

JOINT TRAUMA SYSTEM WHITE PAPER

ESTABLISHING A DOD STANDARD FOR TACTICAL COMBAT CASUALTY CARE (TCCC) TRAINING

10 September 2015

BLUF: TCCC is a proven lifesaver on the battlefield, but it is not consistently trained or implemented across the DoD in a standardized manner. A strategic partnership with the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) in conjunction with the Military Training Network (MTN) at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences would provide the necessary educational infrastructure to decrease variability and increase the quality of TCCC training in the DoD and, as a result, improve outcomes for our nation's combat wounded.

BACKGROUND:

- Evidence-based best practice guidelines for battlefield trauma care have been developed over more than 14 years of war and are embodied in the Joint Trauma System (JTS) TCCC guidelines. Oversight of the TCCC guidelines is provided by the Committee on TCCC (CoTCCC).

-- A TCCC curriculum was first established in 2008 at the request of Navy Medicine. Annually updated versions of this curriculum are now developed by the Joint Trauma System and posted on the MHS and NAEMT websites. Although the US Central Command and the Services have directed that US service members deploying in support of combat operations be trained in TCCC, there has been no standardization of the courses used to accomplish this training.

-- Pockets of excellence exist throughout DoD with TCCC implementation, but significant variation has been noted in TCCC training courses (especially with sustainment training). Further, some medical providers in the DoD have not been trained in TCCC at all.

-- The JTS combat trauma care performance review process, recent medical AARs from combat units and the recent media note of inappropriate and potentially dangerous combat trauma training at some military units have all served to highlight the need for better quality assurance of both initial and sustainment DoD TCCC training courses.

- NAEMT has a worldwide educational infrastructure that has been built over the last 30 years to teach Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) courses. PHTLS courses are currently taught in over 50 nations. NAEMT is accredited by the Continuing Education Coordinating Board of Emergency Medical Services (CECBEMS).

-- In 2009, the Spanish Special Forces requested TCCC training for one of their deploying units. Financial restrictions prevented a planned military to military training mission. At the request of the CoTCCC Chairman, NAEMT conducted TCCC training for the Spanish Special Forces, using the CoTCCC-developed TCCC curriculum and the NAEMT educational infrastructure to accomplish this training. Funding for the training was provided by the Spanish military. NAEMT has subsequently conducted TCCC training using the TCCC curriculum developed by the JTS for 20

other nations' militaries, including a number of other NATO member nations and the Irish National Army.

- The TCCC curriculum as taught by NAEMT adheres to the CoTCCC guidelines and is updated as the CoTCCC recommendations are updated. This course is now internationally recognized and provides a TCCC card with the logos of the groups that have endorsed the concepts that the course contains: the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma, the JTS, the CoTCCC and the NAEMT. This course is currently the best option available to ensure consistent and high-quality training.

-- The NAEMT, working with the MTN, can coordinate the conduct of TCCC courses using the JTS curriculum through the establishment of NAEMT-recognized TCCC training sites at MTFs, operational units, and military bases around the world. Once the training sites have been established and the initial instructor cadre trained, TCCC courses can be taught locally without the need for commercial vendors or travel costs. This is the model currently used by the MHS to train ATLS, ACLS, BLS, PALS, and PHTLS. NAEMT guidelines call for no greater than a 4:1 student:instructor ratio.

-- The NAEMT will recognize basic service medical training (or NREMT certification), completion of the 2-day JTS TCCC provider course, followed by the 2-day monitored "teach-back" of the course (where new instructors demonstrate their ability to teach the course), and a 6-hour online instructor course as adequate credentials to be recognized as a NAEMT-credentialed TCCC instructor.

-- The minimal \$10 administrative fee per student for JTS TCCC courses taught within the NAEMT educational infrastructure needs to be addressed through centralized funding sources/waiver and not borne by MTFs and operational units. This issue is presently being researched. The PHTLS textbook is also required for the course, but options to make this manual available to TCCC students can be explored.

- The Military Training Network at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences oversees the administration of training courses associated with medical professional societies outside of the military. Examples include the Advanced Trauma Life Support course, the Advanced Cardiac Life Support course, and the Basic Life Support course. The NAEMT TCCC course could be added to the MTN list of course offerings.

- NAEMT maintains a roster of individuals current in TCCC training. This roster could be used to provide a centralized method for military medical leaders to maintain knowledge of TCCC readiness in their units.

SOLUTION:

- Recommend Surgeon General acknowledgement that: 1) A lack of standardization for TCCC training is a problem that needs to be resolved; 2) A standardized educational infrastructure such as that developed by the NAEMT that supports the teaching of the Joint Trauma System-developed TCCC curriculum and provides a TCCC card recognized by the JTS, the NAEMT, the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma, and the CoTCCC is the optimal way forward for the services; and 3) the course be coordinated for military units through the Military Training Network.

RECOMMENDATION:

- The military services mandate the use of the JTS-developed TCCC for Medical Personnel Curriculum (2-day course) and the TCCC for All Combatants curriculum for non-medical personnel (1-day course) as the minimum standards for TCCC training. Military units may then opt to supplement this core TCCC training with additional training such as trauma lanes, live tissue training, advanced simulation, field exercises and/or inclusion of casualty response scenarios into unit battle drills as time and resources allow.
- Develop a strategic partnership with NAEMT and the MTN to support the educational infrastructure needed to provide standardized training of the JTS TCCC course throughout DoD. Partnership allows for a TCCC card to be awarded to instructors and students with the requirement to obtain baseline TCCC instruction, sustainment training every three years, and refresher training within six months of deploying in support of combat operations. The goal is to train a cadre of military instructors throughout the DoD with civilian options to support military reserve and guard units.
- Develop a strategic partnership with the Military Training Network (MTN) to establish an MOA with NAEMT similar to MOA in place with American Heart Association for BLS, ACLS, and PALS. Funding issues should be worked as required to support any administrative costs for implementation and long-term course oversight.
- This Strategic Partnership between the JTS and NAEMT/MTN, in conjunction with existing CoTCCC methodology for updating the TCCC Guidelines and curriculum, will provide for much improved quality assurance and standardized battlefield trauma care training throughout the US Military.