

**AEMS Functional Group
July 15, 2026
Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members: Michelle Angle; Shari Brand; Fernando Cortes; Shauna Griffith; Jon Holmes; Roy Ryals; and Barbara Schaffer

Guest Members: Mike Atkinson; Peggy Baker; Dana Barton; Marcia Barry; Yaninn Benoit; Shelley Bissell; Suzanne Buchanan; Ligia Castro; Franco Castro-Marin; Doug Costal; Jorge Delgado; Christine DeRuvo; Kendal Dold; Matthew Earle; Barbara Elliott; Stephen Ferris; Charles Finch; Garth Gemar; Joe Gibson; Jennifer Gilliland; Arelia Henry; Josephine Johnson; Bonnie Lusk; Manuel Montano; Martin Murphy; Vince Podrybau; Chris Riddle; Marissa Salgado; Heather Santiago; Barbara Schaffer; Jett Skrien; Glenn Trainor; Corey Usher; Shelby Wirtanen; Leonard Yontz; Joshua Zeidler.

Call to Order: 10:00 am

Education

10:00 AM – Lunch N Learn

Charles Finch, DO, FACOEP, Medical Director, Phoenix Fire Department, presented The Phoenix Inferno: Prehospital Heat Stroke and Hyperactive Delirium: Ketamine Use in a Prehospital Setting.

11:00 AM – Central Region Profile

Yaninn Benoit presented an overview of Mind 24-7.

A. General Report – Garth Gemar

1. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026, Functional Group meeting minutes were presented for approval.

2. AEMS Announcements

AEMS reported that it was awaiting a contract from the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) for additional rural workforce development funding. The funding will include provider training and continuing education components. Additional information will be provided as details become available.

It was also reported that Chapter 4 of the RED Book has been updated so that stroke centers are identified by their capabilities.

3. Election – Patient Management Chair

ACTION: Dr. Fernando Cortes was elected as the new Patient Management Chair.

4. Old Business

No additional old business was reported.

5. New Business

No additional new business was reported.

6. State Report – Ligia Castro

Ligia Castro provided an update regarding State funding opportunities. Funding will include support for continuing education and provider training scholarships. Contracts were anticipated to be distributed within the next several weeks.

It was also reported that EMS for Children (EMSC) regions will receive \$14,000 in funding. Additional meetings regarding the funding will be scheduled.

Several Rural Health grant opportunities are also being developed, along with funding related to opioids and other initiatives.

ADHS committee meetings were scheduled for the following day beginning at 9:00 AM.

B. Planning and Outreach Report – Garth Gemar

1. Education

a. EMS Odyssey Conference – June 11, 2026

An overview of the 2026 EMS Odyssey Conference was provided. Participant evaluations and feedback were positive.

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Discussion included opportunities to increase partner involvement in future conferences and potential funding opportunities.

Jon Holmes provided additional comments regarding the conference.

b. EMS CE Fall Forum – December 10, 2026

Planning continues for the EMS CE Fall Forum scheduled for December 10, 2026. One presentation slot remained available for a pediatric topic. Additional educational opportunities and program developments were discussed.

c. Rural EMS Funding

An update was provided regarding Rural Health funding, which includes funding for continuing education and provider training.

2. Outreach

a. Agency/Hospital/Fire Contacts

Members were asked to send Peggy Baker any changes or updates to agency, hospital, and fire department contact information.

C. Patient Management Report – Garth Gemar

1. Categorization – Martin Murphy

An update on the Categorization Program was provided.

Stroke centers are now identified according to their capabilities in the Categorization Matrix. Categorization forms are also being revised, with additional updates forthcoming.

2. RED Book

a. Central Arizona Regional EMS Guidelines

An update was provided regarding the transition of the Central Arizona Regional EMS Guidelines.

There are now two separate guideline processes: one for automatic-aid agencies participating in ROCC and one for the remainder of the Central Arizona EMS Region under the Central Arizona Regional EMS Medical Directors Consortium (CAREMDC).

CAREMDC is working with AEMS to continue providing regional EMS guidelines for agencies throughout the Central Arizona Region. Dr. Franco Castro-Marin is working with the app vendor on development of a new CAREMDC guideline application.

Information and instructions were distributed to non-ROCC agencies regarding the transition and interim access to the Central Arizona Regional EMS Guidelines. Peggy Baker will also post information regarding interim access on the AEMS website.

A CAREMDC meeting was planned for August. AEMS approved funding for the initial costs associated with development of the new guideline application, and a list of project deliverables was provided to AEMS.

Dr. Ryan Southworth, Dr. Franco Castro-Marin, Dr. Fernando Cortes, and Dr. Beth Ranney were recognized for their work to ensure continued availability of regional EMS guidelines.

Dr. Castro-Marin thanked AEMS for its support and provided additional information regarding development of the new application. The drug calculator and hyperlinks were not yet operational but were being addressed as part of the development process.

It was emphasized that each agency's medical director remains responsible for determining the guidelines authorized for use by that agency.

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3. Phoenix Stroke Center Coalition – Garth Gemar, MD

An update was provided regarding the Phoenix Stroke Center Coalition, including discussion of VAN/LVO assessment tools and involvement of stroke coordinators.

4. Pediatric

It was reported that Mickey Kovach had retired and that AEMS would be seeking nominations for an AEMS representative to serve on the State Pediatric Advisory Council for EMS (PACES). Nomination information was expected to be posted on the AEMS website.

5. Other Reports

No additional reports were provided.

D. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 PM by Roy Ryals and Barbara Schaffer.

Next Meetings

AEMS Functional Group

September 16, 2026

AEMS Board of Governors

August 19, 2026