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State College PA 16804

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December 7, 2011

Joseph W. Schmider
Director, Bureau of EMS
Pennsylvania Department of Health
Room 606 Health & Welfare Building
625 Forster Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0701

Dear Mr. Schmider:

This letter is to keep you apprised of the Central Region Emergency Strike Team (CREST) QRS interest in applying for Department of Health certification as a special operation EMS service for wilderness EMS. As we previously discussed, we understand that special operations EMS will not be approved until regulation are adopted. In anticipation of that, we wanted to update you on our service's progress in preparation for that eventuality.

In June of 2010 CREST was certified as a QRS by the Department of Health, number 14311. We currently have over 50 active volunteers holding certifications including Health Professional Physician, Registered Nurse, Paramedic, EMT, First Responder, Emergency Vehicle Operator, Wilderness EMT, and Wilderness First Responder. CREST is currently providing the following services in Pennsylvania: QRS support to wilderness search and rescue, cave rescue, rope rescue, and water rescue incidents, and provides special events EMS. This includes a PEMA deployment to support water rescue in Lycoming County during the recent flooding.

Through our affiliated EMS continuing education sponsor, Centre LifeLink EMS number 08-0022, we have been able to certify a number of our volunteers as Wilderness EMTs and Wilderness First Responders using the nationally recognized American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI) wilderness medicine curriculum during 2011. It is our recommendation that this curriculum be considered for inclusion as one of the approved course to recognize wilderness EMS responders in Pennsylvania.

We support the Department of Health in its efforts to establish certified wilderness EMS operations in compliance with the legislative intent of Act 37. We are willing and interested in helping in the rules and regulations and IRRC review process and our medical director is interested in helping support the development of protocols for wilderness providers. We remain willing to serve as a pilot project for wilderness EMS in Pennsylvania. Thank you for your efforts. Please contact me if we can support the Department's efforts in any way.

Sincerely,

Mark Milliron