

## Novel Coronavirus Response Update



▲ Dr. Ted Delbridge (right), MIEMSS Executive Director, participates in a press conference with Governor Larry Hogan, updating Marylanders on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [Photo courtesy of Joseph Andrucyk, Executive Office of the Governor.]

**IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE THE LATEST GUIDANCE** on monitoring and caring for our patients and EMS clinicians during the COVID-19 pandemic, please utilize the COVID-19 EMS Guidance documents found on MIEMSS Infectious Diseases website. Recognizing that guidance regarding COVID-19 is ever-changing, MIEMSS will post new documents to the <http://www.miemss.org/home/infectious-diseases> website as updates occur.

While COVID-19 remains a persistent threat, so does the impending 2020-2021 influenza season. Either illness, by itself, creates demands on the EMS

and health care system. It is incredibly important that everyone get vaccinated for influenza. MIEMSS encourages all emergency services personnel to receive the influenza vaccine. Any flu infection can carry a risk of serious complications, hospitalization, or death, even among otherwise healthy children and adults. In caring for yourself, your family, and your patients, it is critical for everyone to get the flu vaccine.

MIEMSS would like to thank all Maryland's emergency services personnel for their continued dedication to caring for patients during the current pandemic. ■

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# MDERS Provides Small Unmanned Aerial Systems to Maryland-National Capital Partners



**THE MISSION OF THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM (MDERS)** is to support the integration of fire, rescue, emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement, emergency management, public health, and health care systems to ensure a coordinated response to emergency incidents. This is accomplished through strategic planning, information sharing, training, exercise, and equipment acquisition.

In 2018, following several high-profile emergency incidents, MDERS began the small unmanned aerial system (sUAS) capability development planning process with public safety stakeholder agencies in Montgomery County to provide responders with a means of gathering information to enhance situational awareness. More comprehensive situational awareness provides a more vivid and accurate picture to the incident commander. Equipped with this better picture, the incident commander can most effectively and safely address the incident, creating a course of action that protects responders and civilians while resolving the incident.

To gain situational awareness, public safety agencies currently use a variety of tools to gather information, such as call processing software, radio systems, traffic cameras, helicopters, and experienced personnel. The integration of sUAS is one more tool public safety agencies can add to their response kit. The aircraft will enable them to gather intelligence and gain awareness from unique perspectives while providing personnel with a safe operating distance from the threat. Aircrafts will be equipped with cameras, infrared, spotlights, and other tools, all of which provide a real-time feed to incident managers.

To ensure the efficient and effective deployment of the sUAS capability, MDERS staff and stakeholders created an sUAS

capability development plan (CDP). A work group comprised of senior fire, police, and emergency management personnel, along with elected and appointed officials, convened for several months to build the sUAS plan.

MDERS staff employed a series of questions based on the “POETEE” (planning, organizing, equipping, training, exercising, evaluating) capability building process to gather necessary information from the workgroup representatives to develop the sUAS plan. This process allowed the workgroup to identify gaps in key areas. The workgroup representatives coordinated with internal and external subject matter experts to develop solutions to address those deficiencies. Each agency developed a set of key sUAS talking points to engage staff and community members.

As part of the capability development process, each department had to fulfill certain requirements for their programs to become operational. In order to qualify for the grant funds, each department was tasked with developing a policy on sUAS operations and an equipment spending plan that was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Each department also completed training to prepare them for the FAA Part-107 pilot certification.

The police, fire and rescue, and emergency management departments each received a set of sUAS vehicles, attachments, and accessories. The vehicles were selected based on a needs assessment. Training for each device is provided in cooperation with sUAS equipment and software vendors, as well as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Operators complete the courses, then take the federal pilot certification exam.

The Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) completed all requirements to qualify as the first operational sUAS program in the Maryland-National Capital Region. The sUAS vehicles are part of the department’s crash reconstruction

unit, special operations section, and managed search operations. In late-2020, the department’s sUAS vehicles played a critical part in providing police officer safety at a barricade incident and major crime investigation.

Just recently, the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS), and Prince George’s County Police Department (PGPD) received approval from FEMA to begin operationalizing their respective sUAS programs.

Each department received several sUAS vehicle platforms

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***Aircraft will be equipped with cameras, infrared, spotlights, and other tools, all of which provide a real-time feed to incident managers.***

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# Preparation, Awareness, and Vigilance Among Keys to Motorists' Safety During Roadside Emergencies

**MULTIPLE STATE AGENCIES** have come together to provide guidance to Maryland motorists to keep them and others safe in the event of an emergency incident or minor vehicle crash while traveling. Working together, the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT MVA) Highway Safety Office and State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), Maryland Transportation Authority Police (MD-TAP), Maryland State Police (MSP) and Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) are reminding motorists and passengers of the dangers created by roadside emergencies and vehicle breakdowns.

"All of the participating agencies share a commitment to making our roads safer, and we look forward to spreading these critical messages that could potentially save lives," said MDOT MVA Administrator Chrissy Nizer, who also serves as Governor Larry Hogan's Highway Safety Representative. "Getting out of a vehicle on a roadway is extremely dangerous and can put motorists and their passengers in vulnerable situations. We encourage all motorists to remember



and apply these safety messages if they find themselves in a crash or breakdown situation."

The most important reminder is the need to use caution and common sense – because every incident is unique. To be ready for the unexpected, motorists and passengers are encouraged to:

- **Prepare** their vehicle in advance to avoid and minimize emergencies,
- **Assess** the situation when a roadside emergency occurs,
- **Use good judgment** in deciding how to respond, and
- **Stay vigilant** for other motorists, because roadside emergencies are fluid situations that can change in an instant.

ALL motorists play a role in promoting safety for those involved in a roadside emergency. ALL drivers are reminded to drive sober, slow down, and

put your phone down while driving. In Maryland, it is a state law to **MOVE OVER** for emergency responders. If you are unable to move over, slow down while passing.

Although there are multiple suggested actions that can increase your safety during an incident, there is not one single set of procedures that can guarantee the safety of drivers and passengers. Remember, every situation is different, and motorists and passengers should **prepare, assess, use good judgment, and stay vigilant** to ensure they make the best decisions based on their specific roadside emergency.

For more information on highway safety and strategies to protect yourself and others when traveling Maryland's roadways, please visit [ZeroDeathsMD.gov/RoadsideSafety](http://ZeroDeathsMD.gov/RoadsideSafety). ■

## New Virtual Training of Mental Health First Aid

**THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH** (MDH), in partnership with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMSS), has launched a new virtual form of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Maryland, which is being offered to firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and police.

MHFA Maryland has trained over 40,000 individuals and professionals in identifying the signs and symptoms of mental illnesses and substance use disorders so they can respond effectively

to individuals in crisis. The first training sessions began in late-October. Over the next three years, MIEMSS will coordinate statewide training for hundreds of emergency responders, teaching the skills necessary to provide initial support to those in crisis. Participants receive national certification upon successful completion of the 6.5-hour training program, which includes both self-paced learning and live virtual training with a certified instructor. The shift from in-person to virtual training comes as the result of

precautions taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Maryland.

According to the National Council for Behavioral Health, trainees who complete the program report:

- Increased knowledge of signs, symptoms, and risk factors of substance use disorder and mental health challenges;
- Increased confidence in their ability and likelihood to help an individual

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## Safety Tips: Don't Let These Gifts Wheel You into Danger



**LET'S FACE IT, KIDS LIKE THINGS WITH WHEELS!** That makes bikes, skateboards, skates, and scooters some of the most popular gifts for children during the holiday season. These gifts provide fun and exercise, but if they are not used correctly, they can also cause injuries.

A study by Safe Kids Worldwide reported that in 2018, about 181,500 children required emergency room visits due to collisions on these wheeled gifts. About 113,000 of those visits were from bike-related injuries, 42,000 stemmed from skateboards, and another 26,500 from skates. Scooters were not included in this study, but they contribute additional injuries.

Because all of these popular gifts are used outdoors, visibility of the rider is of utmost importance. The recent time change and darkness earlier in the evening play an important role in reducing

visibility and can lead to a greater chance of injury and death.

Keeping the following essential safety tips in mind may help reduce wheeled sports-related injuries:

### Tips for all wheeled sport riders:

- Wear a properly fitted helmet. The straps should fit snugly under your chin and the helmet should rest securely right above the eyebrows. Hats should never be worn underneath a helmet.
- Proper foot gear, like sneakers, should be worn and laces always need to be tied. Pant legs should be tucked so they don't get caught.
- Dress in brightly colored clothing when riding because it makes you easier to be seen by others.
- Obey all traffic laws and look before making turns. Ride with the flow of

traffic, on the right; never ride against traffic.

- Ride in safe locations like sidewalks, bike paths, or bike lanes whenever possible.
- Minimize the impact of a fall by crouching down as you lose balance to reduce the distance to the surface.

### Tips for bike riders:

- Make sure the bike fits correctly. The seat should be adjusted to allow a slight bend when both legs are extended on the pedals. There should be 1-3 inches between your body and the top bar of the bike when standing.
- Before every ride, check to make sure the tires are inflated, and brakes are functioning properly.
- Ride in a straight line and don't weave in and out of traffic.

### Tips for skates and skateboarders:

- Wrist guards are recommended for optimum safety while riding.
- Knee and elbow pads are important for everyone to wear, but especially beginners.
- Mouth guards offer great protection against broken teeth and injuries.
- Children should ride on smooth, dry surfaces located in a well-lit area, away from traffic.

### Tips for scooter riders:

- Inspect the scooter at the beginning and end of the season, and teach children to check for problems with the brakes before each use. If there are any broken or loose parts, the scooter shouldn't be used until its fixed.
- Consistent fit checks are important. If your child is scrunching down to reach the handlebars of a scooter, or his or her feet are too wide for the scooter base, it's time for an upgrade.

Followed carefully, these tips should keep trips to the emergency room from ruining your holidays. Visit [miemss.org/home/bike-safety-project](http://miemss.org/home/bike-safety-project) for more information and to access resources. ■

# ENA Honors Wright-Johnson with Annual Pediatric Readiness Improvement Award

**THE EMERGENCY NURSES ASSOCIATION** (ENA) has named MIEMSS Director of Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Cynthia Wright-Johnson, MSN, RN, the recipient of ENA's 2020 Pediatric Readiness Improvement Award. Now in its third year, this annual award recognizes a nurse who has demonstrated outstanding efforts to improve readiness in caring for children in the emergency care setting.

"I am deeply honored to be recognized as one of the champions for Pediatric Readiness by my professional organization, national ENA," said Wright-Johnson, noting that the award "represents the collaborative work of the state Pediatric Emergency Medical Advisory Committee, the entire EMSC team at MIEMSS, and our local pediatric EMS and Hospital Champions."

Wright-Johnson wears many hats in the field of pediatric emergency care, both in Maryland and beyond. Since 2008, she has served as a representative

on the National Association of State EMS Officials American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Pediatric Emergency Medicine. She has also served as Coordinator & State Chair of Safe Kids Maryland since 2007, as well as Chair of Maryland RISKWATCH Safe Community since 2003. Wright-Johnson has also served on the Advisory Committee of Partnership for a Safer Maryland since 2005.

Wright-Johnson has been an ENA member since 1993, when she became Director of the EMSC Department at MIEMSS, and has served on ENA's National Institute for Quality, Safety, and Injury Prevention Advisory Council (2013-2016) and National Annual Conference Planning Committee (2009-2011). Her numerous other professional affiliations also include membership in the Society of Pediatric Nursing, the Society



**CYNTHIA WRIGHT-JOHNSON**  
MIEMSS Director of Emergency Medical Services for Children

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## Maryland Pediatric EMS Champion Update



**MARYLAND EMSC IS PLEASED TO HIGHLIGHT** the ongoing work of our Pediatric EMS Champions. Since the inception of the Pediatric EMS Champion program in 2018, over 31 Pediatric EMS Champions have been identified for 25 different EMS Operational

Programs (EMSOP) across the State.

The Pediatric EMS Champion is a member of their respective EMSOP who is passionate about the care and treatment of pediatric patients. Some of their roles and responsibilities include:

- Offering and/or promoting pediatric continuing education opportunities
- Supporting pediatric safety and prevention programs

- Encouraging the use of current pediatric care guidelines
  - Encouraging a team approach with the family to provide appropriate care
  - Promoting the use of pediatric equipment and medications
  - Advocating for pediatric perspective in delivery of EMS care
- Maryland Pediatric EMS Champions have also taken instructor training in the following courses and are able to teach the content locally:
- Pediatric High-Performance CPR
  - Tracheostomy Care and Management
  - Pediatric Burns
  - Emergency Ready Families

Have you met your Pediatric EMS Champion? Would you like to work with them to ensure children and families get the right care? Do you enjoy injury prevention outreach? Contact the EMSC Department at MIEMSS for more information, or to find out who is your Pediatric EMS Champion, email [pepp@miemss.org](mailto:pepp@miemss.org). ■

## Wright-Johnson...

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of Trauma Nurses, and the Maryland Division of the American Trauma Society, of which she has also served as a Board Member since 2007. She has also served on the Governor-appointed Maryland State Child Fatality Review Committee since 2015.

Wright-Johnson's dedication to volunteering her expertise at the national level has earned her great respect well beyond Maryland, according to Mary Alice Vanhoy, a member of the State EMS Board and lifetime member of the ENA, who submitted Wright-Johnson's nomination for the award.

"Cyndy's steadfast commitment to

pediatric emergency care helps to ensure that the same high quality of care is available in EDs across Maryland," said Vanhoy.

The Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Program at MIEMSS addresses the unique needs of children within the EMS system, providing a focal point for statewide resources and networking on emergency care for children and their families. The EMSC Program is responsible for the development of statewide guidelines and resources for pediatric care, review of pediatric emergency care and facility regulations, coordination of pediatric education programs, collaboration with other agencies and organizations focused on childhood health, and illness and injury prevention. It also coordinates the state Pediatric Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (PEMAC), the state Pediatric Quality Improvement Committee, and the five Regional Pediatric EMS Advisory Committees.

"Our commitment is to ensuring that every child receives the 'Right Care When It Counts', which translates into every ED and every EMS agency being prepared and ready to handle the sudden, unanticipated emergency in a child's life," said Wright-Johnson. "Thank you to the Maryland ENA Council for nominating me, as well as their ongoing commitment to Peds Ready Initiatives."

ENA's mission is to advance excellence in emergency nursing and, through its vision, strives to be the premier organization for the emergency nursing community worldwide. For more information, visit <https://www.ena.org>. ■

## New Virtual Training...

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in distress;

- Increased comfort in their ability to identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with substance use disorder and mental illness in their communities;
- Improved mental wellness for themselves.

"This training focuses on the unique experiences and needs of emergency services personnel and is an invaluable resource," said MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Ted Delbridge. "It makes a difference in their lives, their coworkers' and families' lives, and in the lives of the people who live in the communities they serve."

MDH was the first to bring this training to the U.S., in 2008, after adapting the Mental Health First Aid Australia program. Joining forces with the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) and national leaders, MDH was also instrumental in rolling out the program across the nation. Today, MHAMD operates the program in Maryland and the National Council for Behavioral Health operates the program in 49 states.

For more information about Mental Health First Aid Maryland, visit [www.mentalhealthfirstaidmaryland.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaidmaryland.org).

If interested in attending an upcoming course, please contact MIEMSS at [cism@miemss.org](mailto:cism@miemss.org). ■

## MDERS...

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with carrying cases. A software subscription was also included with the purchase of the sUAS platforms, which provides real-time direction for operation and flight information.

There are many lessons to be learned from the sUAS capability development process that can be applied within your agency. These include defining the needs

and gaps for your community, stating the goal and objectives to fix the gap, engaging members of your community early in the process, allowing sufficient time for each step in the process, and constructing simple measures that demonstrate value of the program.

If you require any additional information, contact Mike McAdams at [Michael.mcadams@maryland.gov](mailto:Michael.mcadams@maryland.gov). ■

# Prevent a Turkey Fryer Fire



Did you know?

**Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires.**

**When you fry foods, you increase the risk of a cooking fire.**

Keep in mind the potential dangers of deep frying a turkey:

- ▶ Turkey fryers can easily tip over spilling hot oil across a large area. Use your turkey fryer only outdoors on a sturdy, level surface well away from things that can burn. Make sure to have a “3-foot kid- and pet-free zone” around your turkey fryer to protect against burn injuries.
- ▶ An overfilled cooking pot will cause oil to spill over when the turkey is placed inside. Determine the correct amount of oil needed by first placing the turkey in the pot with water.
- ▶ A partially frozen turkey will cause hot oil to splatter. Make sure your turkey is completely thawed before you fry it.
- ▶ Turkey fryers can easily overheat and start a fire. Check the temperature often with a cooking thermometer so the oil won’t overheat.
- ▶ The pot, lid and handles of a turkey fryer can get dangerously hot and cause burn injuries. Use long cooking gloves that protect hands and arms when you handle these items.

For more information and free fire-safety resources, visit

**[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)**



**MIEMSS**

**WISHES ALL OF**

**MARYLAND'S**

**EMS CLINICIANS AND**

**THEIR FAMILIES, FRIENDS,**

**AND COLLEAGUES**

**A HAPPY AND HEALTHY**

**THANKSGIVING!**

► *Artwork courtesy of Jim Jarboe, a retired Montgomery County career firefighter and member for close to 65 years of the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, where he continues to volunteer.*



**MIEMSS, Maryland EMS News**  
**653 W. Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21201-1536**



**Governor Larry Hogan**  
**Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford**

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 653 W. Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21201-1536  
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