

Fire GUARD

A Publication of the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts

www.niafpd.org



Winter 2021

Annual NIAFPD Conference – January 30, 2021



Please join us via Zoom on Saturday, January 30, 2021 from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for our four-hour virtual 28th Annual NIAFPD Conference. Earn 4 hours of trustee/pension CE training from the comfort of your home!

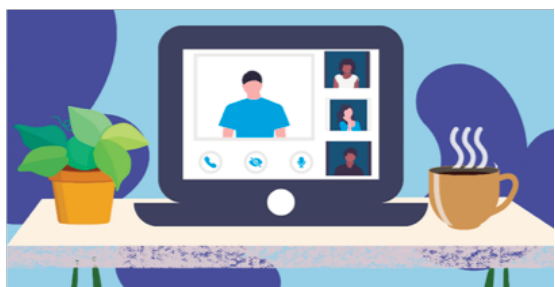
Receive educational programming pertinent to fire district trustees, administrators, commissioners and pension board trustees.

Presentation topics include:

- IFPIF Asset Transition Pension View and Fire District View
- Transparency for Trustees
- Case Law/Legislative Updates
- COVID Panel – Exposures/Impact/Board Meetings/WC/Pension

Speakers will be from the law firm of Ottosen, DiNolfo, Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.

Registration is open now and must be completed by January 23, 2021. www.niafpd.org



How will the online conference work?

A Zoom link will be sent out approximately one week before the conference to the email address provided at registration. A Zoom tutorial video is available on the website now. It is **strongly recommended** to view the tutorial and check your log in prior to January 30th.

THERE WILL BE POLLS TAKEN THROUGHOUT THE VIRTUAL TRAINING AT RANDOM INTERVALS TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE. PER THE OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL, POLLS MUST BE COMPLETED TO RECEIVE CE CREDITS -- NO EXCEPTIONS CAN BE MADE.

ALL PAYMENTS ONCE PROCESSED ARE NON-REFUNDABLE !!

For Answers to Frequently Asked Questions go to: www.niafpd.org

Letter from President Nick Kosiara



With the new year upon us, we look back at 2020 with the mantra of “Goodbye, good riddance and don’t come back!” Last year is one we mostly want to put out of our minds and never think about again.

But one thing we can never let ourselves forget about is the devastation caused by the historic global pandemic – at the time of writing this, claiming more than 1,600,000 lives world-wide with over 340,000 in the United States and 16,000+ in Illinois. And it is not over - not yet! The highly effective vaccines available will provide us with an effective weapon to fight off this scourge and defeat it once and for all. Hopefully, by now, your troops have already started the vaccination regimen and most are willing and able to receive this protection.

Quarantine or not, the NIAFPD has continued to be busy not only keeping up with all the routine duties of running a vital Illinois fire district organization, but also putting together a conference that reflects the times and environment we are all living in right now. It will obviously be a mere subset of what we have all looked forward to and enjoyed for the past 27 years, but it will continue to bring everyone 4 hours of continuing education. If you have not yet registered, please visit www.niafpd.org today.

Karl Ottosen and his firm -- Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd. -- are once again stepping up to the plate as they do every conference. This time, however, they are providing literally everything we need to present this virtual conference which is incredibly generous and is, quite honestly, making it all possible. So, a very big thank you to Karl and all of his team!

Letter from Executive Director Denise Kauffman



Welcome to the first newsletter of 2021! Thank you for your continued support of the NIAFPD because there is no Alliance without all of you!

We all used a lot of four letter words last year to describe our daily lives....Zoom, mask, ‘Rona, stay home, lost, sick, KN95. But with that also evolved a powerful and often used four letter word going into 2021 – hope. Hope for a quick end to the global pandemic, speedy rollout of a vaccine for all and return to a sense of optimism for resolution of the most pressing problems. Hoping to finally exhale!

Please continue to stay engaged with the NIAFPD, share the news happening in your district and contact us with any questions or concerns at admin@niafpd.org. Please forward all updates and contact information to us at admin@niafpd.org. Your quick email update of information is vital to continued communication.

Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you all in 2021.

**Have you updated your contact information with the NIAFPD?
Please forward all changes to admin@niafpd.org.**



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Unemployment Fraud and the Fire Service

by Michael Castaldo III, Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.

Fraudulent unemployment claims have skyrocketed. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security, more than 297,000 fraudulent claims for unemployment benefits have been made since March 1, 2020.¹ According to its director, the Department “is experiencing fraud in an order of magnitude” previously unseen.² The fire service is not immune. This article details the boom in unemployment fraud and what to do about it if you or your department is affected.

Background: Unemployment Compensation

All employers—including fire protection districts and municipalities—are subject to the Unemployment Insurance Act (820 ILCS 405/100 et seq.). The Act provides eligible employees with up to 26 weeks of unemployment compensation during a 12-month period. (820 ILCS 405/403)

The unemployment claims process is straightforward: if an employee loses their job through no fault of their own, they may file an application online with the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Assuming the employee is otherwise eligible, they will begin to receive temporary assistance while they look for other work.

These benefits are paid for through employer contributions. Public employers have the option of making these contributions in two ways. First, public employers can pay an unemployment insurance tax based on a calculation that tracks claims made by former employees. (820 ILCS 405/1506.1E) Second, and alternatively, public bodies can “pay as they go” by reimbursing the state for all benefits paid. (820 ILCS 405/1405) Either way, fire departments are damaged by fraudulent employment claims.

The COVID-19 Unemployment Boom

COVID-19 has devastated segments of the economy. Correspondingly, the unemployment rate in April 2020 jumped to levels not seen since the 1930s.³ Unemployment has remained high at 6.7% nationwide as of November 2020.⁴ In the week ending December 19, 2020, the United States Department of Labor computed approximately 5.5 million people were receiving unemployment benefits.⁵ This is a staggering increase from the 1.7 million unemployed from the year prior.⁶ Of that 5.5 million sum, Illinois accounted for almost 350,000.⁷

Unemployment Fraud

Unemployment fraud has correspondingly risen with the increase in unemployment claim volumes. This uptick has been fueled by additional benefits granted through the CARES Act,

as well as states allowing claims to be back-dated to March 2020.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has stated that unemployment fraudsters are using people’s names and personal information to apply for unemployment benefits through IDES. Once the benefits are approved, they exploit a security flaw in IDES’ systems and request the money be sent to another account. A telltale sign that an individual has been the victim of unemployment fraud is if they receive a debit card in the mail from IDES and have not filed a claim for benefits.

If an employee suspects they are the victim of unemployment fraud, they should be encouraged to report it to IDES and the authorities as soon as possible.

Unemployment fraud, from the fire department’s perspective, is not only damaging to employees but the fire department can also be harmed -- especially those that reimburse the state for all benefits paid. If your department receives a Notice of Claim informing you that an active employee has filed a claim for benefits, swift action is required.

- At the outset, it is important to forward the Notice to your department’s lawyer to determine the proper course of action.
- Thereafter, IDES recommends filing a timely protest to the Notice of Claim and providing as much information as possible. This will ensure the department is not placed on the hook for any illegitimate benefits paid by the state.
- Finally, it is important to inform the employee, who should take appropriate steps of their own to ensure their identity is protected.

Conclusion

Unemployment compensation can be invaluable for individuals down on their luck. Regrettably, scammers are taking advantage of this benevolence. If you or your department experiences unemployment fraud, take it seriously. Partner with counsel immediately and report the matter as soon as possible to ensure your department is not damaged by external fraud.

¹ *Fraudulent Unemployment Claims in Illinois Reach 297,000*, CBS Chicago, <https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/03/fraudulent-unemployment-claims-in-illinois-reach-297000-one-man-was-victim-of-fraud-while-trying-to-get-his-own-benefits/> (Dec. 3, 2020).

² *Fraudulent Unemployment Claims in Illinois Soar During Pandemic, Officials Say*, NBC Chicago, <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/fraudulent-unemployment-claims-in-illinois-soar-during-pandemic-officials-say/2380039/> (Nov. 25, 2020).

³ *Tracking the COVID-19 Recession’s Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Hardships*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and> (Dec. 18, 2020).

⁴ *UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE WEEKLY CLAIMS (DEC. 21, 2019-DEC. 19, 2020)*, U.S. DEPT OF LABOR, available at <https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf>

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*



Springfield Legislative Update



By: Liz Brown-Reeves, NIAFPD Lobbyist

It's a New Year and a New General Assembly is upon us. The 102nd General Assembly will be officially sworn in on January 13th. All legislation from the past two years will be considered dead that did not progress and the bill numbers will start with House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 1 as new bills begin to be filed.

With COVID-19 concerns at an all-time high, the Capitol access will again be very limited to legislators and staff. Legislators will continue to utilize Zoom and other platforms to connect with local constituents.

As I write this column (1/4/21), whether Michael Madigan can retain his role as Speaker of the House is still in question. He will need to have sixty votes to win the election. At current moment, nineteen legislators have come forward to say they will not support Madigan. *

Senator Don Harmon was re-elected as Senate President and it is expected that Jim Durkin will remain House Republican Leader. Longtime Senator Bill Brady has officially retired, and Senator Dan McConchie has been elected the new Senate Republican Leader.

Many new legislators will be joining the ranks this session, either having won elections or replacing retiring ones; it will be imperative to get to know these new faces. We will also work to recruit these members to join the Illinois Fire Caucus in the House and Senate.

All eyes will focus on the state budget in the new General Assembly. With the failure of Governor Pritzker's fair tax ballot initiative and the economic hardship that COVID-19 has caused, the state faces a severe budget crisis. We will be closely monitoring the budget and cuts. Many of the training programs we support; along with the State Fire Marshal budget, may be in jeopardy.

As always, I am available to all of you. Feel free to email me directly at liz.brown@gmail.com if I can ever answer any legislative or political questions you may have.

Looking forward to the upcoming NIAFPD conference and to connect with you all (virtually!).

* Updated on January 13th: Rep. Emanuel Chris Welch was sworn in and replaces Michael Madigan as Speaker of the House.



COVID-19 Can't Keep Us Down

By: Ronald Kubicki, Co-Chair Conference Committee

Resiliency is not foreign to those in the fire service and to those working with emergency responders. As COVID-19 continues to change the traditional ways we have done things, our NIAFPD members continue to demonstrate the ability to cope with the ever-changing environment and have signed up at the same rate as always to attend our highly anticipated educational event – our 28th Annual NIAFPD Conference. Thank you to those who have already registered and if you have not yet done so, please go to the website at www.niafpd.org and sign up today. We promise to provide the usual quality educational experience.

Next year at this time we will have bounced back and will be gathering in person to learn, network and socialize. We look forward to that and the opportunity to be together. "See" you soon at the Zoom conference. Stay healthy!

If you have questions, please reach out to any of the committee members:

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Fire Districts Did Not Garner Votes to Win a Seat on the Firefighters Pension Investment Fund (FPIF)

The new Consolidated Firefighter Pension legislation became law in Illinois in January 2020. The stated purpose of the new legislation was primarily to increase investment returns for the Firefighter Pension Funds and reduce administrative expenses. The Consolidation also enacted enhancements for Tier 2 firefighter retirement benefits (Tier 2 firefighters are those who were hired after 2011) and the new law also turned over the fiduciary responsibility for preparing and distributing the annual actuarial contribution report, which is what is used to determine each agency's annual pension contributions.

The legislation was developed by a Pension Task Force appointed by the Governor. Representatives of labor and municipalities were invited to participate and contribute to the legislation which eventually became law. Fire Districts did not have a voice, nor were they even consulted in the development of the proposal.

Once the law passed, a transitional board was appointed to oversee the newly created Firefighters Pension Investment Fund (FPIF) until permanent trustees could be elected. The election to permanently seat the Board was just completed and certified by the FPIF election committee on December 4, 2020.

Three (3) Board positions were available in the election for Agency Representatives. John Perry, Lisle-Woodridge FPD, and David Geary, of the Wauconda FPD, ran in the election to have our voices heard and have fire districts represented on the Fund's Board. Unfortunately, John and David were unsuccessful in this attempt. Perry gathered 91 votes for the 4-year term and was only 3 votes shy of winning, while Chief Geary collected 83 votes for the 2-year term, only 6 votes short of winning.

Qualified voters in this election were presidents of fire districts and mayors whose organizations have firefighter pension funds. Eligible municipalities outnumbered fire districts by a 2 to 1 margin. Approximately 80% of fire districts participated in the election – an outstanding participation rate. Thank you to all the fire district presidents that sent in ballots! Had only seven more fire districts voted, we would have won two board seats for fire district representation!

"I am disappointed for our constituent group - the fire districts who have funds to be overseen by this new board," said Perry. "It is important that every local pension fund sees the FPIF as an effective vehicle to grow assets to pay pensions."

After the election, Perry reached out to the winning candidates and shared ideas on how fire districts can judge the success of the FPIF.

"We, as districts, welcome the opportunity to discuss and solicit ways to make the FPIF a showcase," said Perry.

Candidate Geary also shared his thoughts about the election.



John Perry



Dave Geary

"By not having a seat at the FPIF Board specifically for fire districts, there exists a very unfair and misrepresented population across the state," said Geary. "I know that as a result of this election, fire districts will be better recognized as a force in these issues and that when need arises we, the districts, will be better prepared to engage and support common causes. Who knows, maybe one day legislation will be enacted to get a more fairly representative FPIF Board into legislation, or even a designated seat for Districts."

The Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts (IAFPD) and the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts (NIAFPD) created a partnership of support for the two fire district candidates in this election.

"The cooperation between IAFPD, NIAFPD and all the FPD's that have pension funds will be even more important in the future," said Cheri Breneman, IAFPD Administrator. "We made great strides in informing and involving districts of the process through email blasts, newsletters and personal calls. While we may not have won a seat, I am honored and proud to be part of what is still an amazing accomplishment of pulling together. Even without a win, we have proven plenty! We have a voice and we will continue to be heard by those who need to hear it."

"This election proved our ability to garner great cooperation among fire districts and demonstrated just how successful we as districts can be when we work together on common issues. With a little extra effort next election, we will surely have an even stronger voice so we can become more fairly represented on the FPIF Board," said Denise Kauffman, Executive Director of the NIAFPD.

The boards of both the NIAFPD and IAFPD would like to thank Perry and Geary for their time and commitment to the process. They both exhibited concern for the future of our districts' pensions by personally stepping up to enact representation. Candidates Perry and Geary spent a great deal of time personally calling districts to ask for their vote and solicit input and concerns. Thank you, gentlemen.

Going forward, both the NIAFPD and the IAFPD will work together for legislative action and representation for districts statewide and will continue the cooperation and outreach for all fire districts in the state.

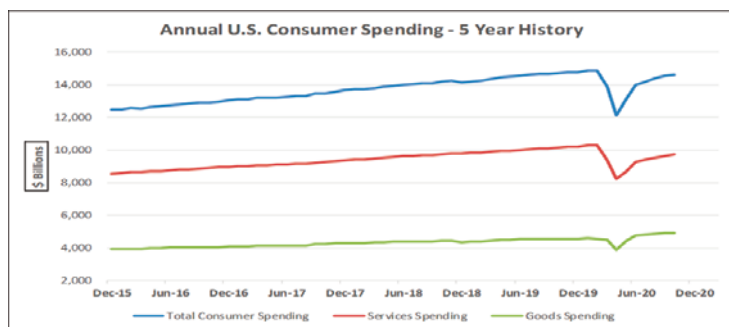


Markets Close 2020 with Optimism

By: Thomas S. Sawyer, Managing Partner, Sawyer Falduto Asset Management, LLC

Key Economic Observations

- **Equity Markets:** Global optimism about Covid-19 vaccines fueled the “reopening of economies trade.”
- **Rally Broadens:** The Equity market rally broadened to include small capitalization and international stocks.
- **The Federal Reserve:** Bond yields remain low with Federal Reserve monetary policy prioritizing economic growth.
- **Consumer Spending:** Consumer spending is increasing at a cautious rate as a degree of economic uncertainty remains.



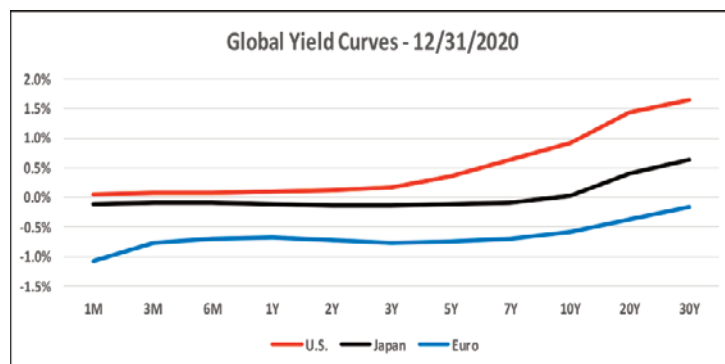
Total consumer spending has rebounded from pandemic lows with demand for goods setting new highs. Key economic indicators point to renewed consumer optimism albeit with a degree of caution.

Fixed Income Overview

The U.S. Treasury Yield curve steepened during the 4th Quarter of 2020 as long-term yields increased while short-term yields moved marginally lower. As we have discussed in the Fire Guard for some time now, short-term yields remain well below historical levels primarily driven by Federal Reserve monetary policy. At one point during the quarter, we observed marketable certificates of deposit with a one-year maturity being issued at 2 basis point yields. Bond yields are actually negative in many global markets as local economies struggle to grow. Foreign investors continue to seek the safe haven of U.S. government securities pushing bond prices higher and yields lower.

An overall increase in economic activity will eventually provide a catalyst for higher interest rates. In the meantime, the Federal Reserve remains committed to monetary policy with a focus on supporting economic recovery. Based on guidance

from the Fed, short-term interest rates are expected to remain low through 2023. Longer-term yields will be most sensitive to economic forces and geopolitical events such as trade relations with China and Middle East unrest.



Portfolio Considerations

For limited maturity fixed income portfolios, we are currently finding value in municipal securities, callable U.S. Government Agency securities and in certificates of deposit. Yields on high quality corporate bonds with maturities out to three years (as allowed by statute) have not offered value that has captured our attention. The yield curve has steepened out toward the 5-year maturity range. To the extent allowed by investment objectives and guidelines, this provides an opportunity to extend average maturities and garner some excess yield over short-term alternatives.

In summary, most readers of the Fire Guard invest cash reserves in conservative portfolios with limited interest rate, credit and market risk within parameters defined by statute and investment policy. While statutory guidelines allow investment in corporate and municipal securities (within certain parameters), investment policy guidelines are the primary risk management tool for managing risk during such uncertain times. We welcome the opportunity to review your current portfolio structure with you. As always, portfolio diversification and sound policy guidelines provide the foundation for consistent long-term returns and risk management.

“The allocation to all available asset classes should be determined with careful consideration given to factors such as statutory guidelines, investment time horizon, liquidity requirements, diversification and risk tolerance. The resulting asset allocation should be well documented in your investment policy and guidelines. Information contained in this commentary is solely the opinion of the author and obtained from sources believed to be reliable. Accuracy can not be guaranteed. Past performance is not predictive of future returns.”

Portable Decontamination System use at Lisle-Woodridge FPD



By James Weaver, EMS Coordinator Lisle-Woodridge FPD

The fire service is no stranger to pandemics. We faced Novel H1N1 in 2009 and Ebola in 2014. It has been 10 months since COVID-19 was declared a national emergency, and it is showing no sign of letting up.

In the beginning, we knew very little about COVID-19. Along with fire departments across the nation, we began to evaluate our infection control policies and emergency/disaster plans. Every departments' goal is to protect its personnel's health, safety, and welfare and minimize potential risks to its members, public, vulnerable patients, and healthcare workers. To meet this goal, the Lisle-Woodridge Fire District implemented numerous infection control measures early on. We required all members to wear masks on every incident, applied surgical masks to all patients we contacted, restricted outside visitors, prohibited wearing work boots into the living quarters, and our stations were wiped down several times throughout the day with disinfecting wipes or spray. As the weeks progressed, we realized we needed a long-term strategy to efficiently disinfect our vehicles and stations.

Our research started with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Portable Ambulance Decontamination Systems Market Survey Report. This report explained the classification of disinfection systems, decontamination cycle, EPA Regulations, and OSHA Standards. It highlighted thirteen portable decontamination systems that are currently on the market, so we researched them all.

We decided to purchase the AeroClave RDS 3110. This model allows us to disinfect both small and large spaces via two fixed heads. The handheld applicator allows for the decontamination of equipment, vehicle compartments, and staff vehicles. The AeroClave RDS 3110 is not the cheapest decontamination system on the market, but we felt it offered the most significant advantages. We utilized FEMA reimbursement to purchase the system and believe the use and application of this product will have long-lasting benefits beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic. We anticipate that with continued infection control measures and the AeroClave system, we will significantly reduce the spread of bloodborne and airborne infectious diseases.

System prices range from \$13,000 to \$15,000 but are well worth the investment. It is fully self-contained, easy to use, and minimal operator training is needed. The AeroClave RDS 3110 uses an EPA-approved, hospital-grade disinfecting solution

that eliminates infectious agents. The solution is non-corrosive and is safe for electronic or medical equipment. Low cost of operation, automation, minimizing vehicle downtime, and reliable results are the benefits of just such a system.

Our new ambulance will have a built-in, single head nozzle that will allow the AeroClave system to connect via an external compartment. This installation will enable our members to run a disinfection cycle without entering the potentially contaminated patient compartment.

Please visit the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Portable Ambulance Decontamination Systems Market Survey Report for more information.

www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Ambulance-Decon-MSR_0915-508.pdf

If the District can answer any questions, feel free to email Jweaver@lwfd.org.



The RDS 3110 unit decontaminating the living quarters in room fogging mode.



The RDS 3110 unit is connected to the ambulance via the ADP-PT hands-free port.



The AeroClave RDS 3110 unit decontaminating bunker gear in room fogging mode.

Mobile Integrated Healthcare and Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport (ET3)



GUEST COLUMN BY: Erik Christensen / Medical Officer/Firemedic /
Wauconda Fire Protection District

Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH), implemented shortly after the passage of the Affordable Care Act, leverages local resources -- specifically fire and EMS agencies -- to provide proactive and preventative care for patients with both acute and chronic health problems to provide preventative care to minimize unnecessary admissions or re-admissions using emergency departments.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced in February of 2019 that a pilot program called Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport, or ET3, would be starting in early 2020. Although the implementation was delayed due to COVID, it now has a start date of January 2021 with the goal of providing fire and EMS agencies further transport abilities and reimbursement options not previously available. The three options offered by ET3 include transport of a patient to the emergency department, to a primary care physician or urgent care clinic or providing "treatment in place" using telemedicine services.

The significance of the programs is great -- they can leverage local resources and increase efficiencies in the healthcare system, dramatically reducing unnecessary use of the emergency department while improving efficiency. While these programs run parallel to one another with increased efficiencies being the objective of each, it is strongly believed that there is crossover for both programs.

As it relates to MIH, EMS and fire agencies are perfectly positioned to use their infrastructure, training, experience, knowledge, and equipment to address the healthcare needs of their local communities. Most importantly, fire and EMS agencies are the most trusted entities within their respective communities. With this institutional level of trust earned by EMS providers by their citizens, fire and EMS agencies are often looked to for help and guidance without second thought. This presents a huge and distinct advantage as it relates to initial patient contact, the provider-to-patient relationship, trust, compliance with medical education, prevention, guidance, and compliance with medical orders. But MIH goes much further than this. The MIH program also provides medical interventions, treatments, and assessments, but it also performs home assessments such as slips, trips, and fall hazards as well as installation and evaluation of smoke and CO detectors. Additionally, we are the liaison for other social services such as transportation, food, and other social services to ensure the

patient has everything they need to be comfortable as well as to provide for chronic issues outside of medical necessity. Most importantly, the intention of an MIH program is to fill in the large gaps in healthcare coverage that exist for patients. We do not intend for this service to be competitive or redundant, but rather cooperative and collaborative. Fire and EMS agencies have identified significant gaps in coverage for our most vulnerable patients and we offer a viable and efficient service to address these needs rather than relying on the 911 emergency service to address these chronic problems. Some of the medical conditions that this program will address are: Diabetes, Congestive Heart Failure, COPD, Post-recovery Acute MI, cardiac arrhythmia management and care, Uncontrolled hypertension, Asthma, pneumonia, and major hip and joint problems.

By compiling patient medications, past and present health conditions, co-morbidities, interventions, and other health considerations performed by EMS and other healthcare providers, EMS providers can provide a better, more efficient service. If EMS can predict the event and thus prevent it, EMS can maintain the proactive approach model and provide a higher level of service that increases the quality of care and the efficient and effective delivery of service. This method also provides a different model of service from the current traditional sense. Currently, EMS agencies respond to and are reimbursed under the "Fee for Service Model" or FFS. FFS provides a level of reimbursement but it does little to provide a level of value to treating long-term health maladies. MIH intends to change that model from the current FFS to a value-based model with the proactive and preventative approach.

The value-based model shows how proactive, preventative, and early interventions for acute and chronic health conditions can greatly improve outcomes and quality of life for a much lower cost. By using the principles of prevention and early intervention coupled with predictive analytics with the use of artificial intelligence (AI), EMS can achieve the goals of improving patient outcomes and efficiencies in the pre-hospital setting. Being able to prove that early and ongoing prevention and intervention is absolutely vital to the long-term success of any mobile integrated healthcare program.

ET3 helps bridge the distance and logistical challenges that sometimes present themselves in an MIH program. Specifically, a significant population of patients are unable or unwilling

(Continued on Next Page)

to get in touch with a primary care physician to address their health care emergency department setting. EMS until this point in time has had very few resources to needs. Over time, these patients get funneled into the 911 EMS system and ultimately into the ecreate that level of outreach for patients who experience the lack of transport ability to get in touch with a doctor. Through the use of telemedicine, not only can EMS providers provide an assessment of the patient's condition but now they can get that patient in touch with a doctor without ever having to leave their home.

The proliferation of cell phones and technology, applications, and the use of telemedicine has made these challenges for EMS a thing of the past. ET3 provides a level of reimbursement for both the EMS provider and clinician who is a qualified healthcare practitioner. Equally as important, it helps minimize the unnecessary admission of the patient into the emergency department while still delivering a high level of care and medical treatment by advanced life support providers.

Tying in predictive analytics is another way to enhance the efficiencies of ET3 by providing the analytic data to doctors on the other end of the telemedicine call. If both pre- hospital providers and doctor staff can have analytical tools to guide decision making for the most vulnerable patients, what other options can artificial intelligence provide for the medical community? These predictive analytical tools will strengthen the value-based care model.

MIH and ET3 programs across the country are in their infancy in terms of outreach and capability. But there are several foundational advantages that MIH and ET3 have to offer for the medical community as a whole. As EMS providers, the focus is all about leveraging existing resources and enhancing efficiencies. There are several ways to accomplish this goal and all are within an arm's reach.



The Annual Conference Committee met several times via Zoom over the past six months to plan a top-notch education experience.

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**Have you updated your contact information with the NIAFPD?
Please forward all changes to niafpd1@gmail.com.**

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**Northern Illinois Fire
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Member News

Please send news from your district to admin@niafpd.org for sharing on social media or in the Fire Guard.



The McHenry Township Fire Protection District swore in Deputy Chief Rudy Horist as the new fire chief on January 8, 2021 after the retirement of Chief Tony Huemann. Congratulations Chief Horist and best of luck in your retirement Chief Huemann.

In Memoriam



Huntley FPD Deputy Chief Al Schlick passed away earlier this month. He was also formerly with the Wauconda FPD. Rest in peace.

Please send updated contact information for your district to admin@niafpd.org.

**Annual membership investments were due November 1, 2020.
Please submit payment ASAP.**

Please visit the NIAFPD website, www.niafpd.org, and follow us on social media for current information.

If you are not receiving regular email updates from NIAFPD, please send your updated email contact information to admin@niafpd.org.



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