Sometimes it’s hard to find words to write when starting with a clean slate on a Word document. What to say, how to say it, who’s the audience, what point is most prevalent to get across—an author’s dilemma.

For this article, I simply want to extend the message to keep up the great work you are doing. Sometimes we can get stuck looking at the current situation we are in, the trial of the day, the fire we are currently putting out, or preparing for our next meeting. Just like a repeat patient’s request to be transferred to a hospital, we need to occasionally pause from the normal retort mechanism that has been ingrained into our training and response to change the course of future calls. At times, this is looking at how social determinates of health are impacting our patients; other times, it’s taking a few extra minutes to share with these patients what other resources are available to help them at home through social services, home health, etc.

Over the past several months, we have found ourselves discussing a similar repetitive conversation with city and county officials. I cannot express how important it is for us as EMS professionals to communicate with our city and county officials. Believe it or not, they are the ones who are providing insurance coverage, liability clauses, and fueling our ambulances. By consistently educating them and keeping them abreast of the details of ambulance operations within your community, you are providing them valuable insight and bringing to the forefront challenges they may be able to assist with.

Currently, South Dakota has 125 ground ambulance services. Within 5-10 years, there is a potential for this number to drop anywhere from 5-10% based on current trends, changes in volunteerism, and the impact on bedroom communities. It is vital for us as a profession to envision the future, instead of allowing the future to write its own path. We encourage you to review the South Dakota EMS Agenda for 2040. Write to us your questions, concerns, and solutions you see to make EMS more sustainable for future years.

But above all else, please look after your brothers and sisters in this industry. The calls responded to have a dramatic impact on our wellbeing. Mental health is very real, very important, and vital for all of us to embrace and maintain in order to live a healthy, productive life.

Sincerely,
Marty
Helmsley AED Grant
By Marty Link—EMS Director

The Helmsley Charitable Trust recently provided a $3.6 million grant to supply 1200 AEDs to law enforcement officials statewide. We are happy to report every participating law enforcement agency has received AEDs for each of their 911 responding vehicles.

We all understand the importance of early CPR and early defibrillation. By equipping law enforcement officials with AEDs, sudden cardiac arrest patients can receive timelier CPR and defibrillation. As of this writing, law enforcement has actively assisted in resuscitative efforts using the AEDs supplied by the Helmsley Charitable Trust. We know of two saves where a patient walked out of the hospital neurologically intact because of the lifesaving efforts of law enforcement.

EMS agencies are encouraged to discuss the new AED technology with local law enforcement and train utilizing mock scenarios. These new CR2 AEDs can send via WIFI the patient's initial rhythm to the EMS unit responding to the arrest. Following the resuscitation, the AED automatically uploads a case summary of the response which can be used for training and review purposes. EMS and law enforcement agencies will see an added benefit to utilizing these reports for feedback and performance improvement for future responses.

Trauma Activities
By Marty Link—EMS Director

Many of you know Rebecca Baird has resigned from her position as the state’s Trauma Program Manager. As of this writing, we are actively recruiting for this open position. Rebecca was instrumental advancing our trauma system, and many lives will be touched by her hard work.

I would like to ask all ambulance service directors to reach out to your local trauma coordinator. One of the mainstays of a system of care is communication. Ensuring open communication between the local trauma coordinator and ambulance director assures potential improvements are rectified quickly. Vital to the process requires the local ambulance director to pass relevant information to their respective members.

EMS directors are encouraged to participate in trauma activities such as designation visits and regional performance improvement webinars. Every three years, all trauma hospitals are required to have a trauma site visit in which a team verifies compliance with trauma system statutes. EMS directors are encouraged to participate in the opening meeting during these visits. In addition, EMS directors are encouraged to participate in quarterly regional performance improvement reviews. If you are unfamiliar with these reviews, reach out to your local trauma coordinator.
EMS Vaccination Progress

By Marty Link—EMS Director

As of this writing, South Dakota has vaccinated Phase one groups A, B, and C, and we are currently on Group D. If you are part of Groups A, B, C, or D and have not received a vaccine, please refer to COVID.SD.GOV and click on “Vaccination Information” for further detail. Up to 32% of South Dakotans have received their first vaccination—again as of this writing.

COVID-19 At-Home Testing Kit

By South Dakota Department of Health

South Dakota and Vault Medical Services have teamed up to offer a free at-home COVID-19 saliva testing for South Dakota residents who believe they have been exposed to COVID-19. You do not need to have symptoms to be tested.

- Order your test from Vault at https://learn.vaulthealth.com/southdakota/. The test kit will arrive at your home via expedited shipping.
- Log on for a virtual visit with a Vault test supervisor; they will show you how to collect your saliva sample.
- Ship your sample to the lab using a prepaid UPS package.
- Get your result 24 to 48 hours after your sample arrives at the lab.

A few notes before you get started:

- You will need an email address
- A photo ID is required

South Dakota Ambulance Association Conference (SDAA)

By Marty Link—EMS Director

I wanted to give a special thanks to Brian, the officers, and attendees of the South Dakota Ambulance Association conference held February 12th through the 14th in Pierre. This Association is paramount in the continued support, development, and mentorship of ambulance service directors across South Dakota. I encourage your service, if you have not already done so, to reach out to the SDAA and inquire about the benefits of participating in this Association.

Serving as an ambulance service director is a challenging yet rewarding role. Thankfully, you do not have to do it all on your own. Like many other aspects in life, networking and establishing mentors to help guide new and upcoming directors is vitally important.
SDAA Conference (continued)

By Julie Smithson, Western EMS Specialist

The SD Ambulance Association is a professional association of EMS leaders dedicated to the discovery, development, and promotion of excellence in leadership and management in EMS systems, regardless of EMS system model, organizational structure or agency affiliation. SDAA website: https://sdaa.wildapricot.org

The conference started on Friday with a pre-conference workshop. The Certified Ambulance Documentation Specialist Course (CADS) course was presented in a dynamic, interactive fashion engaged students which kept their attention and reinforce key concepts. All of the content was developed by the attorneys and consultants of Page, Wolfberg & Wirth – The National EMS Industry Law Firm®. This unique opportunity gave field providers the chance to learn about documentation from leading industry experts and take away practical skills that can be used on every transport.

On Saturday, February 13, the conference started with a Round Table session, which allowed participants to interact with other EMS departments on various subjects. The day continued with a speaker from Page, Wolfberg, & Wirth, a law firm that specializes in EMS law. Matthew Konya filled the day with the following topics:

- Hey, I think a medic on C-shift has COVID - Now What?
- Apathy and failure to act - What happened to our solemn duty?
- Dealing with marijuana use - from the workplace to patient care.
- The four best crew documentation improvements
- Patient refusals: A new approach to protect providers

Matthew started in EMS over 10 years ago, when he obtained his first responder certification. During summer breaks from college Matthew served as Health Officer at a resident Cub Scout camp. Matthew obtained his EMT certification at Penn State, and then worked full time as an EMT for three years before attending law school. Currently, Matthew works as an active EMS practitioner on a part-time basis.

After an evening of fun entertainment with comedy and magic by Jerry Frasier, Sunday morning began with an open discussion of local items/issues of South Dakota. The conversation started with SDAA and SDEMSA lobbyist, Steve Willard. He talked about some bills brought before the legislators this year. He also encouraged everyone to attend EMS Day on the Hill and meet your legislators and talk about EMS. Next, Lynne Valenti, Deputy Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Health, talked about COVID-19 in South Dakota and some state projects that affect EMS. Rounding up the discussion was Marty Link, South Dakota EMS Director, who talked about the Halo project, the P25 radio project, and other projects affecting EMS in the state.

The conference concluded with their annual SDAA business meeting.
SERV SD
By South Dakota Department of Health

WHAT IS SOUTH DAKOTA'S SERV SD?

SERV SD is an acronym for State Emergency Registry of Volunteers for South Dakota, which is an electronic registration system and database of local, regional, and statewide volunteer programs who want to assist our public health and healthcare systems during an event or disaster.

WHY WAS SERV SD CREATED?

In the time of an event or disaster, volunteers are critical to saving lives and an efficient system for volunteers to register and be located when needed is just as critical. In fact there is a federal initiative requiring every state to implement a registration system for volunteers. South Dakota elected to adopt a model called SERV SD. SERV SD is comprised of local volunteer coordinators who mobilize medical and non-medical volunteers to respond to emergencies within the community, or if the volunteer is interested, within the state. SERV SD was created to assist in that process.

HOW DO I JOIN SERV SD?

Whether you work in a health field or not, active or retired, if you are interested in assisting your community or state during a health crisis, we invite you to join SERV SD.  https://volunteers.sd.gov/

HALO Respirator Project Update
By Lance Iversen, Education Coordinator & EMS Data Manager

The SD Department of Health provided CleanSpace HALO Respirators to SD licensed In-State Air and Ground Ambulance Services free of charge from COVID-19 Federal funding, if the services wanted to receive them.

Out of the 131 In-State Air & Ground Ambulance Services, 114 participated in the project and received the devices.

From the first distribution, the Dept. of Health distributed 693 HALO Respirators and accessories to the 114 ambulance services.

After the initial distribution was complete, we provided ambulance services additional units and accessories if needed from what we had left in our inventory. To-date, we were able to distribute an additional 30 HALO blower units and dozens of masks and other accessories to the participating ambulance services.

If your service needs additional HALO blower units, face masks, filters, etc., check with our office first before ordering directly from CleanSpace, as we may be able to fulfill your request and save your service money. Contact Bob Hardwick (605) 773-4440, Bob.Hardwick@state.sd.us or Lance Iversen (605) 394-6027, Lance.Iversen@state.sd.us for order requests.
E-Licensing System
By Lance Iversen, Education Coordinator & EMS Data Manager

The E-Licensing System is where an EMR or EMT will go to update their demographic information, such as a change in address, phone number(s), email address, etc., and is where you will record your continuing education hours completed (if not entered by your instructor), view your hours and how many more hours you need in each category, and to recertify.

Every EMR and EMT has an account in E-Licensing. If you have never accessed your account, you can go to the bottom of the E-Licensing Portal page (https://southdakota.imagetrendlicense.com/lms/public/portal#/login) and click the “Forgot Username” link, read and follow the instructions, and the system will send you an automated email that will tell you your username and will have a link to click to reset your password. The automated email will be from a noreply@imagetrend address so if it doesn’t come to your inbox, check your junk or spam folder.

If you know your username but don’t remember your password, you can click the “Forgot Password?” link and the system will send you an email to reset your password.

Do not create a new account. Duplicate accounts will be deleted, and anything you put in your new account will be lost.

To access the E-Licensing Public Portal site, you can click this link: https://southdakota.imagetrendlicense.com/lms/public/portal#/login, or you can access it by going to the EMS Program’s website, EMS.sd.gov then click the red box labeled “E-Licensing Portal”. Also, on our EMS website, next to the red E-Licensing Portal button, there is an orange button labeled “E-Licensing System Instruction Sheets” that will have step-by-step instructions on several areas of the new E-Licensing System and videos that will help guide you with what you are trying to do.

We also require everyone to upload their photo into their profile. To do this, log into your account and click the gray photo icon next to your name and upload your photo. When you do this, your picture will be printed on your new certification card as an additional means of security and verification.

If you need a copy of your card, you can click the gray button next to your name that says “Generate Card”. This will open a pdf of your card you can print or save.

If you start and do not finish an application, you will click your “Applications” button in your menu list, then below that there will be a button that says “Continue” with a number behind it (the number represents how many applications you started but did not finish before you logged out of your account). Click the Continue button and find the application you want to finish, and click the Start or Continue button by the application you want to continue with.

To see your Training Report, click the “Training” button on your menu list then click “Report”. This will open a page and show you all the categories and how many hours you have completed in each and how many more hours you need. When you are on that page, you can use the drop down box to select either “EMR Recertification Hours” or “EMT Recertification Hours” and press the gray GO button to refresh the page, then click the small pdf icon and that will open a pdf of all the courses you have completed in your account. You can print or save that pdf in needed. Click here for a detailed instruction sheet.
E-Licensing System—Continued
By Lance Iversen, Education Coordinator & EMS Data Manager

How to record your training hours into your E-Licensing account (if not put in by your training officer/instructor):

This system has the ability for your training officer/instructor to add you to his/her training course attendee list and sign you off as being there and completing the training. If this is done, the training course topics and hours will automatically be put into your Training Report. If your instructor does not do this, or if you do an online course, etc., you can log into your E-Licensing account and manually enter your training hours. Click here for detailed instructions on how to do this.

How to recertify your SD EMR or EMT certification:

You can apply for recertification of your EMR or EMT Certification beginning 90 days before your expiration date. If your email address in your account is correct, the system will send you an automated email 90 days and 30 days out to remind you to renew. The recertification application is a two-part system, so once you complete and submit Part 1, you will be able to start and submit Part 2. In the Part 2 section of your application you will need to upload a copy of your current CPR card, Driver’s License, and new National Registry card (if applicable). If you have those documents saved on your computer or device, the renewal application will only take you a few minutes. If you start and don’t finish applications, you can click the “Applications” button in your menu, then right below that there will be a “Continue” button. Click the “Continue” button then click the Start or Continue button next to the application you want to continue with. For detailed renewal instructions, please click here.

How to apply for Reinstatement if your SD EMR or EMT Certification has expired:

If you failed to renew your EMR or EMT certification before your expiration date, you can apply for Reinstatement.

If your SD certification has been expired for two years or less, you will need to have 20 hours of the required topics/hours plus current CPR certification, or current National Registry certification. If you have been expired for more than two years, you will need to have current National Registry certification, or a current certification or license from another state. Click here for detailed instructions on how to apply for reinstatement.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Answers to questions you may have on the E-Licensing System can be found by clicking here.

Please remember: National Registry Certification does not automatically renew your SD EMR or EMT certification. Everyone will need to log into their E-Licensing account and apply for recertification.
South Dakota EMS Mapping
By Julie Smithson, Western EMS Specialist

Julie Smithson and Jeff Earl, GIS Analysts, have been working on a statewide map of EMS response areas since November 2020. The map above is what we have so far with the services that have submitted maps for us to go off of.

Please send to Julie Smithson (Julie.smithson@state.sd.us) a detailed map or description of your service response area by April 1, 2021.

Please include as part of the descriptions such things as:

- County boundaries
- City boundaries
- Roads
- Waterways and Lakes
- Reservation boundaries

This project will greatly help our EMS, Law Enforcement, Dispatchers, and State personnel.
EMS Week

By Julie Smithson, Western EMS Specialist

May 16-22, 2021, is the 46th annual National EMS Week.

In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate EMS practitioners and the important work they do in our nation's communities. NAEMT partnered with the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) to lead annual EMS Week activities. Together, NAEMT and ACEP are working to ensure that EMS practitioners' crucial contributions in safeguarding their communities' health, safety, and wellbeing are fully celebrated and recognized.

EMS Week brings together local communities and medical personnel to honor the dedication of those who provide the day-to-day lifesaving services of medicine's "front line." Whether celebrated with a company cookout or a catered lunch, an open house, an awards ceremony, or even quiet reflection about what it means to be an EMS practitioner, EMS Week is the perfect time to recognize EMS and all that its practitioners do for our nation.

This year, five days of EMS Week have a theme that represents the diverse nature of EMS.

- **Monday** - EMS Education Day
- **Tuesday** - Safety Tuesday
- **Wednesday** - EMS for Children Day
- **Thursday** - Save-A-Life Day (CPR & Stop the Bleed)
- **Friday** - EMS Recognition Day

Start planning your EMS Week now. Go to acep.org or naemt.org or emsstrong.org for more ideas.

Please let the South Dakota EMS Program office know what your service is doing to promote EMS in the state of South Dakota. We would love to hear about it and see your pictures!
2021 EMS Day
By Maynard Konechne, SDEMSA Legislative Committee

2021 EMS Day On The Hill

At our Legislative social at the Ramkota Hotel on February 1, 2021, we had a great turnout of 102 people at the social. Those in attendance were:

- 12 EMTs;
- 61 Legislators;
- 11 spouses;
- 4 children;
- 6 interns;
- Lieutenant Governor;
- 2 from DOH office;
- 1 from the EMS office; and
- 4 lobbyists

This picture is of those in attendance taken on the steps at the Capitol Building.

Front Row: Tyler McElhany-Watertown; Nicole Neugebauer-Armour; Elizabeth Verhey-Spearfish
Middle Row: Eric Van Dusen-Sioux Falls-President of SD Emergency Medical Services Assoc.; Brian Hambek-Spearfish-President of SD Ambulance Assoc.; Chuck Hansen-Selby; Maynard Konechne-Kimball-Legislative Chair

If you have any questions or would like to be more involved with this event, please contact:
Maynard J. Konechne at 605-730-0462 (cell) or e-mail: mjkemtkc@hotmail.com

South Dakota EMS Patches
By Lance Iversen—EMS Data Manager / Ed. & Prof. Standards Coordinator

If you or your service are interested in purchasing SD EMS patches, you can send a check or money order, made out to DOH/EMS, and mail to:

DOH-EMS
Attn. Bob Hardwick
600 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501

Patches are $1.00 each
Questions or More Information? Contact:

**Marty Link**
EMS Director
4101 W. 38th Street, Suite 102
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
605-367-5372 (office)
605-367-1209 (cell)
605-367-5366 (fax)
Marty.Link@state.sd.us

**Lance Iversen**
Educational & Professional Standards Coordinator
State EMS Data Manager
909 East St. Patrick Street, Suite 4
Rapid City, SD 57701
605-394-4027 (office)
605-394-1677 (fax)
Lance.Iversen@state.sd.us

**Vacant**
Trauma Program Manager
Eastern EMS Specialist
4101 W. 38th Street, Suite 102
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
605-367-8971 (office)
605-295-3148 (cell)

**Bob Hardwick**
Central Specialist, Recertifications
600 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
605-773-4031 (office)
605-773-4440 (office)
605-773-5683 (fax)
Bob.Hardwick@state.sd.us

**Julie Smithson**
Western Specialist
909 East St. Patrick Street, Suite 4
Rapid City, SD 57701
605-394-5113 (office)
605-941-0762 (cell)
605-394-1677 (fax)
Julie.Smithson@state.sd.us

**Click** to enter the EMS Program’s website
**Click** to enter the E-Licensing Portal website