

Alcor News Bulletin

Number 5: January 18th, 2003

Training Courses: Preliminary Proposal

Although Alcor has acquired professional medical assistance from paramedics (as reported in previous issues of Alcor News), we still depend heavily on our trained members for local help in a health emergency. Too many months have elapsed since our last training course, and we want to run one which will provide all our Alcor Cryotransport Technicians with up-to-date information on urgent issues such as our new medications protocol.

The question is: When?

The first opportunity for us would be the seven days commencing Saturday, March 1st. However, some people have suggested that a more appropriate time would be in the summer, when more people tend to take vacation time and hotel rates in Phoenix are lower. One problem from our point of view is that by the summer, we hope to be doing major work to expand and reorganize our facility. On the other hand, we should schedule our training when as many people as possible are available.

This is your opportunity to register your preference. If you are interested in attending our training course, please send email to (do not use that address for any other purpose) and tell us:

1. What is the ideal time of year for you to attend?
2. Would you be able to attend if we schedule the course from March 1st through March 7th inclusive? (Note: We would require all students to begin on the first day of the course, but you would not necessarily have to stay till the end of the course.)

Please notify us of your preferences as soon as possible.

Alcor Eliminates Signup Fees

As reported in the previous Alcor News, our board of directors gave our President and CEO, Jerry Lemler, the authority to make changes in our signup fees and study the outcome. Dr. Lemler has completely eliminated the initial \$150 signup fee and also the subsequent monthly charge of \$25 that was billed to prospective members who prolonged the signup process beyond 6 months.

People who paid the \$150 signup fee but have not completed the signup process yet will have their \$150 credited against their membership dues when they eventually join Alcor. Jennifer Chapman has already sent out a mailing notifying prospective members. She can be reached on extension 113 at the Alcor main number, 480 905 1906.

Alcor reserves the right to modify its fee structure in the

future. Therefore, we encourage everyone to complete the signup process during this zero-fee window of opportunity.

Alcor Takes First Step Toward New Ambulance

As previously reported here, Alcor's existing ambulance did not perform reliably in a recent case. The vehicle has been repaired, but replacing it is a major priority.

After much discussion of alternatives, including second-hand ambulances, Winnebago-style motor homes, and trailers, we decided to buy a truck and convert it for our specific requirements. This was the only way to gain the head room and elbow room that we need to fulfill our longterm ambition to perform basic procedures in remote locations.

In a remote standby, our usual practice is to move a patient from a hospital or hospice to a mortuary where we wash out the blood via femoral bypass and replace it with an organ preservation solution. The patient is then packed in ice and transported to Alcor. In the future, in remote locations where we have sufficient warning to deploy our "truck-ambulance," we hope to perform blood washout and organ preservation in the vehicle itself. This will represent a significant saving in time.

We may also pursue the possibility of placing a patient on "warm bypass." One of our medical advisors believes that if the procedure is performed promptly enough, a patient who has been pronounced legally dead can be connected to a conventional heart-lung machine which will provide metabolic support for as long as 48 hours at only a slightly reduced temperature. In this scenario, the patient would be moved to Alcor in our vehicle while remaining on bypass, and the usual period of cardiac arrest in which ischemic injury can occur would be virtually eliminated.

These options are speculative and cannot be applied to human patients until we feel confident of the outcome. Our purchase of the new vehicle is a first step which will enable us to develop and refine our capabilities in the future.

The vehicle we chose is a 2002 Ford truck carrying a box-style container 8 feet wide, 16 feet long, and 7 feet high. This type of vehicle is often owned by rental companies and is typically used by movers. We will be adding thermal insulation, air conditioning for the load area, and several alternate sources of power, including 115 volts from a large gasoline-powered generator, smoothed 115 volts from a smaller Honda generator (suitable for sensitive electronic devices), and a 12-volt circuit for halogen lighting. Proper venting will be included so that oxygen can be used safely in the vehicle.

In the meantime, Alcor's operations manager James Sikes has completed our conversion project for the Chevy Suburban that was purchased late last year. When the seats are folded down we have a load area which is large enough to accommodate a wheeled portable ice bath that James fabricated from welded

steel tube. Heavy-duty wiring has been installed from the battery to the interior of the vehicle, where we now have a massive power inverter capable of 1000 watts continuous and 3000 watts peak power. (This type of wire and inverter are normally used for car stereo systems.) The inverter has ample capacity to run a recirculating pump in the ice bath, plus interior lighting.

In the future, the Suburban can provide backup capability in Phoenix while the truck-ambulance is deployed elsewhere. The Suburban could collect a patient who has been flown in from a remote location, while the truck can be in California during a standby.

The two vehicles will add significantly to our response capability. We also hope to create less ambitious van conversions for regional groups. These conversions will rely to some extent on the experience that we gain in converting the truck.

Plans for Facility Expansion: First Phase

As reported previously, Alcor has outgrown its current space and will expand into adjoining units at its Scottsdale location. The three-person committee which was assigned the task of studying options has reached a consensus, and its plans will be presented to Alcor employees on Monday, January 20th. After the people who use the facility make their suggestions, plans will be modified accordingly and presented to the Patient Care Trust and the Alcor board of directors.

Alcor News is written primarily by Charles Platt.
Contents are copyright 2003 by Alcor
Foundation but permission is granted to reprint any whole
news item, so long as Alcor is credited as the source and
the reprint includes our URL at <http://www.alcornews.org>.