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Reflecting and Rebuilding after 2020

A Message from the JCEMS Team

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Keywords: collegiate-based emergency medical services; covid-19; coronavirus | **Corresponding Author and Author Affiliations:** Listed at the end of this article.

The collegiate or campus-based EMS (CBEMS) community has faced unprecedented challenges in the past year. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause suffering across the world, many in our community have fallen ill or lost loved ones to the virus. Many have felt the economic impacts of the crisis and are fighting to make ends meet. And many are continuing to struggle with the mental health repercussions of social isolation and chronic stress.

Faced with the daunting tasks of confronting a global pandemic and navigating campus closures, this past year CBEMS agencies rapidly adopted operations to serve their communities in a time of need. Some squads spearheaded contract tracing efforts and assisted with testing on their campuses. In other cases, providers volunteered on the frontlines through state and local organizations. Every CBEMS provider has played an important role in combating this pandemic, whether by directly caring for patients, conducting medical research, or following public health guidelines and leading by example. We at the Journal of Collegiate EMS (JCEMS) have been uplifted and inspired watching our community navigate these decisions with integrity and unwavering optimism.

This past year has been marked not just by the pandemic, of course, but by a series of crises. From natural disasters to mass political protests, instability and change have been defining features of life. In particular, there has been a global reckoning with structural racism and police brutality. Police killings of Black Americans – including the murder of a fellow EMT, Breonna Taylor – have been brought to the forefront of the national conversation here in the United States. JCEMS stands in solidarity with Black and other marginalized communities fighting for dignity, health, wellness, opportunity, and life. We will commit ourselves in the coming years to help root out systemic inequities in healthcare and bring justice to marginalized patients and providers alike.

Looking to the future of the CBEMS community, many have already begun the work of rebuilding and reimagining. As evidenced by recent submissions to JCEMS, providers at numerous schools have developed a renewed focus on CBEMS research. All the while, CBEMS agencies are maintaining educational

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standards - for example, through the National Collegiate EMS Foundation's remote learning program - and are preparing to reinstate operations upon reopening of school campuses. As a journal focused on research and scholarship, we recognize the importance of developing a literature base that supports CBEMS agencies in confronting the challenges ahead. This issue, for example, will feature a publication from Georgetown EMS on what CBEMS agencies can do to maintain high educational standards while planning to restart operations. We welcome additional submissions focusing on how CBEMS organizations can promote public health and fight injustice. We recognize that by sharing best practices, lessons learned, and innovative strategies, we can best serve our communities together.

To our readers and the entire CBEMS community: thank you for your resilience, your integrity, your persistence, and your compassion. While we cannot know what this next year may bring, we can be sure that you will all continue to fight for your patients, for public health, and for justice. Here at JCEMS we pledge to do the same.

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