for a way to contact a member of the CAA team, look no further than the Contact Us page. Contact names, phone numbers emails and the address for the CAA's Executive Offices are listed here.

Of course, we believe a webpage should be a living and breathing document that is consistently updated and improved to meet the needs of our membership. With that being said, we would love to hear from you if you feel there is an item or feature that should be included on the new website.

Perhaps you have noticed several improvements taking place over the past year when it comes to the quality of the communications materials provided to our members, elected officials and the media. By the time you receive this edition of the Siren newsletter, the CAA will have officially gone live with the next step in its communications plan, that is the completely revamped CAA website: www.the-caa.org.

The new site features a graphically interesting interface design coupled with user-friendly navigational features. The objective was to create a website that conveyed the professionalism of a statewide association beginning its sixty-second year.

We anticipate the new website will further enhance the Association's ability to provide legislators, media and the general public with a wealth of Association and industry related news and information.

Companies who are considering joining the CAA will appreciate the Membership section providing a list of member benefits. In addition, they will be able to download a member application.

Did someone take your copy of the

This past quarter saw the passing of three California ambulance providers. In memory, we thank them for their efforts to provide quality ambulance service to their respective communities.



Herb Wilson

Wilson Ambulance Service
Palmdale, California

Herb Wilson, who with his wife Dorothy owned Wilson Ambulance Services for thirty-seven years in Palmdale California, passed away on June 23. He was 84.

The Wilson's moved to the Antelope Valley in 1954 and just five years

later, they purchased Desert Ambulance. They reopened the company using their namesake: Wilson Ambulance Services on Halloween 1959.

Herb and his wife were active members of the CAA for many years, where he served as Sgt-at-Arms. They faithfully attended CAA meetings, often bringing their children with them. The Wilsons sold their ambulance service to AMR in 1996.

In memoriam, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors extended its deepest sympathy to the Wilson family and adjourned in tribute and reverence at its June 30, 2009 meeting.

Robert McAdoo

Ukiah Ambulance
Ukiah, California

Robert McAdoo, owner of Ukiah Ambulance, passed away on June 28. Bob attended Stanford Paramedic School in Palo Alto, CA where he graduated at the top of his class.

After graduation, Robert went to work for Hall Ambulance Service in Bakersfield and Mercy Peninsular Ambulance Company. In 1994, Bob acquired Ukiah Ambulance Company where he owned and operated it until the time of his death. Robert received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Mendocino Co. for his years of service with Ukiah Ambulance Co.

Ken Riggs

Riggs Ambulance
Merced, California

Ken Riggs died peacefully in his Merced home on July 1, 2009 in the company of his family. He will be remembered most as a loving and fun family man, a generous and quick-witted friend, and a community leader.

In Merced, with charisma as his greatest resource, Ken set out to build his career. Beginning with a gas station on "M" Street, he soon founded Riggs Ambulance Service. Then he established Riggs Ambulance Answering Service, a two-way radio communications company and later, Merced Transportation Company. Ken's career included twenty-five years as Merced County Coroner-Public Administrator and Public Guardian/Conservator.



AB1174 Update

by Chris Micheli, CAA Legislative Advocate

While our sponsored bill, AB 1174 by Assemblyman Dr. Ed Hernandez, passed out of the Assembly Health Committee with a unanimous vote, it was unfortunately held

on the Assembly Appropriations Committee's "Suspense File." Like all bills that have a General Fund impact, our bill was held because of its \$110 million fiscal impact.

Of course, we believe that the fiscal impact of our bill demonstrates that the State of California is getting over \$100 million of unpaid ambulance transports annually.

As a result of AB 1174 being held, we have been working on the potential of a "quality assurance fee," as set forth in AB 511 (de la Torre). The Board of Directors adopted a "support in concept" position on this bill while the particulars of the measure are finalized. We view AB 511 as merely a means to fund the provisions of AB 1174, which is the Ambulance Payment Reform Act of 2009 that would adopt the six levels of Medicare service for ambulance providers, recognize the financial differences between BLS and ALS, and create a "prudent layperson" standard to ensure that all emergency transports, even if they turn out not to be a medical emergency, are reimbursed as such, similar to the treatment offered to hospital emergency departments.

We will continue to deliver a very strong message to legislators and their staff, as well the Governor's Office and Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). They appreciate that we are unique among underpaid Medi-Cal providers in this state, including our requirement to serve all patients, regardless of their ability to pay, with a specified time period. No other provider faces the same requirements as our industry does. In light of the strong support for AB 1174, we are working diligently with interested parties on devising a workable quality assurance fee for ambulance providers within the Medi-Cal program.

As I have discussed before, this effort is very labor intensive and CAA has created a work group to negotiate the parameters of such a program, including the actual statutory language and the required economic modeling. We made two presentations at the CAA's Annual Convention in July in Los Angeles to educate our membership and receive feedback on the proposal. After several meetings with the DHCS, we are also meeting with the Board of Equalization, which may be tasked with collecting the fee. Although we desire to have a program in place as soon as possible to ensure Medi-Cal rates are increased, a fair amount of work lies ahead.

Of course, we believe that the fiscal impact of our bill demonstrates that the State of California is getting over \$100 million of unpaid ambulance transports annually.



- Full Line of EMS Products
- Local Representation
- Easy Online Ordering
- Grants Assistance

And Much More!

800-533-0523
www.boundtree.com



Making Precious Minutes Count.™



The Birth and Care of an Ambulance Claim



October 5-6, 2009 | Hyatt Regency La Jolla

The American Ambulance Association and the California Ambulance Association are partnering together to present their Fall Reimbursement Conference.

During this one day workshop, industry experts will be covering all aspects of the billing process from preparation to appeals. Get ready for an intense, yet exciting and fun-filled approach to the entire life cycle of the ambulance claim. Industry experts from around the country (including AAA's Medicare Consultants, David and Brian Werfel) will provide you with the necessary insight to process your claims, regardless of the size of your operation.

This intriguing one day event is appropriate for all levels of your organization with more than one year of experience.



HOTEL INFORMATION

Hyatt Regency La Jolla
3777 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92122
858.552.1234

Guest Room Rate: \$130.00 single/double occupancy, plus taxes

To make reservations, please contact Hyatt Reservations. Cut-off date for room reservations: September 13, 2009. Please refer to the California Ambulance Association to receive the reduced rate.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Preparing for the Big Event

- HIPAA & Red Flag Programs
- Selection of Systems
- Systems Implementation
 - Codes
 - Demographics
 - Billing #'s & ID's
 - NPI
 - Medicare and medicaid registration
 - Dispatch codes and crosswalks

The Big Day. Time to boil the water and tear some bedsheets!

- Dispatch
- Crew
- Billing
- The birth record

The Formidable Period - Getting it out!

- Days to process
- Clean claims
- Submission to carriers
 - Electronic
 - Hard copy
- PCS Forms
- Assignment to a schedule

The Aging Process

- Follow-ups
- Co-pays
- Rejections
- Appeals

Planning for the future

- Write -offs
- Bad Debt
- Advocacy
 - Provider relations
 - Grass Roots
- Record retention
 - How long must you retain documents

SALUTE TO THE

The CAA's Annual Returns to South



With all the fanfare of a movie-premiere, the CAA made its triumphant return to southern California for its 61st Annual Convention. Members throughout the state came for three days of catching up with old friends, making new ones and getting the latest news and information impacting our industry.

The festivities kicked off with the Raymond Lim Memorial Golf Tournament at the beautiful De Bell Golf Course. Nearly twenty members participated but in the end, Stewart Slipiec and Jimmy McNeal took top honors.

For the non-golfers, a brunch and bunco tournament was held at the hotel.

The first day wrapped up with a get-acquainted reception and golf/bunco awards dinner.

Thursday morning got going bright and early starting with the CAA Marketplace featuring more than two dozen vendors showcasing the latest products and services related to the ambulance industry.

Kicking off the day's seminars was a dynamic, humorous and informative presentation by Gordon Graham, entitled, "Why Things Go Right, Why Things Go Wrong." With a focus on the five pillars of a successful organization, Graham gave attendees ideas that could be initiated into the workplace immediately to improve performance and prevent accidents.

Kathy Montoya, representing the Medicare Part B Carrier for California, Palmetto GBA, provided an industry specific year in review. Topics included enrollment, electronic billing requirements and coding.

During lunch, State Fund presented their annual safety awards. In addition, members were given their first look at the Medi-Cal Provider Fee, which would provide a new funding mechanism by establishing a provider fee paid to the state and is then matched by Federal dollars.

Following lunch, Art Tharpe, Regional Director of the California Employers Association provided an informative lecture entitled, "Strategies for Dealing with Organized Labor."

STARS OF EMS

Annual Convention Northern California

Representatives from EDS, the Medi-Cal Fiscal Intermediary provided an update on the latest ambulance billing requirements including eTARS and other claims topics. Following a brief break, an ambulance reimbursement panel comprised of several specialists answered questions and shared best practices in billing operations management.

Gordon Graham closed his sessions with a discussion on “Progressive Discipline,” and the importance of handling discipline problems.

Thursday evening was capped off with Chairman Solomon’s reception followed by the Annual Banquet and Ball with Awards Presentations. The dinner served as the perfect forum to give special recognition to David and Cathy Nevins for their many years of service not only to the California Ambulance Association, but their contributions on a national level. Chairman Solomon on behalf of the board of directors proclaimed the Nevins as honorary members of the California Ambulance Association, drawing a standing ovation from the audience.

Chairman Solomon took time to thank his board and committee chairs for their efforts over the past year. The Chair then presented Leslie Jessop Watkins with the Chairman’s Award for her tireless work on behalf of the Association’s membership.

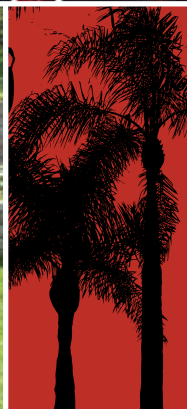
On Friday morning, the seminars wrapped up with Doug Wolfberg tackling, “Public-Private

Partnerships in EMS: The Legal Cutting Edge,” followed by his presentation on “The California EMS Act: Grandfathering, EOAs, Market Rights and more.”

Janet Smith and Chip Magdelinkas provided an informative session on “Stick to the Knitting: Maximizing Core Capabilities for New Revenue Streams.”

During Friday’s lunch, Chris Micheli gave a legislative update covering prospects for a Medi-Cal rate increase and other bills affecting ambulance providers. Of course everyone got into the fun during the CAAPAC drawing while Bob Barry assisted in recognizing those companies and individuals who have financially assisted in the PACs efforts over the past year.

The conference wrapped up with the General Membership Meeting during which Mark Corum gave those in attendance a sneak preview of the CAA’s new website and Ed Guzman presenting the election results of the new Board of Directors.





Honoring the Nevins for Their Contributions to the Ambulance Industry

A highlight of this year’s Annual Convention was the special recognition given to David and Cathy Nevins for their many years of valuable service to the California Ambulance Association.

For over 21 years, David served in several roles including President from 1987 to 2008. Likewise, Cathy served the CAA for an even longer 25 years in several roles including Administrative Director from 1980 to 1983 and then from 1986 to 2008.

Dennis Bolt—our friend and colleague—introduced his cousin David to Cathy in the 1980’s. Cathy and David formed their own management company, Executive Management Services, in 1992 and continued to provide association management services to both the CAA, the AAA, as well as other clients.

Over the years, they both played an integral part in bringing professional executive management services to the nation’s two largest organizations representing the interests of the private ambulance providers. They have worked with literally hundreds of volunteer leaders from around the country and they guided the associations through both challenges and opportunities that faced the industry.

They were always devoted to the success of association members and have also shared many fun and memorable

times. Members found they could network, share best practices and experience the fellowship that is unique to our organization. Cathy always made sure we enjoyed our time together. Of course, there was golf on some of the most beautiful courses in the state.

There were also evening dinner cruises, bar-b-ques and elegant balls with dancing. They also took such great care to honor and recognize the contributions of so many volunteer leaders over the years.

David has represented the interests of California ambulance providers on each critical issue that challenged



Cathy and David Nevins take a moment to reflect on their many years managing the California Ambulance Association.

the association and its members, including Medicare and Medi-Cal reimbursement and claims issues, ambulance strike team development and other disaster issues and critical EMT and paramedic licensure legislation just to name a few of the issue over the years. Under their leadership and management, they guided the association through a very successful reorganization in 2006.

California Budget Agreement Reached

by Chris Micheli, CAA Legislative Advocate

In an effort to address California’s \$23 billion budget deficit (up from the \$19.5 estimated just in May), the California Legislature on July 23-24 adopted nearly thirty bills to implement spending plan changes. This budget includes over \$15.5 billion in cuts, primarily one-time revenues, along with borrowing, fund shifts, and other deferrals. The Legislature began Floor debate Thursday evening and continued until Friday afternoon before the final bills were approved.

Democrats claimed a victory in that “no new tax ‘give-a-ways’” were included in this budget accord, but lamented that neither an oil severance tax nor an increased tobacco tax were included either. They also were pleased that the “safety net” programs were protected, despite efforts by Governor Schwarzenegger to dismantle them. The Governor and Republicans touted the budget changes did not include any tax increases.

Over the past eighteen months, California’s revenues have declined more than

15% as the national and state economies have weakened, leading to a continued deficit. Last September, an almost three-month overdue budget was enacted with \$10 billion worth of tax increases and accelerations directed at the business community. Just five months ago, in February, legislators closed an estimated \$42 billion deficit with over \$12 billion in tax increases and a similar amount in budget cuts.

Unfortunately, it is unclear how long this new budget agreement will keep the state budget balanced because it includes a number of deferrals, one-time measures, and rosy revenue assumptions. With a continuing decrease in state tax revenues, there is likely another shortfall to be addressed before the end of this calendar year. As

Continued on next page



California Budget Agreement Reached

Continued from previous page

a result, it is likely the Legislature will be called into another special session in November.

In regards to the State's Medi-Cal program, ambulance providers were not subject to any reductions in their already low reimbursement rates. However, one of the trailer bills (SB 6xxxx) contains a number of changes to the program. For example, SB 6xxxx requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to submit a Medi-Cal waiver to the federal government that includes "restructuring proposals" designed to improve coordination of care for several groups, including seniors and people with disabilities; improve health outcomes; and slow the rate of growth of the Medi-Cal Program.

The waiver could result in more Medi-Cal beneficiaries being required to enroll in managed care. SB 6xxxx requires the waiver to include processes and criteria by which DHCS will evaluate and grant exemptions from any mandatory enrollment into managed care.

In addition, DHCS must convene and consult with a stakeholder advisory group and develop an implementation plan that addresses, among other things, "the multiple and complex needs of vulnerable populations." The bill aims to have the waiver approved either by September 1, 2010 or when the state's current Medi-Cal hospital waiver expires.

In addition, the budget agreement:

- Assumes receipt of \$1.0 billion in federal funds in 2009-10 to reimburse California for prior state expenditures that the state indicates should have been funded by the federal government. State funding for Medi-Cal would be reduced by up to \$1.0 billion in 2009-10 depending on the amount of federal funds received.
- Cuts state funding for Medi-Cal by \$323.3 million in 2009-10 without specifying how those savings would be achieved.
- Freezes rates paid to certain nursing homes and other long-term care facilities for state savings of \$75.5 million in 2009-10.
- Makes several changes to Adult Day Health Care (ADHC), including temporarily limiting participation for enrollees to three days per week, for state savings of \$18.3 million in 2009-10.
- Freezes rates paid to ADHC centers at the 2008 level for state savings of \$3.7 million.
- Adopts several Medi-Cal prescription-drug reforms

for state savings of approximately \$109 million in 2009-10.

- Cuts payments by 10 percent for private safety-net hospitals for state savings of \$18.4 million in 2009-10.
- Cuts the fee-for-service inpatient rate for certain small and rural hospitals, except those designated as "critical access" hospitals and referral centers, for state savings of approximately \$7.2 million in 2009-10.
- Reduces the Distressed Hospital Fund by \$23.9 million to generate an equivalent amount of state savings.

The budget agreement also establishes a process to privatize eligibility processing. Currently, Californians' eligibility for the CalWORKs Program, the Medi-Cal Program, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program) is determined by public employees in each of the state's 58 counties. SB 7xxxx establishes a process to shift this responsibility from the counties to a single entity by developing a "statewide eligibility and enrollment determination process."

If implemented, this change would likely result in a private contractor taking over eligibility processing in California, despite the fact that other states' privatized systems have failed. The bill requires the DHCS and the Department of Social Services to jointly develop a plan for a new system in consultation with a stakeholder steering committee. According to the bill analysis, SB 7xxxx permits the state "to proceed with procurement activities... upon legislative approval of the comprehensive plan and an appropriation for this purpose."

CINDY ELBERT Insurance Services

Over 25 Years of Experience

INSURANCE PROGRAMS FOR AMBULANCE SERVICES

- Professional, General, Auto Liability
- Workers Compensation
- Best service, coverage and prices available, and much more!

Call Today **888-681-1020**
www.ambulanceinsurance.com

CINDY ELBERT INSURANCE SERVICES



Pending Membership Applications:

Avesta Systems, Inc.
Macedonia, OH

Gregory Lawton, President

Comments, or questions about this applicant should be directed to:

Chair of the Ethics and Professionalism Committee in care of Kim Ingersoll at:

kingersoll@the-caa.org



Medi-Cal QA Fee Update



McNeil & Company's Ambulance Services Insurance Program (ASIP) offers one of the most inventive and inclusive insurance programs available. We have been proudly serving the commercial ambulance industry since 1997.

1-800-822-3749
www.mcneilandcompany.com

Medi-Cal Quality Assurance Fee Update

By Gerry Hart, Medi-Cal Provider Fee Work Group

Those who attended our 61st Annual Convention were provided several opportunities to be briefed by the CAA's Medi-Cal Provider Fee Work Group members on the progress being made toward addressing a potential increase in Medi-Cal reimbursement via a quality assurance fee (QAF) as proposed in AB 511 (de la Torre) sponsored by American Medical Response. Additionally, those attending the convention sessions on this topic were also provided a draft provider impact template to evaluate their respective company's impact of a QAF as it would relate to a combination Medi-Cal increase and provider fee.

Since the convention, this work group (CAA members: Bob Barry, Gerry Hart, Chris Micheli, Helen Pierson, Dana Solomon, Jody Soule and Brenda Staffan along with AMR members: Craig Cannizzo, Tim Dorn, Lou Meyer, Tom Wagner and Joe Yocca) has moved forward with meetings with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to present our rate increase and provider fee model and perhaps even more importantly, begin the education process of laying the foundation for the state to adopt the Medicare service level definitions and prudent lay person language in a broader scope effort to secure Medi-Cal reimbursement reform through modernizing the State's antiquated Medi-Cal ambulance reimbursement scheme.

To this end, CAA Executive Director Brenda Staffan led the work group presentation to DHCS on July 23, 2009 providing a walk through of the sourced data elements and methodologies used in developing the model. Additionally, DHCS was provided with the CAA sponsored Hobbs-Ong industry performance survey and the GAO ambulance cost study as justification for the rate increase.

While there is a legislative calendar deadline rapidly approaching during the week of August 17, 2009 to provide further AB 511 bill amendments for consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee, the joint CAA/AMR work group has agreed to remain steadfast with our original consensus objectives that a successful QAF approach would gain a Medi-Cal rate increase for both emergency and non-emergency providers, protect against a future Medi-Cal rate decrease and achieve recognition of ALS level of care. The joint work group is also in agreement that to accomplish these objectives AB 511 will need to be amended to incorporate as many of our core requirements as possible

within the legislative language rather than leaving key components to the process of regulatory negotiation with DHCS that occurs after the bill is passed. Therefore it is anticipated that our CAA sponsored AB 1174 (Hernandez) legislative language will be used to amend AB 511.

On July 24, 2009 the CAA Board of Directors approved the retention of Jim Frizzera, Principal in the firm Health Management Associates. Mr. Frizzera worked at CMS (formerly HCFA) for the last twenty years.

Most recently, his responsibilities included the overall financial management of the \$300+ billion Medicaid program. Mr. Frizzera is recognized as the national expert in the area of Medicaid reimbursement and financing including QAF program approvals for CMS. This level of expertise will be needed to assure proposals generated from the work group are federally compliant and that all necessary data is analyzed and presented in a manner acceptable to CMS via DHCS. Mr. Frizzera's background and familiarity with Medicare will also be helpful in efforts to structure an overall Medi-Cal reimbursement reform model approach for consideration by DHCS.

Mr. Frizzera is recognized as the national expert in the area of Medicaid reimbursement and financing including QAF program approvals for CMS.

The CAA work group continues its due diligence to assure the best possible outcome of a QAF funding mechanism to enhance Medi-Cal reimbursement for our members. We will continue to welcome your questions and thoughts as we move forward in this process.

Delivering efficiently bright ideas!



What's Your Communications Efforts Saying About Your Company?

15 Years Experience in the EMS, Public Safety and Political Arenas

Corporate Identity

- Branding
- Newsletters
- Brochures

New Media

- Web Design
- Flash Animation

Specialty Products

- Pens
- Trading Cards
- Polo Shirts
- & more!



mark@corum-communications.com

*Some restrictions apply.

Street Story

by Stewart Slipiec, Safety Committee Chair

One morning I was asked to assist a crew in lifting a large patient. The victim was a 50-ish male that weighed 650-pounds. As a result of a vehicle accident several months ago he became permanently confined to his recliner. He was unable to walk and needed to be transported to the hospital for numerous medical reasons mostly all related to his enormous weight gain after the accident.



We enlisted the help of the local fire department personnel which normally did not respond to medical calls. My initial reaction driving to the scene was how does someone allow themselves to get in such bad physical condition and maybe I should say something to that effect. When I got on-scene and met the patient he began to cry. He felt bad for all of us that had to lift him. He was very apologetic. At this point all of our hearts melted and that built in compassion we all have in this business bloomed. My thoughts then turned to the engineering feat before us. We had

the time to discuss and plan a strategy. Paramount in my mind was to protect my back. I had already broken the first rule of proper lifting – I normally work in the office and I did not have a high level of physical fitness needed for lifting and moving patients. Using eight people and a heavy tarp device with handles we were able to move the patient to the stretcher and transport from there.

By practicing these safe handling tips it will save you a lot of aggravation and expense.

- Lift using the strength of your legs
- Lift and carry without twisting the upper body
- Stand with feet shoulder-wide apart and firmly on floor
- Communicate with the patient and team members

In other news . . .

Workers compensation claims may cost us a lot more in the future. There are two recent decisions under

Continued on page 15

The Employers Easiest Compliance Tool



Your one call answer for compliance, including:

- TB Testing
- OSHA Respiratory protection (medical clearance, training and fit testing)
- New hire physical evaluations based on essential job tasks
- DL-51 examinations
- Hepatitis B (Titers and injection series)
- Drug and Alcohol testing programs
- MARK 1 Training
- Flu Shots

FastResponse

ON-SITE TESTING

Premier Mobile Occupational Health Services

Fast Response On-Site Testing takes the pain out of annual OSHA compliance.

We make compliance easy by coming directly to you in one of our state of the art, mobile testing clinics. Doing so eliminates the lost time and productivity that many employers experience from having employees drive and wait at the local clinic.



- 30 Years of EMS experience
- Dependable- On-time - On-budget - Every time
- Annual Scheduling reduces budget spikes while keeping workforce compliance up to date
- Records are scanned and electronically stored for easy access/retrieval

(831) 477-2867 | drcasey@fastresponseonsite.com



“...he raced through Oakhurst with the lights blazing and siren wailing to announce the arrival of the community’s first ambulance.”

Community Owned Sierra Ambulance Has All the Right Stuff

The origins of Sierra Ambulance is proof positive of the good things that can happen when people come together for the betterment of their community. The ambulance service was founded in 1964 by a group of concerned citizens who were interested in quicker response times when someone found themselves victim to sudden illness or injury. Up until that time, the closest ambulance had to respond from Madera City to emergencies 50 miles away in Oakhurst.

Originally, all ambulance personnel were volunteer first-aiders. They were paid \$10 per call. Over time, the staff, while still volunteer, became EMT-1s and eventually paramedic. Sierra did not start having paid personnel at the station until 1980. Over the course of time, the Service evolved from a one ambulance, all volunteer organization to a six ambulance, all ALS service operating from three separate locations.

One of the founding “fathers” of the ambulance service was the owner of the local telephone company, Sierra Telephone, Harry Baker. Baker used

his own money to purchase the first ambulance, a used 1958 Cadillac ambulance that he had purchased from Reedley Ambulance. The story goes that when he returned from Reedley to pick up the ambulance, he raced through Oakhurst with the lights blazing and siren wailing to announce the arrival of the community’s first ambulance. Baker, is in his 80s now; however, he still runs the phone company and is still a strong supporter of Sierra Ambulance.

Where paramedics and EMTs often transfer to the fire departments, Sierra has been able to hold a very steady workforce. Of the 25 employees who work there, two have twenty years +, four have ten years and eight have seven or more years. This can be attributed to the professionalism of the organization and its values, which resonates with their staff.

Sierra operates 6 ambulances covering Eastern Madera County and parts of Mariposa County including the southern one-third of Yosemite National Park. Eastern Madera County is the rural mountainous portion of the County. It includes the communities of Oakhurst, Bass Lake and Coarsegold; about 1,000 square miles, most of which is within the Sierra National Forest and is quite remote.

Through the years, Sierra Ambulance has played an active role in serving its community outside of delivering first rate emergency and non-emergency medical transportation services. The ambulance service offers community CPR instruction, a junior paramedic program in the schools and various EMS awareness programs in the community. Sierra



Citizens wanting to improve pre-hospital care in their community formed Sierra Ambulance in 1964.



CAA Member Profile

Milestones SIERRA AMBULANCE

also provides ambulance standby service to varsity football games and other non-profit community events without charge.

Their excellent relationship with their patients and community transcends through the ongoing positive relationships they have fostered with the other EMS stakeholders in their community, including: Cal Fire, Madera County Sheriff and CHP, the local EMS Agency, and neighboring EMS providers such as: Mercy Ambulance in Mariposa, Pistoresi Ambulance in Madera and American Ambulance in Fresno.

Like all ambulance providers in the state of California, Sierra finds funding to be a perennial challenge. Whether it's Medicare or Medi-Cal or the growing



Kelly Burns, EMT-1 restocks an ALS ambulance following transport to the ER.

number of uninsured, it affects their ability to provide quality, affordable service to the community. To help offset such challenges, Sierra Ambulance got creative in developing relationships with area businesses to provide financial assistance. Perhaps the best example is the relationship they have forged with Chukchansi Gold Resort and Casino. In the five years the casino has been open, they have provided grant funding to cover the cost of two Advanced Life Support ambulances and a host of other equipment including 6 power cots at \$9,000 each, a solar electric system at their main office and six Zoll 12 lead monitor defibrillators. Chukchansi also provides a \$110,000 annual subsidy in an effort to help mitigate their impact on local EMS.

Sierra Ambulance became an associate member of the CAA in 1990 and then became a full member in 1997. General manager Ed Guzman believes the CAA adds a level of professionalism to their organization that they would have had a hard time achieving without it. "We are a very small fish in a large pond," says Guzman, "Having the opportunity to network with the best minds in EMS through the CAA has been invaluable to our



Paramedic Nick Righten monitors a patient's vitals while enroute to the ER.

organization." He believes that the CAA exposes their leadership to new ideas and trends and that it is invigorating to associate with so many good and bright people.

Additionally, Guzman supports the political ends that the CAA pursues and he wants to do his part to be involved.

Guzman has dedicated 30 years of his life to EMS and helping others. "I have worked with some of the great leaders in EMS."

Pasadena and San Diego, as well as Hartson. In fact, Guzman has dedicated 30 years of his life to EMS and helping others. "I have worked with some of the great leaders in EMS," says Guzman, "While much has changed over the years, the job remains exactly the same. We take care of people and we make them feel better, whether they are knocking on death's door or just need basic medical transportation. It's what I love about the job."

Part of Sierra Ambulance's success can be attributed to the leadership over the past 18 years of general manager Ed Guzman. Prior to coming to the Company he worked for Medevac in

1964
Founded in 1964 as a volunteer operation. The ambulance was parked behind the only gas station. An air raid siren and CB radios were used to notify crews of a call.

1975
All volunteers were certified to the EMT-1 level.

1980
Hired its first paramedic who took call 7/24 from home. When he was off, Sierra had BLS care.

1985
Ambulance hard covered at our own station ALS full time. Back up BLS crew from home.

Present
4 staffed ALS units. Two reserve units operating out of three stations.

In Other News...

Continued from page 13
appeal (Ogilvie v City and County of San Francisco and Almaraz v Enviro Recovery Services/Guzman v Milpitas Unified School District). The plaintiff's want to get rid of the restriction limit on disability ratings. Insurers are estimating that this will result in a +25% to +40% increase in disability payments and thus an increase in premiums to providers. One of Schwarzenegger's achievements is his 2004 Worker's Compensation reform that eliminated costly settlements based upon subjective complaints which were not supported by objective findings. The reform resulted in an implementation of a medical providers network, capped chiropractic, PT & OT visits and established a new disability rating system. This is all in jeopardy and we risk returning to a pre-reform era. Stay abreast of this important decision.



2520 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 150
Sacramento, CA 95833

PRSR-STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bakersfeld, CA
Permit #110



your HANDS
touch
many LIVES



one simple act
can help prevent
the spread of disease

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME
YOU WASHED YOUR HANDS?

Safety Message from:
Care West Insurance Risk Management



CWIRM Insurance Services, LLC

Toll Free 800-760-6204 | Office: 949-673-0398 | Fax: 949-673-0362

www.carewestinsurance.com

lic# 0G3557

Workers' Compensation · General & Professional Liability · Commerical Package
Health Benefits · E & O