



HCEC Happenings

February 2022

ACE Accreditation

Congratulations to our Communications Team on maintaining their ACE (Accredited Center of Excellence) accreditation. Our HCEC Communications Team first earned this accreditation in 2018, and they are required to submit quarterly reports to maintain their certification.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our call takers and dispatchers have worked tirelessly to provide thorough call information to help keep our staff safe.

Thank you to the Communications Team for all you do!

A Note From Our CEO

Student Feedback Forms

Most of you probably noticed that we have placed student feedback QR codes at each of the stations in hopes of getting useful feedback. I would like to report that we have been getting some wonderful accounts of the great work you do. In fact, all of the submissions have been positive! It is important to the future of our profession that we take the time to be informative to our students. We were all there once, and often patience and kindness go a long way.

Thanks to the following people for getting 5 star ratings this month: Chase Hinman, Slate Uys, Collin Poole, Austin Dickson, Sarah Rosenberg, Alex Cherem, Tom Sanchez, and Chris Bailey!

-Jeremy Hyde, CEO



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Upcoming Continuing Education

Feb 3	PHTLS Hybrid
Feb 4	ATLS Refresher
Feb 5-6	ATLS
Feb 8	AMLS Hybrid
Feb 9	Case Review
Feb 10	PALS Update
Feb 17	ACLS Update
Feb 22-24	TCE 1*
Feb 26	TCE 1*

***Mandatory for all
credentialed staff**



NAEMT Scholarship Link

Black History Month

In February we celebrate Black History Month. Black History Month has been declared in February by every president since 1976 starting with President Ford. We take this month every year to celebrate the achievements of African Americans and to recognize their role in US History.

HCEC is proud to be a diverse workplace that serves a diverse population and promotes the inclusion of all races.

Did you know that in an attempt to diversify the EMS workforce the NAEMT offers a diversity scholarship to any person of color who aspires to be a paramedic or EMT? Our very own Steven Nelson is a proud recipient of this award. If you would like to find out more about this scholarship, visit the NAEMT website using the QR code provided. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to Steven Nelson.

HAPPY BLACK HISTORY MONTH



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Mental Health and Wellness Check-In

I've been feeling a lot of compassion fatigue lately. I know many of you might be in the same place. I'm tired of having conversations about COVID-19. I'm tired of talking to patients about it. I'm tired of treating patients with it. I'm tired of wearing masks. I'm tired of PPE. I'm tired of worrying if I will get the virus again. I'm tired of worrying about the COVID status of my loved ones. I'm tired of worrying if my elderly parents will get it again. I'm tired of the politicization of healthcare. I'm so tired of patients not trusting their healthcare providers, but they'll trust ANYTHING they read on Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter. I'm tired of having to factor in "COVID-19 risk-tolerance" into every activity I do. I'm tired of watching families cry when their loved ones are staring down the barrel of a ventilator or when they're watching us do CPR. Sometimes I'm numb, and I don't feel anything when watching patients and families grieve. I feel desensitized. I think I'm just tired.

The narrative I'm sharing of my own experience is not unique and echoes the sentiments I'm hearing from many of you and my colleagues working inside of hospitals and other EMS systems all across the country. We are at risk of losing our friends, family, and co-workers to this disease. The COVID-19 virus is dangerous to healthcare workers, especially those with pre-existing conditions, and the unvaccinated. It was very sobering to read an EMS1 article released on December 30, 2021, highlighting the names and ages of approximately 80 EMS providers lost to COVID-19 since the pandemic started (EMS1, 2021). One of the medics, Kevin Leiva, was just 24 years old. If you want to read it, it's titled "EMS providers lost to COVID-19" and is an open-access article online. We have to protect ourselves and each other from getting sick. The best way to prevent a disease is through primary prevention, which is accomplished through vaccines. As an organization, HCEC urges each of you to have conversations with your healthcare providers and consider getting vaccinated. If you have not had a booster dose, we encourage you to take it when the time is right. This is the best way to protect ourselves, our families, and our workforce. Now is also an excellent time to remind you to wear your mask at work. We regularly update our COVID-19 resources page on the website. Please make sure you are following our current recommendations.

The other risk we face is losing our workforce to burnout and mental illness. The pandemic is taking a toll on us all. In an August 2021 survey of EMS workers, 84% of respondents reported decreased morale at work; 70.9% reported worsening mental health as compared with non-pandemic times, and 33% of respondents considered changing career paths altogether (Shekhar, 2021). EMS workers are at more than double the risk of suicide than that of the remaining work population, and this was even before the pandemic (Vigil, 2021). The effect of mental health on our team due to this pandemic cannot be brushed under the rug. Each of us has been affected by COVID-19. How do we keep our mental health in a positive headspace?



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The CDC has offered some tips to enhance resilience (CDC, n.d.). Here are some of the best recommendations:

- Communicate openly with your coworkers about job stress.
- Identify and accept those things which you do not have control over.
- Recognize you are performing a crucial role in fighting this pandemic and that you are doing the best you can.
- Increase your sense of control by keeping a consistent daily routine
 - Get adequate sleep
 - Make time to eat healthy meals
 - Take breaks to rest, stretch, or check-in with supportive colleagues, coworkers, friends, and family.
- When away from work, get exercise when you can. Spend time outdoors being physically active or relaxing. Do things you enjoy.
- Take breaks from reading the news and social media. Hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting, especially since you work with people directly affected by the virus.
- If you feel like you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescriptions), ask for help.

Some other things we can do:

- Use your vacation time
- Try not to work too much overtime
- Set boundaries - are you doing work during your time off?
- Try a new hobby.
- Do something creative.

There are resources out there for people who need it (and if we paid closer attention to ourselves, you might realize YOU are one of those people). Don't forget about our EAP program. Some are more comfortable talking with colleagues or their supervisors instead of a counselor. Whomever you choose to talk to, find someone who can help you process your feelings. If you are burned out, talking to others can really help. If you don't have anyone to talk to, you can always call me.

I hope by reading this you understand that I know how you feel. So does the rest of the team. We are all in this together and none of us are immune from the fallout associated with the pandemic. There are things we can do to help each other. It is possible some of us are struggling more than others realize. Be alert to how you feel. Watch out for your coworkers, and please reach out if you need help.

-Chivas

References:

CDC (n.d.) Healthcare personnel and first responders: How to cope with stress and build resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/healthcare-workers-first-responders/index.html>

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Shekhar, A. (2021). EMS provider mental health during COVID-19: A pandemic within a pandemic. Retrieved from on February 1, 2021 from: <https://www.jems.com/exclusives/ems-provider-mental-health-during-covid-19-a-pandemic-within-a-pandemic/>

Vigil, N. H., Beger, S., Gochenour, K. S., Frazier, W. H., Vadeboncoeur, T. F., & Bobrow, B. J. (2021). Suicide Among the Emergency Medical Systems Occupation in the United States. *The western journal of emergency medicine*, 22(2), 326–332. <https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.2020.10.48742>



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The CORPS Award

At HCEC we exude the core values of integrity, pride, stewardship, professionalism, and innovation.

Every month a winner is selected from the nominations submitted by their peers. Be sure to let us know when you see someone who exemplifies the CORPS Values.

Don't forget that both the winner and person who nominates them receive \$100 giftcards.

Congratulations to two of our most recent CORPS Award winners, Bryan Whitfill and Jessa Vochaska.



February 2022

What's Happening Clinically?

Some recent clinical accomplishments involving our field providers:

- We recently participated in the delivery of a newborn baby in the field.
- Through our CARES registry data, 5 cardiac arrest survivors were discharged from the hospital neurologically intact since July of 2021.
- We had 7 DSI cases in January. Our adverse event rate continues to be very low. We have some opportunities to improve our post-intubation care. Be prepared to respond to hypotension AFTER the intubation is done. We had a couple of minor adverse events of transient hypotension after the 2nd dose of Ketamine or after Rocuronium. You can correct this via fluids, pressors, or blood as indicated. Also remember - if you cannot get the patient's sats above 93%, consider extraglottic placement in lieu of attempting intubation unless contraindicated.
- We have given blood to 8 patients since our program started in 2021 without any adverse events.
- We have performed 11 finger thoracostomies since we added this skill in 2021.
- Our supervisors are becoming very good at ultrasound acquisition and interpretation; our next step is to hopefully expand the number of ultrasound units to the FTO units in 2022.
- We sent 9 staff members to the cadaver lab this past week in San Antonio. Our team had very good things to say about their experience.
- Our next In-charge academy is scheduled for February 28th. Four candidates have been selected, and we plan to host 2 additional academies between now and July.
- We are in the process of completing the P3-P4 upgrades for a few of our senior field paramedics.

-HCEC Department of Clinical Services



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February Birthdays

Hiram Castro	2/2
Chris Bailey	2/4
JA Syzmanski	2/6
Omar Cepeda	2/7
David Clark	2/8
Martin Douglas	2/9
Sam Rodriguez	2/9
Heath White	2/9
Amy Jackle	2/12
Jennifer Rodriguez	2/16
Erika Cardona	2/17
Jerry Reyes	2/17
Andrea Bell	2/22
Jose Luna	2/22
Katie Conn	2/23
Lauren Levingston	2/24
Ian Feldman	2/24
Travis Loafman	2/24
James Martin	2/24
Mark Smith	2/24
Amanda Feuge	2/26
Ryan Moreno	2/26
Robert Scott	2/26
Corey Naranjo	2/28

Community Health

The CHP program currently has over 60 active patients, and we are working diligently to help as many folks as possible promptly. Thanks for your referrals, patience, and support for what we do.

You should have all received a new “badge buddy” with QR codes on each side—one side for Alternative Disposition documents and the other side for Nurse Health Line. These are meant to help make these processes convenient and quick. Remember that ALL patient refusals should receive NHL information via paper form or QR code/website. For Alternative Disposition, the NHL information is already attached to the patient education documents, so no need to give them both links. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out.

On the Radar:

We are currently discussing an exciting new initiative with a local mental health hospital. We all know the routine—a patient with a psychiatric emergency wants to be admitted to a mental health facility, but we must transport them to a hospital-based ER for medical clearance first. Several of these cases may soon be a thing of the past! While some patients will require medical evaluation--acute intoxication, overdoses, vital signs outside of established parameters, etc.--our goal is to establish a process by which crews can safely bypass a medical hospital ER and transport directly to a psychiatric hospital ER.

Please be aware that this is still in the planning stages - a work in progress! It is still cooking and not ready just yet! Please do not contact your supervisor or the Consult Line to request direct psychiatric admission at this time. We currently do not have the necessary components in place, but we plan on finalizing the process within the next few months. We just wanted to take this opportunity to be transparent and share this exciting plan. More to come later!

-Corey



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February Anniversaries

Quincy Burnett	4 years
Julio Mejia	4 years
Lauren Charles	9 years
Mike Hoyt	11 years
Eric Montelongo	13 years
Eric Johnson	14 years



Jen Price EMT-P



Chris Bailey EMT-P

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New Faces in Familiar Places

In 2021 we welcomed several new members to HCEC, and we have already welcomed one new member in 2022. Take a few minutes to meet a few of our newest employees, and be sure to say hello when you see them around!

Jen Price EMT-P

Jen Price is the first person to join our team in 2022. Jen is from Houston and has been in EMS for almost 10 years. Jen joined EMS because she likes helping people, and she enjoys the medical and trauma calls. Jen chose HCEC because she believes we are the best 911 EMS agency. (We think so too!) In her free time, she enjoys reading, playing golf, and playing with her dogs. You may be surprised to know that Jen was a ballerina for 15 years!

Chris Bailey EMT-P

Chris is from Baytown, Tx and was a Navy Corpsman. He enjoys helping others and likes the EMS schedule. Chris came to HCEC as a part-time event medic and has now transitioned to the 911 division full-time. In his free time he enjoys video games and house hunting. Chris has traveled to over 30 countries.



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Karl Moore LP

Karl is from Oakland, California. He has been in EMS for 9 years and in prehospital medicine for nearly 20 years. Karl had always wanted to come work at HCEC, but it just didn't work out.

When Karl left Cypress Creek EMS he used our job fair as an opportunity and joined our team.

Karl is a dad to 4 kids that keep him very busy when he isn't working. We are happy to welcome Karl to the team!

Rodrigo Solana LP

Rodrigo is from Mexico City. He joined HCEC from Cypress Creek. He started at Cypress Creek in 2017 and completed their paramedic program. In his free time, he enjoys reading, music, movies, food/ cooking, wine, travel, anything outdoors, running with his dog, tennis, soccer, and working out. Rodrigo is fluent in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Rodrigo is also a new dad to his daughter, Emilia. He says he is happy and excited to be here at HCEC, and we are happy to have him.

Carlos Cordova

Carlos is from Houston and is new to EMS. He came to work in dispatch because it aligns with his future occupation and will give him good work experience. Carlos enjoys video games, going to the gym, and sports. Carlos says that a fun fact about him is he is ambidextrous. Welcome to HCEC Carlos!



Karl Moore LP



Rodrigo Solana LP



Carlos Cordova, Dispatch



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Olivia Kaufman EMT-P

Olivia is from New York, New York. She started in EMS 12 years ago as a EMT-B. She has experience in private EMS and 911 including a year in Bronx, NY, and Brooklyn, NY. Her most recent employment was with MCHD for 8.5 years. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and coaching her daughter's softball team. She and her wife enjoy being foster parents. They have had 5 children placed with them so far and it has been a remarkable experience. They have a big, blended family including 2 stepchildren, one biological child, and a foster baby. Olivia would like for her coworkers to know that she is a relaxed person and tends to get along with people easily. She is also teachable and willing to take constructive criticism in order to grow both personally and professionally. She is happy to be a part of our HCEC family and we are happy to have her!



Olivia Kaufman EMT-P

Discounts for Days

Be sure to check out this section monthly for discounts available to EMS providers!

Looking for some warm clothes to combat the winter weather? Maybe you just need some new outdoor gear. Check out this discount!

Columbia: Columbia offers discounts to first responders who can register to the Columbia Professional Purchase Program.



welcome