



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS
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February 20, 2009

Matthew Minson, MD
Senior Medical Officer for Strategic Initiatives
Office of Policy, Strategic Planning and Communications
US Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
200 Independence Ave. SW
Room 638G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Minson:

The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) is the professional organization of the Emergency Medical Services first responders at the national level. NAEMT always appreciates being asked to participate in federal agency deliberations that may have a significant impact, or that need the input from our perspective, experience and expertise. Thus, we attended and contributed to the discussion December 18 at the meeting called for by the DHS-OHA meeting on Anthrax and First Responder protection. This letter is to follow up on our organization's recommendations on the issue of pre-attack deployment of antibiotics to first responders.

We believe that having immediate access to antibiotics for first responders and their families is the best way to protect first responders and assure that they are optimally available to stay or be called into service. Having the antibiotics immediately available to their families will give the first responders peace of mind and prevent conflict between their commitment to protect their community and their family.

Every community needs to decide how to have the antibiotics immediately available to first responders and their families. This can be accomplished through a first responder cache or distribution of necessary antibiotics to the homes of first responders. We believe the logistical issues of centralized caches will make it difficult to make antibiotics immediately available as we respond to the simultaneously occurring needs of the community at large.

We recognize there is a potential of families utilizing the "anthrax" intended antibiotics for some other medical problem requiring antibiotics, thus making the counter measure unavailable immediately when needed. However, we believe that education and agency policy and procedure as well as drills would all but eliminate this potential problem. Furthermore, EMS personnel are familiar with the issue of developing drug resistance and reinforcement of this issue will be well received with the distribution of the antibiotics to the individual first responders.

NAEMT would be willing to meet with you to further discuss this issue. If interested please contact me at our Headquarters Office at 601-924-7744.

Sincerely,

Patrick F. Moore
President, NAEMT