

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sonya Carius, (800) 332-3911

National Emergency
Number Association



NENA Task Force to Study 9-1-1 and HMO/Managed Care Relationships

Columbus, Ohio (February 15, 2000)—The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) will form a task force of health care and 9-1-1 professionals to explore the issues and needs of a coordinated response effort between 9-1-1, HMOs and the emergency medical dispatch community. Through this task force, NENA will provide leadership and help ensure the integrity of 9-1-1 as the vital American resource on which the public has come to rely.

“This task force will examine the number and nature of non-emergency calls to 9-1-1 and the most effective approach to managing non-emergency calls. The group will also study the feasibility of the integration of medical call centers—technically and operationally—with 9-1-1, while preserving the operation and integrity of the Nation’s 9-1-1 system,” said William H. Hinkle, NENA president.

Specific task force objectives may include a determination of whether this practice is appropriate for some, if any, communities; if and how it is technologically and operationally feasible/compatible with 9-1-1; and whether NENA should undertake the development of National standards to be used in implementing the process.

“NENA recognizes that the health care industry is exploring the development of medical call centers to better manage patient care of non-urgent situations,” stated Hinkle. “We also recognize a need to evaluate alternatives to more effectively manage access to emergency services and to respond to the public’s needs and expectations.” The work of this task force will also be a part of NENA’s comprehensive study of 9-1-1 services—the Report Card to the Nation.

NENA, however, as an advocate of “9-1-1 as **the** emergency telephone number” since 1982, maintains its position that 9-1-1 should always be the first number called in the event of an emergency.

NENA's plans for the task force were put in motion when professionals in the public safety, emergency medical services and managed care industries met to discuss the emerging trend of managed care involvement in emergency medical services response. The forum, sponsored by NENA on February 10-11 in Los Angeles, was attended by 9-1-1 directors and managers, fire chiefs/fire personnel, emergency medical services (EMS) professionals, and interested commercial NENA members. Managed-care perspectives were represented by Bob Eisenman, Ph.D., and Dr. Jay Goldman of Kaiser Permanente, one of the Nation's leading managed-care providers.

NENA is planning a second forum, to be held in the East Coast region, to further develop the issues and identify potential task force members.

* * *

NENA's Mission is to foster the technological advancement, availability and implementation of a universal emergency telephone number (9-1-1) system. In carrying out its mission, NENA promotes research, planning, training and education. The protection of human life, the preservation of property, and the maintenance of general community security are among NENA's objectives. NENA has more than 7,300 members worldwide.

###