

Maryland EMS News

For All Emergency Medical Clinicians

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MIEMSS Introduces EMT Education Stipend

~ Delbridge: Program recognizes “sacrifices people make” when they pursue EMT education ~

THROUGHOUT THE US AND IN MARYLAND, EMT attrition is exceeding recruitment. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation by reducing the availability of educational programs. In Maryland, the number of EMTs has decreased, from 16,069 in 2017 to 14,875 in 2020. The diminishment of the workforce is significant, and continues to strain the EMS system and its ability to respond to more than one million calls for help each year.

A significant barrier to recruiting new EMTs is the required education. In Maryland, MFRI and several community colleges provide EMT education for volunteers. Students are generally part-time and attend classes around work schedules. Attrition from educational programs can be as much as ~50%.

To help increase the number of certified EMTs in Maryland, entice additional students to enroll in EMT courses, and reduce attrition from EMT classes,

MIEMSS will soon offer a stipend program for EMT students who commence their initial education after January 1, 2022. Up to 500 students will be offered stipends of \$2,000 distributed in escalating payments during the course training. As part of the stipend program, students will be eligible to receive:

- \$200 after successful completion of their first assessment (Module 1 or equivalent) with a 70%, as attested by the course instructor;
- \$300 after successfully completing the second assessment or halfway point (Module 2) with a 70%, as attested by the course instructor;
- \$300 after successfully completing the EMT program (Module 3) with a 70%, as attested by the course instructor;

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MARYLAND INSTITUTE FOR EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEMS

APPLY FOR THE EMT EDUCATION STIPEND

Get the financial support you need
to complete training!

If you enroll in an EMT course
beginning after January 1, 2022 you
may be eligible for the stipend.



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Maryland EMS Clinicians Authorized to Care for Police Canines and Other Animals

ON FEBRUARY 17, 2022, MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Ted Delbridge and State EMS Medical Director Timothy P. Chizmar issued a reminder to EMS Highest Jurisdictional Officials and Medical Directors across the state that EMS clinicians – including emergency medical responders, emergency medical technicians, cardiac rescue technicians, and paramedics – are authorized to render emergency care to police canines, other working canines, and other animals that may be present at an incident scene. Emergency care should be commensurate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the EMS clinician.

MD. Courts and Judicial Proceedings Code Ann. § 5-614 – Emergency Veterinary Assistance provides, in part, that “a member of any State, county, municipal, or volunteer

fire department, ambulance and rescue squad, or law enforcement agency, or a corporate fire department [...] is not civilly liable for any act or omission in giving any veterinary aid, care, or assistance to an animal.” The aid, care, or assistance must be “provided without fee or other compensation from the owner or custodian of the animal,” and be provided “at the scene of an emergency, in transit to a veterinary facility, or through communications with licensed veterinary personnel.” (Read full memo at <https://tinyurl.com/memo2022feb17>.)

“We fully anticipate that EMS clinicians will call on their personal expertise and available resources to care for an acutely ill or injured animal at the scene of an emergency, unless such aid would interfere with care for an ill or injured person,” noted the memorandum. “In fact, we

are aware that several EMS departments have procured or accepted donations of canine oxygen masks, expecting their EMS clinicians to use them if the need presented itself. We are fully supportive.”

The memorandum came in response to recent indications of a sense of ambiguity among EMS clinicians regarding their personal discretion in caring for acutely ill or injured animals, particularly law enforcement canines, at the scene of an emergency incident. “With this communicate, we affirm the authority of EMS clinicians to exercise their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the best interest of the animal.”

Drs. Delbridge and Chizmar acknowledged that “the interface of the EMS system and law enforcement

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New MIEMSS Online Training Center Enhances User Experience for Maryland EMS Clinicians

MIEMSS ONLINE TRAINING CENTER

Home Courses Courses A-Z Help eLicensure

Welcome!

Welcome to the new MIEMSS Online Training Center. Please note that continuing education credit for your completed continuing education course will appear on your records in 10 to 14 days. It will NOT appear immediately upon completion.

Online Training Center Information

The continuing education credit for your completed continuing education course will appear on your records in 10 to 14 days. It will NOT appear immediately upon completion.

As insurance, it is highly recommended that you take a "Screen Shot" of your passing quiz grades in the unlikely event that any course fails to capture into the system. If your grade does not

THE MIEMSS ONLINE TRAINING CENTER (OTC) has been updated to enhance the clinician's experience while taking MIEMSS-sponsored or created courses.

The OTC's new layout enables clinicians to locate courses in multiple ways: on the home page, featured courses, a drop-down menu, and the A-Z lookup feature. As more courses are added, the organizational structure will continue to evolve. For the convenience of the end-user, a link to eLicensure has also been added to the navigation bar.

"The team at MIEMSS is very excited about this new site, and we hope that clinicians find it user-friendly, fresh, and inviting," says Beverly Witmer, Director of EMS

Clinician Services. The OTC's "new face" will also reflect the many faces of Maryland's EMS personnel.

"We've added some graphics and photos of Maryland clinicians in action, and we will feature other cli-

nicians through periodic updates to the sliders on the OTC homepage," she explains.

Visit the MIEMSS Online Training Center at <https://www.emsonlinetraining.org/>. ■



Winterfest & Miltenberger 2022 EMS Conferences



THE WINTERFEST & MILTENBERGER 2022 EMS CONFERENCES are now available through the newly revamped MIEMSS Online Training Center! All content is eligible for BLS and ALS continuing education credits. Nursing continuing education credits will be available on or before April 1, 2022. Course content will be available through December 31, 2022. Go to <https://www.emsonlinetraining.org/>. ■

The Maryland Poison Center Celebrates 50 Years of Expert Care

By Emily Paterson, BS, CHES®

SINCE 1972, it has been the mission of the Maryland Poison Center (MPC) to save lives and dollars by providing emergency triage, treatment, and prevention information to Maryland's citizens and health professionals. Serving 4.1 million Marylanders in 21 counties and Baltimore City, the MPC is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by pharmacists and nurses who are certified specialists in poison information (CSPI).

The MPC, which can be reached by calling 1-800-222-1222, has answered approximately 2.5 million calls over the last 50 years from Marylanders dealing with a poison-

ing emergency.

The MPC is certified by the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) as one of 55 regional poison centers in the country. All eligible specialists have been certified by the AAPCC as CSPIs. MPC specialists have more than 250 years of combined experience managing poisoning and overdose cases. In addition to the experience of the poison specialists, Executive Director Bruce Anderson, PharmD, DABAT, FAACT, and Clinical Toxicologist James Leonard, PharmD, DABAT, are board certified in clinical toxicology, and the center's Medical Director Joshua King, MD, FACMT, is fellowship trained and board certified in internal medicine,

nephrology, and medical toxicology. Anderson is also a professor of pharmacy practice and science at the School of Pharmacy.

"Fifty years of service to Maryland is a wonderful milestone for the Maryland Poison Center," says Natalie D. Eddington, PhD, FAAPS, FCP, dean and professor of the School of Pharmacy. "Over the decades, the Poison Center has adapted to changing times and continues to be a relevant and vital service to us all. I am proud of the impact they have in our state and proud that they are part of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy community."

MPC's Role in Public Health Events

The MPC has been a public service through the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy since 1972 and has continued to grow over the years. During its first year, the center managed 5,600 cases and kept paper records. In 2021, the MPC managed more than 37,000 cases, with more than 80 percent of those cases involving human exposure, using a sophisticated electronic system to track and manage calls.

The MPC analyzes cases in real-time for trends and events that might be of public health significance, such as food poisoning, product recalls, and potential terrorism. Its specialists have helped during many public health events over the years, including:

- Gasoline ingestions in 1979 when long lines at gas pumps forced some to ration or siphon gas from one tank to another
- Cyanide contamination of Tyle-

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POISON CENTERS:
Here for the Ages

1-800-222-1222

mdpoison.com

Maryland Poison Center
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

NHTSA Names Wijetunge New Office of EMS Director

THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (NHTSA) has announced that Gamunu “Gam” Wijetunge, NRP, has assumed the role of Director of the Office of EMS (OEMS), effective January 29, 2022.

An OEMS veteran of more than 20 years, Wijetunge, a volunteer paramedic, fire captain, and president of the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad in Montgomery County, will also be responsible for the National 9-1-1 Program housed within OEMS.

“For many years, Gam has been a leader within NHTSA’s Office of EMS, an advocate for clinicians, and a trusted colleague for both Federal partners and Fire/EMS organizations,” says his predecessor, Jon Krohmer, MD, FACEP, FAEMS, who retired in 2021. “His commitment to collaboration within the EMS community may be best illustrated through his stewardship of EMS Agenda 2050, which sets a clear path for the continued improvement of people-centered EMS systems for the next 30 years.”

Throughout his tenure at NHTSA, Wijetunge has played an integral collaborative role in the development of EMS systems nationwide. These include leading efforts to:

- Develop evidence-based guidelines and tackle EMS system improvement issues
- Address recruiting, retention, cli-

Maryland has a long history of organizing EMS as a system focused on getting the right care to the right patient at the right time. My time as a clinician in Maryland has reinforced this people-centered approach.

GAMUNU WIJETUNGE, NRP
Director, NHTSA Office of EMS



nician safety, and other EMS workforce topics

- Improve national EMS preparedness through coordination with other Federal agencies
- Facilitate consensus and collaboration within leadership and working groups of the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS).

“I am thrilled to continue the office’s collaborative work side-by-side with our Federal partners, EMS stakeholders nationwide, and my colleagues at NHTSA,” says Wijetunge. “I look forward to continuing Jon’s good work to support state, regional, and local EMS and 9-1-1 agencies as we strive to advance our people-cen-

tered EMS and 9-1-1 systems.”

The Wheaton native counts among his earliest memories “seeing my local rescue squad respond to a crash in front of my house.”

“I started volunteering at the age of 16 and spent a lot of time running calls with UMBC paramedics, where I ended up pursuing my bachelor’s degree,” explains Wijetunge. In addition to his undergraduate degree in Emergency Health Services from UMBC, he also holds a Master of Public Management from the University of Maryland, College Park. Wijetunge has several profes-

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SAVE THE DATE ♦ Maryland EMS Care

May 11-15, 2022 ♦ Ocean City Fontainebleu Resort ♦ Ocean City, Maryland

More information coming soon!

Biker Credits Helmet with Saving His Life in 40 mph Crash



James Hook credits his helmet with saving his life when he crashed while riding downhill at 40 mph.

JAMES HOOK CREDITS HIS BIKE HELMET with saving his life when he encountered a deer while riding his bicycle on a steep downgrade near his home in Friendsville, Maryland.

A week after his March 2021 bike crash, the 40-year-old local grocery store manager and Friendsville Town Councilman recalls being “stiff and sore and very bruised.”

“I feel very fortunate and realize that if it weren’t for my helmet, things would have been much, much worse,” he says. “Always wear a hel-

met. They do save lives.”

Hook was out enjoying a rare spring ride in Garrett County when he saw a deer coming from the side of the road, just as his speed hit 40 mph. Knowing he would miss it, Hook didn’t apply his brakes.

“Then a second deer appeared, and I knew right away that I wouldn’t avoid a collision,” he says, noting that he has a roughly 90-minute lapse in memory following the crash.

“I do have a few memories, but there isn’t anything that really adds up



It’s not if you wreck, it’s when you wreck.

JAMES HOOK

for a while,” he explains. “I do realize that there was a medic and ambulance involved. I remember someone telling me that I would be flying in a helicopter, but I don’t remember the flight. If I hadn’t been told, I wouldn’t even have known that my twin brother, Rob, had flown with me.” His brother, Rob Hook, is a volunteer firefighter and a Maryland State Police trooper.

“Things are still very fuzzy for a little while longer, until they started doing X-rays and CT scans, which coincidentally was the same time my wife, Kristy, finally made it to be by my side,” he continues. “That’s when it finally occurred to me that I had hit that deer.”

Although he still cannot remember colliding with the deer, Hook believes it was unharmed. An eye-

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What is a Pediatric EMS Champion?



Champions practice their skills at the first annual Pediatric EMS Champion Instructor Forum.

DID YOU KNOW that since 2018, Maryland has had Pediatric EMS Champions across the state with the goal of helping EMS clinicians become more confident and competent when responding to pediatric EMS calls? Do you know who your Pediatric EMS Champion is?

In the coming months, the Maryland EMS for Children Department will highlight each region's Pediatric Medical Director and Pediatric EMS Champions. For now, let's learn more about why the role is so important to improving pediatric patient care outcomes and the responsibilities of the Pediatric EMS Champion in Maryland.

The Institute of Medicine 2007 publication *Emergency Care for*



Children: Growing Pains recommended that EMS agencies appoint a pediatric emergency coordinator (or Pediatric EMS Champion) to provide pediatric leadership for the agency. This recommendation was based on findings that Pediatric EMS Champions “are necessary to advocate for improved competencies

and the availability of resources for pediatric patients.” In 2017, the federal EMSC State Partnership grant program established the presence of a designated coordinator of pediatric emergency care as a national Performance Measure that is documented annually through the EMSC EMS Assessment Survey. The national consensus is that jurisdictions that have a Pediatric EMS Champion will be more prepared to care for pediatric emergencies.

Maryland Pediatric EMS Champions are chosen by their jurisdiction as someone who is passionate about the care and treatment of pediatric patients. The Pediatric

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Biker Credits Helmet with Saving His Life in 40 mph Crash...

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witness says that both Hook and the bike flipped into the air.

While his bike only received a few scratches, Hook himself did not fare so well. He sustained three broken ribs, a broken left scapula, a gash that required nine staples in the back of his head, and road rash over much of his body. Three weeks later, he continued having pain in his right shoulder; an MRI showed he had also fractured that shoulder.

“The word concussion wasn't used until four or five weeks after the crash, when I asked my neurologist about it,” says Hook. “He told me there was obvious head trauma, but they try to avoid using the term ‘concussion’ these days.”

Now, a full year after Hook's crash, the only remnants of his close encounter with the deer are a few small scars and residual minor pain and soreness in his right shoulder depending on how he moves.

“Years ago, I had a friend tell me, ‘It's not if you wreck, it's when you wreck,’” he recalls. “I feel like repeating this over the years somehow helped me prepare or deal with the crash afterwards. I know if I hadn't been wearing that helmet, this would not be the conversation I would be having right now. Someone else would be telling this story. So, my advice for anyone who thinks they don't need a helmet is, ‘It's not if you wreck, it's when you wreck.’” ■

MIEMSS Introduces EMT Education Stipend...

(Continued from page 1)

- \$200 after completing the MIEMSS internship package, as attested by the course instructor;
- \$1,000 after passing the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians cognitive exam within three attempts (required for certification in Maryland).

The stipend program's target demographics include high school and community college students, youth groups, and hospital staff. Applicants unable to pass the Office of Integrity questions on an EMT application are not eligible. Potential disqualifiers may include previous EMT students who dropped or failed their courses.

“We recognize the sacrifices people make when they choose to pursue education to be an emer-

gency medical technician,” says Dr. Ted Delbridge, MIEMSS Executive Director. “This program helps to acknowledge their importance, offset some of the personal costs involved, and incentivize students to successfully complete the course of study and the certification examination.”

Stipend Applications will be avail-

able on the Public Portal starting April 1, 2022, after creating an account via www.miemsslicense.com. The grant expires on June 30, 2023. For more information, please call the Office of EMS Clinician Services at (410) 706-3666 or toll-free at (800) 762-7157 or visit <https://miemss.org/home/EMS-Clinicians/EMT-Stipend-Program>. ■

Maryland EMS Clinicians Authorized to Care for Police Canines and Other Animals...

(Continued from page 2)

is nuanced in each jurisdiction, and that needs, priorities, and resources differ.”

“Thus, we encourage you to assess the needs or appropriateness

of policies, specific to your jurisdiction, related to caring for police canines and other working dogs,” they concluded. “Collaboration with your law enforcement colleagues is optimal. We are happy to be of assistance, as needed.” ■



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Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT MVA)

Maryland Highway Safety Office

The MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office (MHSO) is dedicated to saving lives and working with many partners across the State to reduce the number of crashes each year. In addition, the MHSO looks for ways to reduce crash severity and ways to treat crash victims easier and faster.

Maryland aims to reduce the number of crashes, and the resulting deaths and injuries, to zero by 2030.

MHSO Announcements

The MDOT MVA's Highway Safety Office is excited to announce that registration is now open for the 2022 Highway Safety Summit.

Please plan to join us on April 18, 2022, at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum for a day-long summit focused on the 4 E's of Leadership in Traffic Safety: Education, Enforcement, Engineering and EMS.

Visit ZeroDeathsMD.gov/Summit for additional information on the day's events and registration.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Emphasis Area Team Meetings

Looking to become more involved in local road safety? MHSO welcomes participation from the EMS community for all emphasis areas. Mark your calendar for the upcoming meetings:

- Impaired Driving:
April 25, 2022 (10:00 a.m. – Noon)
- Occupant Protection & Distracted Driving:
May 19, 2022 (10:00 a.m. – Noon)

Contact MHSO@mdot.maryland.gov to register

April Showers Bring Roadway Hazards: Avoiding Hydroplaning

Springtime brings the promise of sunshine, warmer weather, and an end to short dreary winter days. Unfortunately, it also brings an abundance of rain and the need for additional caution on the roads.

What is Hydroplaning? Hydroplaning is an effect caused when your vehicle's tires are unable to properly channel water away from the center of the tire, resulting in your vehicle tires losing contact with the surface of the roadway.

Factors in Hydroplaning

- **Vehicle Speed** – Traction is reduced as speed increases.
- **Tire Tread Depth** – Worn tires do not channel water as effectively
- **Water Depth** – The greater the water on the road, the easier it is to lose traction.

If you feel your tires slipping, don't apply your brakes or turn your steering wheel. Hold the steering wheel firmly and slowly release your foot from the gas pedal, allowing the vehicle to slow and regain traction. If you must brake, do so gently in a pumping motion.

To prevent hydroplaning, ensure your tires are checked regularly for pressure and tread depth and make sure to slow down in wet weather!



The Maryland Poison Center Celebrates 50 Years of Expert Care...

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nal[®] in 1982

- Train fire in the tunnel under Baltimore City in 2001 that resulted in toxic smoke being released into the air

- Anthrax attacks in 2001

- Carbon monoxide exposures from the use of generators during the blizzards and tropical storms of 2009, 2010, and 2011

- Abuse of synthetic marijuana and the new stimulant known as “bath salts” since 2010

- Mercury in skin lightening creams in 2011

- Administration of bystander naloxone beginning in 2015

- Newly designed laundry packets being ingested by children in 2015

- Opioid epidemic beginning in 2017, leading to Governor Larry Hogan declaring a state of emergency and bystander naloxone made available without a prescription. The MPC assists in tracking usage of the lifesaving drug.

- K2/Spice contaminated with brodifacoum leading to severe bleeding in 2018

- E-cigarette or Vaping Use-Associated Lung Injury (EVALI) in 2019

- COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020:

- ◆ Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine exposures
- ◆ Bleach and household cleaning products exposures
- ◆ Ivermectin exposures and general information
- ◆ Teaching collaboration with two additional regional poison centers (A-TEAM) to virtually educate medical professionals in

toxicology during the pandemic

“Over the last 50 years, the Maryland Poison Center has answered the call about 2.5 million times,” says Jill Morgan, PharmD, professor and chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Science at the School of Pharmacy. “Marylanders rely on the MPC’s pharmacists and nurses with specialized training and

The MPC has been here for 50 years, and serves people in every decade of life. Thirty-nine percent of the MPC’s cases are about children under the age of 6, but poisonings in teens and adults tend to be more serious. That’s why they’re here for people of all ages.

national certification to help manage poisonings and overdoses 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The center also provides education to health care providers and the community, saving health care dollars. The MPC is a service you hope to never need and are so relieved to find the experts there when you do.”

“Throughout the past 50 years and the variety of challenges over that time, the Maryland Poison Center has and continues to meet its mission. We save lives and save dollars,” says Anderson, the center’s executive director “We also educate the next generation of pharmacists, nurses,

and physicians on managing poisoning and overdose cases. We’re constantly monitoring cases reported to the MPC looking for potential public health events that may not otherwise be readily detected by an individual pharmacist or nurse at an individual hospital. It’s truly remarkable what the MPC has been able to accomplish over the past half century.”

How You Can Get Involved with MPC

- Visit our website, <https://mdpoison.com>

- Sign up for our e-newsletters, *Poison Prevention Press* (public) and/or *ToxTidbits* (health care professionals)

- The Maryland Poison Center debuted its Instagram account – follow @mdpoisoncenter

- Follow MPC on Facebook (@MarylandPoisonCenter) and Twitter (@MDPoisonCtr) for biweekly social media posts highlighting the last 50 years

- Visit and subscribe to our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvxmoBHHJUD8FsG1lu6gh6xA/videos>). New videos will be added throughout the year

- Visit our *eAntidote* blog (<https://blog.mdpoison.com>) for two new posts a month

- Join us for National Poison Prevention Week – March 20-26 – as we raise awareness of the MPC and share poison prevention tips. ■

Emily Paterson, BS, CHES[®], is the Public Education and Communication Specialist for the Maryland Poison Center.

For the latest news and events pertaining to MPC’s 50th anniversary, visit <https://bit.ly/MPC50Years>

What is a Pediatric EMS Champion?...

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EMS Champion is responsible for the coordination of pediatric specific activities. The Pediatric EMS Champion does not need to be dedicated solely to this role; the roles and responsibilities are integrated into their existing duties and involve outreach within the jurisdiction. The Champions are the voice for children and recruit others in their EMS agency to also advocate for pediatric training. Roles and responsibilities of the Maryland Pediatric EMS Champion include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Offer and/or promote pediatric continuing education opportunities
- Support pediatric safety and prevention programs
- Encourage use of current pediatric care guidelines
- Encourage a team approach with the family to provide appropriate care
- Promote use of pediatric equipment and medications
- Advocate for pediatric perspective in delivery of EMS care

Finally, as part of their role, Maryland Pediatric EMS Champions attend quarterly trainings offered by the Maryland EMSC Department and receive educational content that can be offered locally. These educational modules include Pediatric High Performance CPR, Tracheostomy Care, Pediatric Burns, and Emergency Ready Families. Each EMS Region also has access to pediatric CPR and infant tracheostomy care manikins to be used for local training drills.

Don't want to wait until your region is highlighted in Maryland

EMS Newsletters to find out more about your champion? Email pepp@miemss.org and we will connect you with them!

References

■ Institute of Medicine. 2007. *Emergency Care for Children: Growing Pains*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<https://doi.org/10.17226/11655>.

■ Pediatric Readiness in Emergency Medical Services Systems, *Prehospital Emergency Care*, 24:2, 175-179, DOI: 10.1080/10903127.2019.1685614

■ The Prehospital Pediatric Readiness EMS Agency Checklist (<https://emscimprovement.center/domains/prehospital-care/prehospital-pediatric-readiness/>) ■



Champions conduct a simulation as part of the October PEPP course.



Champions assist in the instruction as part of the Tracheostomy Care session offered at Winterfest EMS 2020.

NHTSA Names Wijetunge New Office of EMS Director...

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sional affiliations and has been recognized repeatedly for outstanding performance and federal service, including most recently the HHS/ASPR COVID-19 Pandemic Civilian Service Medal in 2021.

“Maryland has a long history of organizing EMS as a system focused on getting the right care to the right patient at the right time,” says Wijetunge. “This has required strong communication, coordination, and collaboration between all the people involved in the system of care. My time as a clinician in Maryland has reinforced this people-centered approach.” ■



Artwork courtesy of Jim Jarboe, a retired Montgomery County career firefighter and member for over 65 years of the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, where he continues to volunteer.

MIEMSS, Maryland EMS News
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Governor Larry Hogan
Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford

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