

July 1991

Volume 16 Number 7 \$3.00

# Jems

JOURNAL OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

COBRA'S  
Consequences

Discipline With  
Due Process

EMS  
LAW &  
POLICY  
*In Motion*





# Contents

JOURNAL OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

## FEATURES

### COVER

Design  
Kathy Bush

Photograph  
of Gavel  
Tom Page

Action  
Photograph  
Ted Brunner  
*The Kansas  
Trooper*

### 35 One Size Doesn't Fit All: Choosing Pediatric Equipment—Part II

BY LARRY B. MELLICK, MD, AND BRENT H. DIERKING, BS, REMT-P

This is the second in a two-part series designed to instruct EMS providers as to the benefits of procuring specially sized equipment for pediatric patients. This installment builds on the variables unique to this patient population and recommends specific types of pediatric equipment.

### 48 Discipline With Due Process

BY JAMES O. PAGE

What steps must an EMS employer take when an employee requires disciplinary action? Determining what constitutes appropriate corrective action while affording due process to the employee can be especially challenging for EMS agencies.

### 52 You're Fired

BY JAMES O. PAGE

### 58 COBRA Snakes Its Way Around the System

BY R. MICHAEL SCARANO JR., ESQ.

Many unresolved issues and conflicting interpretations have evolved since the enactment of COBRA six years ago. Although two recent amendments are noteworthy, perhaps the most significant COBRA development to date was spurred on by a little-known internal memo issued by the Department of Health and Human Services.

### 66 Destination Dilemmas: Government Ups the Ante

BY FRANKLIN E. FOSTER, JD

Never a simple matter, determining where to transport a patient has become increasingly difficult for EMS providers. Not only must traditional factors such as vehicle and facility availability be considered, but the increasing involvement of state and federal governments and national organizations has further clouded the decision-making process.

### 70 Gut Instinct: Dealing With Abdominal Trauma in the Field

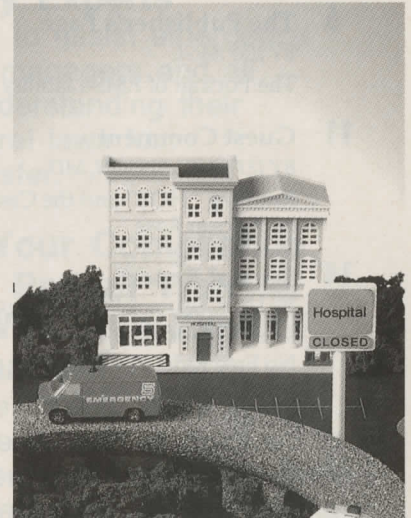
BY BRUCE R. ALLEN, NREMT-P, AND ANTHONY J. MARTINEZ, NREMT-P

Because abdominal trauma is often overlooked in the field, it is imperative that EMS providers maintain a high index of suspicion for such injuries, especially in asymptomatic patients. This article describes the anatomical structures within the abdomen and the various possible mechanisms of injury to these structures.

### 90 1991 Ambulance Manufacturers Directory

BY GEOFFREY A. CADY, EMT-P

In order to fit form to function, ambulance design should be a democratic process that involves the participation of all providers within a service. Our annual updated list of ambulance manufacturers can provide the tools to ensure that custom-built rigs meet specific functional needs.



CEU Article



## FEATURES

### 94 Withholding Resuscitation: The Medical, Legal and Ethical Concerns

BY W. ANN MAGGIORE, NREMT-P

EMS training and system protocols have not kept pace with the changing perceptions of society and the medical community regarding patients' rights to die with dignity. Providers, therefore, often seem left to their own devices when deciding whether to initiate resuscitative measures.

### 99 Trauma Rounds: The Case of the Pregnant MVA Victim

BY KEVIN BROWN, MD, EMT-P, WALLACE CARTER JR., MD,  
GARY E. LOMBARDI, MD, FACEP, AND WARREN WETZEL, MD, FACS

This article focuses on the pregnant victim of a motor-vehicle accident, with discussion centering on the proper prehospital care of multiple unstable pelvic fractures and the use of a pneumatic anti-shock garment.

## COLUMNS

### 6 The Publisher's Page

BY JIM PAGE

The Portrait of EMS Liability

### 11 Guest Comment

BY JEFF J. CLAWSON, MD

Running "HOT" and the Case  
of Sharron Rose

### 14 Special Report

BY HOWARD A. KIRKWOOD JR.,  
ESQ., NREMT-P

No Free Ride: Physician  
Certificates and Ambulance  
Transport

### 24 Current Research

BY BRUCE GOLDFARB

### 29 Guest Comment

BY ANDREW WILSON, EMT-P

On Scene, Off Duty

### 31 Tricks of the Trade

BY MIKE SMITH

Too High for Eye to Eye

### 107 The Legal File

BY CAROL J. SHANABERGER

Determining Domain:  
The Issue of Medical Control

### 109 Clinical Q & A

BY SCOTT BOURN

Rules, Reason and EMS

### 117 Inroads

BY DOUG WOLFBURG

## DEPARTMENTS

### 17 Letters

### 21 Inside EMS

### 105 Calendar

### 113 Advertiser Directory

### 115 Classifieds

### 126 The Last Word

JEMS, Journal of Emergency Medical Services, ISSN 0197-2510, is published monthly by Jems Communications, 1947 Camino Vida Roble, Suite 200, Carlsbad, CA 92008; 619/431-9797 (Fed. ID #22-2357324).

**Subscription information:** Send \$21.97 for one year (12 issues), \$38.97 for two years (24 issues) or \$52.97 for three years (36 issues) to P.O. Box 3730, Escondido, CA 92033. Add \$12 per year for Canadian subscriptions, \$22 per year for foreign subscriptions. For new orders only, call toll-free 800/334-8152 (in California, call 800/255-3302).

**Advertising information:** Rates are available upon request. Contact JEMS Advertising Department at 1947 Camino Vida Roble, Suite 200, Carlsbad, CA 92008; P.O. Box 2789, Carlsbad, CA 92018; 619/431-9797.

**Editorial information:** Manuscripts and queries should be directed to Diane Lofshult, P.O. Box 2789, Carlsbad, CA 92018. Editorial guidelines are available upon request. Submitted manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced and submitted in quadruplicate.

**Microfiche:** JEMS is available on microfiche. Please direct inquiries to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; 800/521-3044.

**Copyright 1991** Jems Communications. No material can be reproduced without the expressed permission of the publisher.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to JEMS, P.O. Box 3730, Escondido, CA 92033. Claims of non-receipt or damaged issues must be filed within three months of cover date. Second-class circulation postage paid at Carlsbad, Calif., and at additional mailing offices.



JEMS is indexed in the Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature.