

# REGIONAL EMS COUNCIL MERGER CREATES “EMS WEST”

Effective July 1, 2017, the long-awaited merger of EMMCO East, Inc. and Emergency Medical Service Institute will be official. The merged entity will operate as **EMS WEST** and will serve a 16-county EMS region in western Pennsylvania stretching from West Virginia to New York state.

“This merger is the culmination of several years of cooperative operations where these two entities have shared staff and resources to develop unprecedented efficiencies of operation,” said Michael McAllister, President of the Board of Directors of EMMCO East. Robert McCaughan, President of the Board of Directors of EMSI, agreed, stating “This new organization has been formed to better serve the best interests of our providers and our patients through unequaled customer service, unparalleled efficiency, and unprecedented cost effectiveness.” Raphael Barishansky, Deputy Secretary for Health Planning and Assessment with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, said “The Department applauds both EMSI and EMMCO East for this proactive move and for showing their joint ability to build consensus.”

Charles Cressley, Director of Operations for Jefferson County EMS, looks forward to increased efficiencies. “Every report that has been done on the EMS system in Pennsylvania has been critical of the Regional Council structure. EMMCO East and EMSI are taking a bold step forward to eliminate duplication and waste in the system and to direct cost savings into improvements and programs that will benefit the local EMS providers, including more education opportunities and better training equipment,” said Mr. Cressley. Cost savings are expected from consolidation of health and commercial insurance policies, elimination of finance, accounting and audit expenses, and streamlining of administrative overhead including telephone and communication fees, and office supplies.

Looking toward future operations, the two existing office locations (Pittsburgh and Kersey), will remain fully staffed. Prior to the merger, EMMCO East had a staff of only three but now shares a combined staff of 13 with their new partners. “Additional staff provides depth and bench strength which affords better opportunities to provide exemplary customer service to the EMS providers and agencies in the region,” said John Weidow, EMMCO East Executive Director.

Tom McElree, Executive Director of EMSI, noted that both offices are located in areas that allow easy access to the majority of the EMS agencies located in the combined region. “The cost to maintain each location falls within budgetary constraints and each office also provides the significant benefit of expanded classroom space for education and meeting opportunities,” said Mr. McElree.

“I congratulate the Boards of Directors of both EMMCO East and EMSI for their vision, and thank the Department of Health for its support during this transition,” said Mr.

McCaughan. “By creating a model that the rest of the state could emulate, we have demonstrated that, together, it is possible to accomplish the most challenging goals. Leading the way through collaboration and cooperation, we are proud of what we have been able to accomplish together.”



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