



**Northeast Central Ohio Region 5**  
**REGIONAL WORKGROUP MEETINGS**  
**March 15, 2007**

## COMMUNICATIONS

**Present:** Scott Martin, AGMC; Mike Hildreth, MedCentral; John Mason, Portage Co. EMA; Mark Terzel, Intern, University of Akron; Steven Bosso, Ravenna Twp. Fire/City of Twinsburg Fire; Bob Walker, Robinson Memorial Hospital; David Nunley, Regional PH Coordinator; David Randall, MORCHD; Nancy O'Diam, MORCHD; David Calderone, Coventry Fire; Sarah Metzger, Regional Hospitals Coordinator; Jackie Brinegar, ARHA; Kathy Coleman, Summit County Health District

**FACILITATOR:** Bruce Shade

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### Assessment of Interoperable Communications within the Region

- Conduct an assessment of EMA directors, health departments and hospitals
- Look at the physical tally of the equipment being used, as well as staff proficiency
- Review the state's communications assessment, as well as those conducted by individual counties
- Make onsite visits to explain the assessment and how it should be completed

#### Review of Existing Systems

- OPHCS – limited by licensure, hospitals not on the system yet
- MARCS – too many talk groups, uneducated users, no protocol in place
- Cell phones
- Satellite phones – hospitals currently not permitted to purchase satellite phones
- Land lines – vulnerability
- HAM radios – all hospitals currently have them; very robust system
- TeamSpeak – ODH hosts for free on their server
- Email
- Fax
- Handheld devices
- Websites
- Gateway solutions – used to bridge disparate systems together

One of the major issues in pursuing interoperability is to first develop and teach an operating protocol for using the existing systems. HAM radio operators would be a great resource when developing the protocol for using the system. Consensus is that the focus should be on using and developing the communications tools we currently have.

#### Regional Coordination of Communication Systems

- In order to avoid provincialism, need to frame the idea of a regional coordination center not as being “in charge,” but as one coordination function
- EMA-to-EMA would be the logical route for regional communication since the key people would likely be at the EOC during an event
- Develop a comprehensive directory listing regional communications systems, if the EMA directors feel it would be a useful tool.
- If local communications protocols were in place, the regional protocol would not need to be so extensive

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Review the state communications plan and county plans, then develop a rough draft for the regional plan.
- Determine if the development of a county-specific regional directory is something the EMAs would utilize. Discuss at the RMRS breakout session on June 14.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- John and Bruce will start working on a draft of the plan, then it will be sent to the group for review
- Bruce will start working on the assessment tool
- David Calderone has an excellent guidebook created by law enforcement on developing regional communications. He will send it to Sarah who will disseminate it.

## **OTHER**

- David Calderone agreed to chair the committee.
- The next meeting will be April 5 at 9:00 at ARHA.