

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 20, 2006

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ELEVATED TO BUREAU STATUS AT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Change in Status Solidifies Commitment to Enhancing Emergency Medical Services in Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG – Pennsylvania is solidifying its commitment to enhancing and providing quality emergency medical services with Governor Edward G. Rendell’s recent elevation of the Office of Emergency Medical Services to bureau status in the state Department of Health.

Health Secretary Dr. Calvin B. Johnson said that over the past three years, Pennsylvania has increased funding and training, which has made it possible for EMS to enhance its services and community outreach, improving EMS services in the commonwealth.

“Emergency medical services are a vital part of public health in the commonwealth, and by elevating the status of our EMS office to a bureau, Governor Rendell has ensured that EMS will continue to play a key role in the Department of Health’s efforts to preserve the health and safety of our citizens,” Dr. Johnson said. “This move from office to bureau will raise the visibility of EMS and improve our ability to ensure that the citizens of the commonwealth continue to receive quality emergency medical services.

“Our EMS providers throughout Pennsylvania have received an additional \$3 million for equipment and local ambulance services, \$500,000 to participate in over 120 training drills and received 240 computers for online training programs for their staff during the past year,” Dr.

Johnson said. “Five mini-grants totaling \$15,000 were awarded to five of our ambulance services for outreach on seatbelt usage and education for the community.”

Nationwide more than 80 percent of EMS offices and bureaus are located in the state’s health department. In Pennsylvania, there are 16 regional EMS councils serving 983 ambulance services. In 2005, over 1.7 million people were transported by ambulance in the commonwealth.

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