

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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Neptune, New Jersey



Message from Our Leadership

On behalf of our organization, I'm honored to share the New Jersey Emergency Medical Services Task Force's 2023 Annual Report.

The NJ EMS Task Force continued to deliver significant services to communities throughout the state this year, helping to ensure New Jersey residents were safe and prepared for any large-scale emergency that could emerge.

This has been a pivotal year for our team. We've faced new challenges head-on. We've adapted and transformed the way we respond, the way we work, and the way we serve our world.

Our volunteer organization of more than 250 career and volunteer EMS providers from agencies across the state represents the best in pre-hospital care, planning, and disaster response. At our core, we are a mass casualty emergency response organization able to respond anywhere and anytime throughout the state.

Our team responded to floods, fires, hospital evacuations, and more this year. We've updated many of the state's emergency response plans. We've developed specialized capabilities to support all aspects of healthcare and public safety. Our equipment is utilized daily throughout the state to respond to EMS incidents, fires, and law enforcement incidents; support surge needs at hospitals; evacuate healthcare facilities; provide supportive technology; and manage various emergent situations.

As we've seen all too frequently, the need to be prepared is more urgent and necessary than ever.

Our team members' dedication to positively impacting the communities where they live and in our state is encouraging, inspiring, and transformational.

The success of the New Jersey EMS Task Force is due to the people who make up our team, and our alignment with the New Jersey Department of Health, The State Office of Emergency Management, and the emergency management offices in each county.

We've expanded our team and added new skill sets to respond to this rapidly changing environment. Our team has developed innovative ways to respond to natural and man-made disasters, they've enhanced training to ensure our first responders are the best of the best, and they've looked ahead to prepare for the next pandemic or disaster.

Our success also depends on grant and public funding. We continue to pursue new, sustainable funding sources that will secure the NJ EMS Task Force's future for years to come.

I'm proud of what our team has accomplished in 2023 and excited about what's ahead in 2024 as we celebrate our 20th anniversary of service to the State of New Jersey.

I appreciate your support. Together, we can make a difference.

Michael J. Bascom

President





2023 SUMMARY

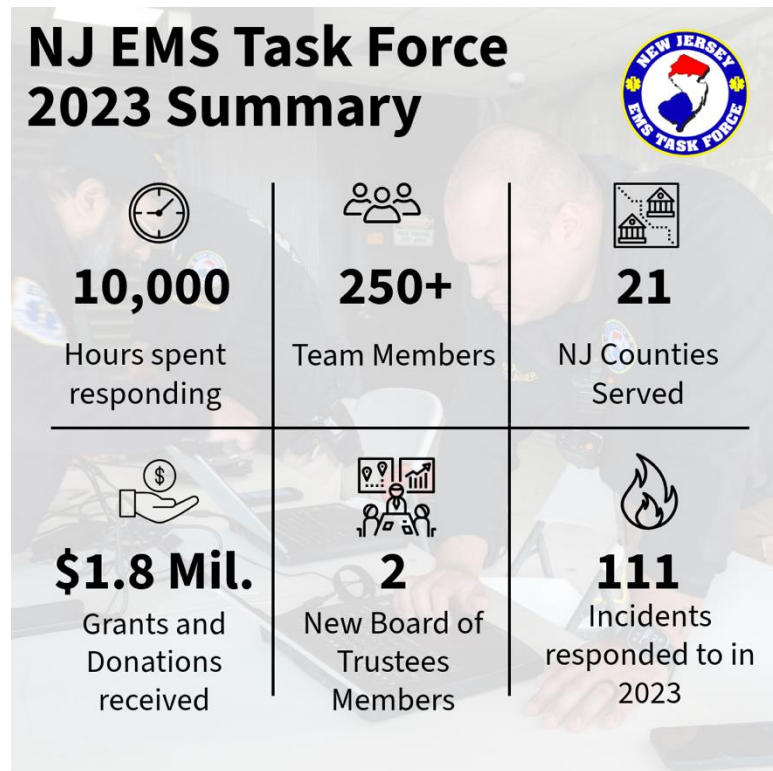
TIME: New Jersey EMS Task Force members committed more than 10,000 hours in 2023 responding to active large-scale emergencies such as nursing home and hospital evacuations, revamping and rewriting New Jersey’s preparedness plans, and participating in large-scale training exercises throughout the state.

ENHANCED LEADERSHIP: The NJ EMS Task Force Board of Trustees added two highly respected medical field experts to its Board of Trustees. Dr. David Adinaro, a long-time supporter of the NJ EMS TASK FORCE, and Robert Saunders, a career firefighter-EMT with decades of experience

in leadership, emergency management, and education, have joined the NJ EMS TASK FORCE Advisory Board. Saunders has been with Cooper University Hospital for nearly two decades and is currently the director of its National Disaster Life Support Regional Training Center. Dr. Adinaro is a physician leader and an emergency department doctor at Englewood Health. Previously, he served as Deputy Commissioner at the New Jersey Department of Health. During his tenure with the NJDOH, Dr. Adinaro oversaw the NJDOH’s operation response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the unprecedented efforts to vaccinate all who live, work, and are educated in NJ.

FUNDING: The New Jersey EMS Task Force received nearly \$1.8 million in funding through grants and private donations in 2023. Approximately \$150,000 of that funding was used to upgrade and enhance some of the NJ EMS TASK FORCE’s off-road ambulances and Mass Casualty Response Units. This upgrade increased our response readiness, directly improving the organization’s ability to respond to incidents throughout the state. This funding also allowed us to maintain our full-time planners and two (2) logistics specialists who assist in resource management and maintaining our equipment deployed across the state. In addition, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE received grant funding to offer the NAEMT’s Mental Health Resilience Officer Course (MHRO), which was open to all EMS providers across the state, and to offer the Leadership Enhancement and Development Course (LEAD) to task force members.

RESPONSES: It was a busy year for the NJ EMS Task Force, which responded to various events, demonstrating the vast array of skills and technology that only the organization can provide to





our communities. The responses ranged from multiple wildfires, the evacuation of Hoboken University Medical Center, ransomware attacks on a national hospital chain in our area, planning, people power, and specialized equipment for major events at the Meadowlands Sports Complex, preparations for the United Nations General Assembly Response; multiple large airshows; and multiple, multi-day concert events.

IMPACT: Our team, equipment, and training impacted residents in all 21 counties throughout the state.

2023 MAJOR INITIATIVES

UPDATED PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS: The NJ EMS TASK FORCE is the project manager for major regional and statewide EMS planning initiatives, bringing together EMS leaders and other stakeholders from municipal, county, state, federal, and private industry organizations. During 2023, the NJ EMS Task Force updated response plans for Pandemic Preparedness, EMS Staging Area Management, Helibase EMS Management, Emergency Healthcare Facility Evacuation, Tropical Storm/Hurricane preparedness, and Active Assailant Response Guide.



The **Infectious Disease Plan** ensures that New Jersey remains prepared to implement an effective and safe public health response before and after an infectious disease outbreak. This plan is one element of the New Jersey Department of Health Pandemic Response plan, which helps minimize morbidity and mortality and maintain the operations of essential community services during

a pandemic.

The **NJ EMS Staging Area Management Plan** defines specific, pre-identified locations designated as EMS staging areas. It may be activated for planned and emergent large-scale events through the emergency management process. Four (4) regional staging areas for EMS have been identified in New Jersey. In addition, many of the state's counties have identified staging areas. These staging areas were selected based on size, geographic location, accessibility, security, and other factors.



The **Tropical Storm/Hurricane Management Plan for EMS** outlines procedures that are followed by the NJ State EMS Coordinator, County OEM EMS Coordinators of New Jersey, and the NJ EMS Task Force should a tropical storm or hurricane threat exist, and a watch or warning is issued for portions or all of New Jersey.

The **Helibase HEMS (Helicopter EMS) Management Plan** defines specific, pre-identified locations designated as HEMS Helibases where helicopter-centered air operations can be conducted. While this plan was conceived for a large-scale medical operation, portions may be used by other disciplines, such as law enforcement and fire services, to manage a large air operation.



2023 MAJOR RESPONSES

Wildfires

The NJ EMS Task Force was called to assist with several fires throughout the year, including the Kanouse Wildfire of West Milford in Passaic County, which burned for several days and consumed over 3,859 acres of land, and the Jimmy's Waterhole Wildfire of Manchester in Ocean County, which burned over 972 acres. For all wildfire incidents, the organization worked with the respective county OEM EMS coordinators to provide support with the Medical Operations, Logistics, and Communications Modules. The NJ EMS TASK FORCE operated as the Medical Unit and rehabilitated all first responders fighting the fires for extended operational periods in challenging conditions and terrain. Several assets were requested, including ASAPs, Gators, and Medical Ambulance Buses.





Healthcare Facility Evacuations



Early in 2023, the Hudson County OEM EMS Coordinator requested the NJ EMS Task Force to facilitate Hoboken University Medical Center evacuation. The hospital experienced a loss of water due to a large water main break. Members of the Incident Advance Team responded and integrated into the hospital command post and developed a plan for a safe and rapid evacuation of the patients in the facility. Ambulance Strike Teams and specialized resources responded from within Hudson County and surrounding areas to assist with

evacuation. In total, 45 patients were safely evacuated from the facility and taken to other hospitals.

Ransomware Cyber Attack

Various New Jersey Acute Care facilities were impacted by cyberattacks, which compromised patient management software and other critical elements of care. The NJ EMS Task Force's Communications/IT Module and Logistics Module responded to support these facilities with networking and radio equipment to ensure continuity of operations. In addition, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE partnered with ATT's FirstNet Disaster Response Group to provide healthcare facilities with all available resources and access to subject matter experts.





Vaccine Transfer and Reallocation Project

In June 2021, the New Jersey Department of Health requested the New Jersey EMS Task Force create and institute a statewide vaccine distribution program to eliminate vaccine waste and expand access to underserved and vulnerable members of the population. The EMS Task Force partnered with EMS host agencies across the state and successfully delivered 850,000 doses to hundreds of providers throughout the state, which wound down in 2023.

Meadowlands Sports Complex

The NJ EMS Task Force regularly supports high-profile special events for the New Jersey Sports and Exhibition Authority (NJSEA) EMS, which includes MetLife Stadium, the American Dream Complex, the racetrack, and other areas of the property. In 2023, the team continued to provide incident management support and preparedness for the NFL season (Jets and Giants) and numerous concerts. Our team works with the NJSEA Medical Department, the Bergen County Office of Emergency Management, and the New Jersey State Police, participating in planning meetings, providing incident management personnel on site, and deploying specialized EMS resources, such as Medical Ambulance Buses, Mass Casualty Response Units, and more, to support EMS operations.

Atlantic City Airshow

In August, the NJ EMS Task Force assisted at the annual two-day Atlantic City Air Show featuring the US Army Golden Knights and specialized aerial displays. During the two-day show, Atlantic City sees tens of thousands of spectators who mostly gather along the boardwalk to watch. The organization focused on preparedness and response for the event. Planners coordinated with state, county, and local officials while coordinating NJ EMS Task Force resources to ensure they were ready to respond in case of any large-scale incident.

Large-Scale Music Festivals at The Shore

During the summer, the NJ EMS Task Force was critical in successfully executing two three-day beach concerts in Atlantic City – the Adjacent Festival and the Tidalwave Country Festival. The NJ EMS Task Force provided planning support and worked closely with city officials to ensure the safety and well-being of 100k plus concertgoers. The Task Force was embedded with city officials in the command post to provide real-time response and management of emergencies, mitigate potential risks, and ensure that the attendees had a safe and enjoyable experience. Overall, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE's active participation in the planning and execution of the concerts was essential in the event's successful outcome.

Power over the Pine

This year, the Power over the Pines Air and Space Show returned to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. The NJ EMS Task Force partnered with Burlington County OEM and Joint Base OEM to provide EMS coverage and resource management over the 3-day event. Medical Ambulance Buses were on-site and part of the response plan in the event of a mass casualty incident.



United Nations General Assembly

In September, at the request of Monmouth County OEM, the United States Secret Service, and The United States Department of Health and Human Services, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE was activated to assist with preparedness and planning surrounding the United Nations General Assembly event in New York City and participate in an evacuation exercise. Our Logistics Module deployed multiple field-hospital tents staffed by National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) members and ancillary resources should the evacuation plan be implemented.

2023 EXERCISES

Annual Full-scale Exercise - Operation Empty House



The NJ EMS Task Force partnered with Hunterdon Medical Center and Hunterdon County OEM this year to exercise the planned evacuation of an acute care hospital and establish an on-site Base of Operation. The NJ EMS Task Force Exercise Design Team spent several months preparing for the exercise, which evaluated the evacuation and transport of 100 patients to multiple receiving facilities,

emphasizing patient tracking and accountability via D4H Software. The NJ EMS Task Force Incident Advance Team activated the entire team to meet the objectives by filling various ICS roles to ensure a successful exercise. The NJ EMS TASK FORCE was also evaluated using the D4H patient tracking dashboard. This electronic means of maintaining accountability was shared with the hospital incident command post and regional stakeholders throughout the exercise to enhance situational awareness and inform decision-making.

Community Medical Center Full-scale Exercise Ocean County

The NJ EMS Task Force participated in the Community Medical Center full-scale exercise, which tested the local EMS agencies and the RWJBH EMS Physicians responding to a simulated mass casualty incident. The incident produced approximately 20 patients who needed to be triaged, treated, and transported to local hospitals.



Emergency Management Assistance Compact – Hurricane

In August of 2023, the State of New Jersey received an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request from the State of Florida for impending Hurricane Idalia. The request was received by the New Jersey State Police Office of Emergency Management EMAC Coordinator and sent to the Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF – 8) desk through NJ DOH. The request was for 30 paramedic units to form a strike



team to respond to Florida ahead of the storm, be able to answer 911 calls, and be self-sufficient for 72 hours. The NJ EMS Task Force worked with our partners and host agencies to fill the request and submit a Mission Ready Package.

Atlantic County – Active Shooter Full-scale Exercise

The NJ EMS Task Force participated in planning a full-scale Active Shooter Exercise in Galloway Twp., Atlantic County. The exercise took place in a school setting, and the county's Rescue Task Force Plan was evaluated, establishing an EMS Staging Area and Command and Control. Local EMS agencies integrated with numerous law enforcement agencies to provide triage, treatment, and transport safely and efficiently to local hospitals.



OUR LEADERSHIP

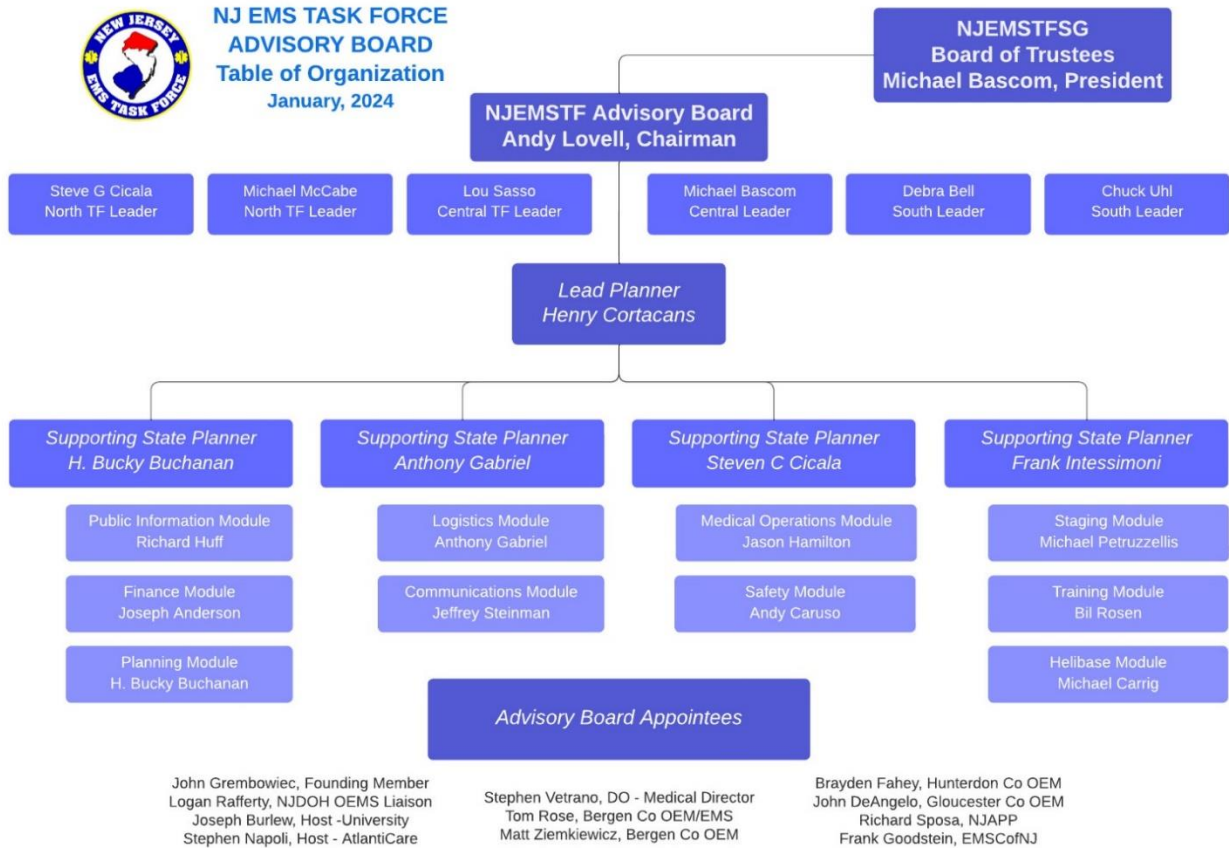
NJ EMS TASK FORCE Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees accomplishes emergency preparedness, public health, and safety activities through several key initiatives: strategic planning, fiscal oversight, policy development, stakeholder engagement, and leadership oversight.



NJ EMS TASK FORCE Advisory Board

The NJ EMS Task Force is guided by an Advisory Board that focuses on the team's overall preparedness. This membership represents the diverse EMS community, with members from every region of New Jersey. The Advisory Board Chair is selected by a vote of the membership with the consent of the Board of Trustees. The Task Force Advisory Board works with a team of Task Force Planners and Module Managers who incorporate the recommendations from the Advisory Board and execute the goals and objectives set forth.



OUR HISTORY

The inception of the New Jersey EMS Task Force traces back to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, when EMS leaders from across the state convened to devise a comprehensive strategy for coordinating emergency response efforts. Evolving from these conversations, the New Jersey EMS Task Force emerged as a formidable entity committed to training first responders and coordinating statewide EMS responses to diverse disasters. Today, the NJ EMS Task Force stands as a nationally acclaimed authority with a membership of more than 200 premier EMS providers, from career and volunteer services, hospital-based advanced life support teams, and communication units. Equipped and prepared, its members are poised to mobilize swiftly in response to large-scale emergencies within New Jersey and beyond, ranging from natural calamities to planned events.

The NJ EMS Task Force is a 501(c)3 non-profit governed by a Board of Trustees that oversees the organization’s roles and responsibilities. It operates on funding from grants, donations, and the New Jersey Department of Health.



NJ EMS TASK FORCE AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

The NJ EMS Task Force functions as a modular organization with individual or multiple modules activated to support EMS activities based on a needs assessment conducted in coordination with the NJ EMS Task Force Incident Advance Team, NJ County OEM EMS Coordinators, and NJ Department of Health Office OEMS.

Planning and the Multi-Agency Coordination Group

The Planning Module features planning specialists who fill many roles. During incidents, the planning specialists fill the positions of the Planning Section Chief and Deputy Section Chief, as well as all ICS roles, such as Resource Unit Leader, Documentation Unit Leader, and Situation Unit Leader. The Planning Module also contains the Multi-Agency Coordination Group. This group is tasked to help receive, organize, track, and deploy EMS resources when needed in communities.



Staging Module

The staging module focuses on efficiently organizing and deploying resources to support incident



response activities. It manages allocating resources to staging areas based on operational needs, ensuring that sufficient resources are readily available for rapid deployment as requested by incident commanders. Additionally, it coordinates the rotation and replenishment of resources in staging areas to maintain operational readiness throughout the incident.



Helibase Module

The Helibase module's mission is to ensure the safety of all air assets in the air once they land at the designated Helibase. It will request and manage all incoming aircraft and coordinate directly with the statewide medevac dispatchers in REMCS.

Logistics Module

The logistics section provides essential service and support roles for effective incident management. This includes coordinating the setup and maintenance of base camps or incident command posts, ensuring they are equipped with necessary facilities such as shelter, sanitation, and communication infrastructure to accommodate responders and support personnel. Additionally, the logistics section manages allocating and replenishing resources like food, water, medical supplies, and equipment to sustain operations. Their role extends to coordinating transportation services for personnel and materials and efficiently facilitating the movement of resources to and from the incident site.



Safety Module

The Safety Module is responsible for the team's overall health and well-being. It oversees identifying and mitigating hazards and enforcing safety regulations to prevent accidents and injuries.

Finance and Administration Module

The Finance Module handles the task force's day-to-day finances, working alongside the board of Trustees.

Medical Operations Module

The Medical Operations Module supplies highly trained Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics to the scene of a disaster or emergency. This entails establishing medical treatment areas, triaging patients, and providing appropriate medical interventions. The medical operations module coordinates the deployment of medical personnel, including doctors, nurses, and emergency medical technicians, to assess and treat patients on-site or facilitate their transport to healthcare facilities for further treatment.



Training Module

The Training Module tracks all team member certifications and develops multi-year training plans to ensure our members are trained to the highest levels. This past year, the module has focused on offering a



Mental Health Resilience Officer (MHRO). The organization also hosted a LEADS training, a two-day course that provides the attendees with a set of best practices for establishing a program at their own EMS agency, which serves as a conduit to improve access to mental health services.

Communications and Technology



A dedicated team of specialists ensures seamless and reliable communication channels during incidents and planned events in the communication module. These experts fulfill crucial roles such as Communication Unit Leader, responsible for coordinating communication efforts, and support roles like Radio Operators, Dispatchers, and Data/Information Managers. The communication module employs various

technologies and protocols to facilitate efficient information exchange between responders, command staff, and external agencies. Additionally, it liaises with telecommunications providers, such as ATT First Net, to maintain and enhance communication infrastructure resilience.



Incident Advanced Team

The Incident Advance Team (IAT) includes leaders, planners, and module managers. This unit is activated in response to a request from the county EMS coordinators. The team is typically notified to join a virtual meeting to obtain an incident briefing and discuss and forward deploys to the scene of an emergency event. The team integrates with local officials to offer support for any operation.



Full and Part-time Employees: State

The NJ EMS TASK FORCE was awarded grant funds through the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) and Workforce Development Grant to strengthen the state's ability to respond to the pandemic. As such, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE has partnered with three regional hospital systems and other EMS entities: University Hospital, RWJBarnabas Health, Atlanticare, South Branch Emergency Services, and Neptune Township EMS, through a professional services agreement to provide five full-time and two part-time employees. The staff reports to the NJ EMS TASK FORCE Board of Trustees.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

Part of the organization's mission is industry and community outreach and sharing knowledge and education. As such, during the year, NJ EMS Task Force members are active participants as presenters and attendees at local, regional, and national conferences.



During 2023, NJ EMS TASK FORCE team members presented sessions on organization, disaster planning, and response at the Gloucester EMS Exposition, the New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Association



Conference, and the National Conference on EMS. Each event was supported through member attendance, information booths, and networking opportunities.

As part of the 2023 National Conference on EMS, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE offered specialized training on Large Scale Incident Awareness. This training initiative aimed to equip participants with essential skills and knowledge for managing complex emergencies, emphasizing the importance of triage, treatment, and transport groups to structure response efforts.

ANNUAL FULL TEAM MEETING

NJ EMS Task Force members met in March for an evening of inspiration, encouragement, hope, and repeated reminders that those in emergency services aren't in the field for fame but rather to change the lives of others. Guest speaker Gian Paul Gonzalez capped an evening highlighted by conversations with Mike Bascom, New Jersey State Police Col. Patrick Callahan,



Dana Johnson, assistant commissioner of the NJ Department of Health, and the late H. Mickey McCabe, one of the four founders of the organization.

Jennifer McCarthy, Vice President of the Board, presented Distinguished Awards to NJ EMS TASK FORCE member Terry Hoben and Dr. David Adinaro for their service, work with the organization and their overall impact on the field of EMS.



MICKEYS' PASSING

H. Mickey McCabe was a founding member of the New Jersey Emergency Medical Services and a Founding member of the non-profit corporation that provides oversight of the Task Force. McCabe was known throughout New Jersey as a leader in the field and an advocate for a patient-centric system that assured the best care for our communities through the constant improvement and investment needed to sustain our EMS systems. McCabe died in 2023 as a result of complications from his response to the September 11 attacks.

In McCabe's honor, the New Jersey Department of Health and the New Jersey Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board have established the "H. Mickey McCabe EMS Advocacy Award," which will be presented annually at the National EMS Conference.



PARTNERSHIPS

New Jersey Department of Health

The synergy between the New Jersey Emergency Medical Services Task Force (NJ EMS TASK FORCE) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJ DOH) is foundational to our operational readiness and success.





The NJ DOH's Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) oversight of grant administration further enhances our capabilities, enabling efficient resource allocation and maximizing the impact of our initiatives. During times of crisis, such as public health emergencies or natural disasters, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE stands as a steadfast ally to OEMS and our State EMS Coordinator to provide essential support in coordinating emergency medical response efforts, ensuring the swift deployment of resources, and safeguarding the health and safety of communities across New Jersey. The State EMS Coordinator actively participates in all NJ EMS TASK FORCE advisory board meetings, fostering a collaborative environment for strategic decision-making and ensuring alignment of efforts for effective emergency response. Together, we exemplify the power of collaboration in enhancing emergency preparedness and response capabilities statewide.

Supporting the Healthcare Coalitions



By the 2023 Healthcare Preparedness Grant deliverables, the New Jersey EMS Task Force has continued our partnership with the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) Regional Healthcare Coalitions (RHCC). The RHCC offers a centralized platform for healthcare organizations and emergency management agencies

throughout the state to share ideas and best practices and maintain situational awareness. The NJ EMS TASK FORCE participates in RHCC meetings with all three regional coalitions. The NJ EMS TASK FORCE updates the coalition members with our ongoing operational response activities, provides our resources' status, and provides additional information and feedback to the relevant agenda items. In addition, RHCC members are provided access to our 24/7 virtual MACS (Multi-Agency Coordination System) should an immediate threat arise that overwhelms local capabilities and requires additional resources or personnel. The NJ EMS TASK FORCE also participated in the Pediatric Burn Surge and Medical Response Surge Exercises.

County Office of Emergency Management EMS Coordinators



The New Jersey County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) EMS Coordinators are pivotal in facilitating mutual aid resource coordination across the state. In each of New Jersey's 21 counties, a designated lead EMS Coordinator serves as the point of contact in coordinating responses and managing resources during mutual aid requests to affected jurisdictions.

Aligned with the mission of seamless emergency response, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE meets monthly with the EMS Coordinators to foster ongoing communication, share best practices, and enhance coordination efforts. Whether



responding to events or assisting in the planning and supporting of special events, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE stands ready to support and complement the efforts of the EMS Coordinators, ensuring an efficient and effective response to emergencies statewide.

NJ, NY, CT Regional EMS Task Force Preparedness Group

The NJ EMS TASK FORCE co-chairs the NJ/NY/CT regional EMS Task Force Preparedness group. This group was founded over a decade ago on the idea of intrastate knowledge sharing between EMS agencies in the NYC metropolitan area. In response to evolving threats throughout the region, this group meets regularly to discuss best practices, preparedness efforts, emergency operations plans, and resource availability. The group serves as a coordination point for the region's Medical Ambulance Bus fleet, 23 Medical Ambulance Buses that can respond to large-scale incidents, high-impact disasters, and planned high-profile special events. Combined, this group can care for and transport over 500 patients.

New Jersey State Police



The NJ EMS TASK FORCE has a significant partnership with the New Jersey State Police (NJSP). Our group provides subject matter expertise for various bureaus within the organization for EMS-related operations and events. In recent years, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE has partnered with the NJSP All-Hazards Incident Management Team to receive training and begin the credentialing process to be held to the nationwide standard of incident management team members. In addition, the NJ EMS TASK FORCE has been participating in the Incident Support Bureaus' initiative to provide Active Shooter training to first

responders.