Elizabeth “Liz” Basnett was named Acting Director of the Emergency Medical Services Authority as of November 15, 2021.

In addition to this acting appointment, Liz maintains her current position as an Assistant Secretary with the California Health and Human Services Agency (Cal HHS), a role assumed on June 1, 2020. Liz has the privilege to lead the coordination of emergency preparedness, response and recovery across the Cal HHS Agency with all 12 departments and 5 offices.

Liz earned a Bachelor’s of Science from the University of Missouri, Columbia and an Executive Master’s Degree in Emergency and Disaster Management from Georgetown University, Washington D.C.
Hernando Garzon, MD Named Acting Medical Director of the Emergency Medical Services Authority

To introduce and highlight his remarkable contributions to the world of medicine, we recently interviewed Dr. Garzon about his professional journey.

**Q: Please tell us a little about your experience in prehospital care, EMS, and disaster medical response?**

A: I have been a practicing Emergency Medicine physician in California since 1992, a member of the national Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) system since 1993, and the Sacramento EMS Medical Director since 2008. Through the USAR system I've been on 14 domestic disaster responses, including the Oklahoma City bombing, the World Trade Center response during 9/11, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and others. I have also done over 20 international disaster responses since 2003 with various healthcare non-profit organizations including the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, earthquakes in Peru and Pakistan, civil unrest in Kenya and Nigeria, famine in Ethiopia and Somalia, and more. I have been a part of the COVID response in California with CDPH and EMSA since 2020.

**Q: What has been most challenging in your new role?**

A: Getting to know the many layers and work done by EMSA while also working on an operational response to the COVID pandemic.

**Q: What has been most rewarding?**

A: Being a part of the operational healthcare response to the COVID pandemic for California through EMSA and helping to save lives and avoid crisis care.

**Q: What motivates you to continue serving the people of California during such an unprecedented time for emergency medical services?**

A: A career in medicine has always been about being of service to others and helping to improve health and alleviate suffering. Emergency response has always been a personally and professionally rewarding way to do that.

**Q: Lastly, is there anything you would like to share about yourself?**

A: Outside of my medical career, I have three amazing children and three grandchildren, love almost all things outdoors, and love to travel.
EMSA Embarks on a new Strategic Plan

Essential to the long-term growth and evolution of any organization is an up-to-date strategic plan that establishes a mission for the future and a set of measurable goals and objectives to help guide our future pathway. EMSA has undergone significant changes as a result of our organization’s role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to take advantage of our experiences with this unprecedented event to better define our mission, vision, and values.

I write today to announce the launch of a strategic planning effort commencing in February 2022. In the weeks and months to come, EMSA will be communicating with stakeholders and will seek participation through a series of facilitated discussions and interviews internally at the department, and externally with other agencies and organizations responsible to California’s EMS and disaster medical response systems. The input gathered from contributors throughout this process will help inform the development of a set of actionable priorities that will comprise the final Strategic Plan. Please be on the lookout for these announcements. Obtaining constructive feedback from key partners and stakeholders will be vital to this process.

I want to say thank you in advance to those who will be actively involved and share their voice in this important conversation as we embark on this effort and work to guide EMSA to new levels of excellence. I look forward to participating in this collaborative process and determining together a way forward that is reflective of the good work that California’s EMS and disaster medical response systems continue to demonstrate in the face of extraordinary challenges.

Liz Basnett
Acting Director
Emergency Medical Services Authority
The Commission on Emergency Medical Services has set the following meeting dates for 2022. At this time, the Commission on EMS is meeting virtually and meeting information is posted ten (10) days prior to each gathering. More information on the Commission, including meeting agendas and commissioner member appointments, is available online at www.emsa.ca.gov/ems_commission.

2022 Commission on EMS Meeting Dates:

- March 16
- June 15
- September 21
- December 14
The Ambulance Patient Offload Time (APOT) report

In mid-2021, the California EMS Authority created an Ambulance Patient Offload Time (APOT) Committee and hosted its first meeting on November 2, 2021. The committee will continue to meet monthly. The purpose of this group is to advise the EMSA Director and Commission on Emergency Medical Services on topics related to the APOT program, including, but not limited to, updating the APOT specifications, best practices, data documentation, and barriers to success.
Online Paramedic Licensure

The Paramedic Licensure Unit (PLU) made dramatic improvements to the online licensing system, resulting in a +33% increase in the number of paramedics submitting their applications online between the first and second half of 2021. This service improvement resulted in a staff workload savings of nearly 2,000 hours in 2021, when comparing with workload statistics from 2020. Previously, California’s paramedics could expect their licensure renewal to take seven (7) to ten (10) business days. Today, they may complete and confirm their renewal within as little as one hour.

The PLU is GOING GREEN! The availability of online licensing has greatly reduced both staff hours and the use of paper and printer ink both by the PLU and paramedic applicants throughout California. Across all services, we have saved approximately 46 reams of paper. That’s four, whole trees!

Local Optional Scope of Practice

The California EMS Authority, in coordination with the 33 local EMS agencies (LEMSAs), is proud to report that 2,523 EMTs, 8 AEMTs, and 2,264 Paramedics have been trained to administer COVID-19 vaccinations. Under their approved local optional scope of practice, in support of healthcare response to the pandemic, the LEMSAs have reported 267,883 vaccinations have been given.
The California EMS Authority’s Disaster Medical Services (DMS) Division Response Personnel Unit (RPU) has been hard at work since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, ensuring adequate medical personnel is available and deployed to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and wildfires. DMS strives to ensure EMSA has the medical personnel needed during disasters to provide excellent patient care. Below is information on four of the RPU programs.

**Disaster Healthcare Volunteers (DHV)**

DHV is an EMSA coordinated web-based program that registers and credentials health professionals who may wish to volunteer during disasters including doctors, nurses, paramedics, pharmacists, dentists, mental health practitioners, and many others. Find more information about DHV at [www.healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov](http://www.healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov)
The DHV System has approximately 107,500 volunteers registered. The number of volunteers has nearly quadrupled since the COVID-19 Pandemic began. The DHV/MRC volunteers have been crucial in California’s COVID-19 response efforts. There have been over 7,000 individual DHV/MRC volunteers deployed for COVID-19 pandemic response and medical support across the State. There have been 26 MRC Units and 13 DHV Units in California that have activated for COVID-19, and their volunteers put in over 208,000 hours. DHV/MRCs have volunteered their time and skills in COVID-19 vaccination clinics, COVID-19 testing sites, COVID-19 hotlines, contact tracing, patient care, alternate care site support, and operation center support. DHV/MRCs are comprised of Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Registered Nurses, Licensed Vocational Nurses, Emergency Medical Technicians, Paramedics, Medical Assistants, retired medical personnel, and nonmedical support staff. During the COVID-19 pandemic, California DHV/MRC Units have more than doubled in size. RPU continues to provide support, training, communication, and coordination to the DHV/MRC Local Administrators in the DHV System during the COVID-19 response.

Volunteer with your local DHV/MRC Unit by registering here: https://healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov/. You can select the DHV Volunteer County Organization and/or MRC Organization nearest to where you reside.
California Medical Assistant Teams (CAL-MAT)

*CAL-MAT is a paid program within the EMSA under Emergency Support Function 8, which provides medical support across the State of California.*

There are currently 7 CAL-MAT units that prepare and respond to natural disasters such as wildfires, earthquakes, floods, and other emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic and terrorist attacks. During a disaster, members can deploy for a minimum of one week at various locations across the state. There has been major growth for the program since the onset of COVID-19. The program has expanded from approximately 180 members pre-COVID to over 1,200 presently, with another 1,000 seeking approval. Communication for disasters goes through the DHV System. These units include both medical and non-medical paid volunteers who provide support as part of the Incident Command System. CAL-MAT has been hard at work assisting with the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies in 2020 and 2021. During the 2021 California fire season, CAL-MAT members deployed to nine fire camps to provide medical support to firefighters on the frontline. Over the past couple of years, there have been well over 4,400 CAL-MAT deployments to various sites, including supporting the EMSA Department Operations Center, EMSA’s warehouses, Alternate Care Sites, Long-term Care Facilities, Migrant Hubs, and vaccination clinics during the COVID-19 response with over 8,000 patients treated. CAL-MAT continues to support the constituents of California as emergency needs arise.

Individuals interested in joining CAL-MAT can do so by following the link here at [https://emsa.ca.gov/cal-mat/](https://emsa.ca.gov/cal-mat/). Some of the positions with CAL-MAT are Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), Nurse Practitioner (NP), Physician Assistant (PA), Registered Nurse (RN), Physicians, Pharmacists, and Administrative and Warehouse Workers.
Out of State Authorization Approvals

California state law prohibits any individual from working in a licensed field in California without first obtaining a license from the appropriate board. The California State Legislature, however, anticipated that this would cause an undue burden during times of declared emergency. To address this issue, years ago the legislators passed Business and Professions Code §900 which allows EMSA’s director to create a process to authorize out of state medical providers to work in California during declared emergencies. The out-of-state authorization temporary waivers were thus created.

To be eligible to utilize temporary authorization, the requestor must satisfy numerous conditions. These include, but are not limited to, (1) the request must come from a California medical facility, telehealth agency contracted with a California medical facility or a staffing agency providing staffing to California medical facilities, and (2) the personnel placement must be directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19. Upon meeting the requirements, the request will be processed, and a decision sent out in writing.

The RPU has been hard at work assisting with the staffing shortage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Since operations began in March 2020, over 48,000 out of state authorization waivers have been approved. Requests were received from countless facilities across the State of California and agencies nationwide. During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, EMSA received more than 2,800 requests per week. EMSA strives to maintain request processing time at one to two, even during the peak of operations. RPU continues to support the facilities and agencies to mitigate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic until the end of the emergency declaration.

Guidance on Authorization of Out-Of-State Medical Personnel can be found here:
https://emsa.ca.gov/covid19/
California EMS Awards

LA County Fire Museum
Bellflower, CA
Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Museum Social Hour 11 AM - 12 PM
Lunch & Awards Ceremony 12 - 2 PM

Registration Coming Soon
As COVID-19 conditions continue to improve across California, the following temporary measures have expired as of February 15:

- Indoor masking requirements will revert to the previous guidance after February 15. Unvaccinated persons will still be required to mask in all indoor public settings. Guidance for the Use of Face Masks.

- Definitions for indoor and outdoor mega events will return to pre-surge guidance after 2/15. Read Beyond the Blueprint for Industry and Business Sectors (Including Mega Events).

To read the full press release, visit https://bit.ly/3GV4BMs.
COVID Updates from the California Department of Public Health

COVID-19 is still with us. Thanks for masking up, California. Please wear the best mask you can – especially in indoor settings or when traveling. Choose a mask with good fit and filtration (N95 and KN95 masks are best). Double masking is also good (a surgical mask plus a cloth mask on top).

KF94s and KN95s are both available in kid's sizes with good fit and good filtration. N95s also provide excellent fit and filtration but will not fit smaller faces. Kid-sized medical masks provide good filtration, but do not provide a tight fit. Fabric masks can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, but many have both poor fit and filtration.

CA Notify, California’s COVID-19 exposure notification app, now allows individuals who test positive for COVID-19 – including those who test at home – to alert others of a potential exposure more quickly and conveniently.

Individuals can now initiate the notification process as soon as they are aware of their positive test result. This new feature is available online and through most cell phone and mobile devices.

CaNotify.ca.gov
Assembly Bill 2293 (Chapter 342, Statutes of 2018) requires California’s EMS certifying agencies to collect data on initial EMT and AEMT certifications, certification actions, and demographic information and submit that data to the EMS Authority (EMSA). EMSA is then required to develop a report to determine if a person’s criminal history creates a barrier to certification. EMSA is also required to submit this report to the Commission on EMS and the legislature. Last year marked the second report based on this data from the 2020 calendar year. The report was provided to the Legislature and Commission on EMS on December 8, 2021.

To view a full copy of the new report, and first report issued in 2020, visit https://emsa.ca.gov/legislative-reports/.
2022 is the second year of the 2021-22 two-year legislative cycle. With a new year comes new legislation, and new deadlines as bills work their through the legislative process.

2022 Key Legislative Dates

February 18 – Last day for new bills to be introduced.
May 27 – Last day for Senate bills to pass in the Senate, and Assembly bills to pass in the Assembly.
August 31 – Deadline for bills that passed in their originating house to be passed by legislators in the second house.
September 30 – Last day for the Governor to sign or veto bills.

The California EMS Authority keeps tabs on any proposed legislation with potential impacts to EMS. You too can follow along by regularly viewing the EMSA Legislative Activity web page.
See what NHTSA has achieved in 2021 and learn how you can participate in national efforts to advance EMS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) Office of EMS continues to work with partners across the nation to advance EMS systems and support EMS clinicians serving on the front lines. Together, NHTSA is striving to achieve the vision of a people-centered EMS system put forth in EMS Agenda 2050.

NHTSA thanks all who have helped make great strides in 2021, even in the face of some of the greatest challenges we’ve ever faced as a profession—and a country. This year’s NHTSA Office of EMS Annual Update highlights some of the work happening at the national level, including:

- Newly revised National EMS Education Standards
- Evidence-based guidelines to support safe and effective patient care
- Advances in EMS data collection and analysis
- The COVID-19 response

Most important, look for ways that you can get involved in national efforts to improve EMS and create a better future for our profession, our patients and our communities. To read a summary of 2021 accomplishments and review the status of ongoing NHTSA Office of EMS projects, click here.
California State STEMI and Stroke Summit

Save The Dates

June 27, 2022
California State Virtual STEMI Summit
Starts Morning for Half a Day

June 28, 2022
California State Virtual Stroke Summit
Starts Morning for Half a Day

For more information contact:
Farid Nasr, M.D.
(916) 431-3685 or farid.nasr@emsa.ca.gov

A registration brochure and more details will be posted on the California EMS Authority website.