Unconventional Wisdom:

*New Perspectives on EMS at National Political Conventions*

Tom Collins, MD (Cleveland) – RNC
C. Crawford Mechem, MD (Philadelphia) – DNC
How does EMS coverage for political conventions differ from other special events?
RNC Medical Operations

- Cleveland EMS, private EMS
- Contracted Medical Teams
- Street Medics
- Hospitals
- HHS – DMAT/Medical Strike Team
- FBI, USSS medical teams, TEMS
- Homeland Security Intelligence
- US Capitol Office of the Attending Physician
- Staged Consequence Management teams
“Street Medics”

- Protester support
- Volunteers
- Variable training
- Well intentioned
- Set expectations
It’s All About the Movement!
Inner Perimeter

- 2 Tent ERs
- 2 Mini ALS
Address vs. Check Point vs. Post Number
Rehab

• Dedicated LEO rehab areas
  – Secured and unsecured zones
  – Scheduled breaks

• What about EMS?
Philly’s Story – The DNC

- July 25-28, 2016
- Primary venue Wells Fargo Center
- Security and potential for mass protests presented unique planning challenges
Security

• DHS designated convention a National Special Security Event (NSSE)
  – US Secret Service lead agency for security
  – Heavy presence of federal, state, local assets
  – Road closures, rail and air-space restrictions
  – Operational security major consideration
Security

- USSS credentials required to get in
- Credentialed personnel still went through airport-style security
- PFD vehicles swept by USSS agents, dogs
- Had just gone through this with the Pope
Security

Convention Road Closures, July 23-29

“The Box”

“The Wall”
The Protesters

• One of greatest planning variables
• Not sure how many would come
  – Hundreds to hundreds of thousands?
  – Cleveland was a guide
  – Philly expected more
• FDR Park established as Free Speech Zone
  – No assurance they would go there, stay there
Medical Coverage for Protesters

- FDR Park Division
- Center City Division
- Coverage for roving protesters
- Supervisors, ambulances, bike teams, gators, medical tents
- Physician Response Team
- Casualty Contingency Strike Team
“DNC protests in Philadelphia dwarf those outside RNC in Cleveland”
The Protesters

- Overall impact relatively small
- Most peaceful, a few less so ("anarchists")
- Heat was a factor (mid-90s, humid)
- Water stations and cooling tents
- Police were professional, pre-emptive
  - Only 103 citations
  - Few medical encounter
Cleveland/Philly Lessons Learned

- Practice patient movement
- Prepare for different location designations
- Security measures were time-consuming
- Preparing for protesters involved many unknowns. Anticipate more in future
- Building good relations was key