



FEMA

December 13, 2007

Mr. Dino J. Villani  
Director, Department of Public Safety  
Okaloosa County Public Safety  
6 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite G-1  
Shalimar, FL 32579

Dear Director Villani,

Thank you for your letter of September 6, 2007, concerning the START and Sacco Triage methods, and for your support of the National Incident Management System ("NIMS") concepts. I am pleased to know that Okaloosa County leadership is thinking about and recognizes the values of NIMS elements and compatibility.

The Sacco Triage Method ("STM") was evaluated from 8 through 12 January 2007 as part of a pilot effort for our Testing and Evaluation Program at the NIMS Support Center in Somerset, Kentucky. The evaluation was designed to collect data regarding STM's incorporation of NIMS elements, its effectiveness and its suitability to the operational environment. The evaluation team was made up of Subject Matter Experts ("SMEs") with experience in mass casualty triage, Emergency Medical Services, emergency management, firefighting, Hazardous materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction response, and working in an Emergency Room, and Test Engineers that tested STM software.

STM was found to demonstrate many of the concepts of NIMS. Its objective to maximize survivors is fundamental to preparedness and response, and supports the mission of emergency responders and managers. The triage methodology was identified as having beneficial capability and (according to the SMEs) was an improvement over current practices. The SMEs specifically cited the following advantages/strengths of STM:

- the capability to generate an objective triage strategy in consideration of the timing and availability of resources is a primary advantage of STM
- provides capabilities to prepare for and respond to an MCI
- resource management was identified as a key strength of the system
- supports inventory of resources and capacities prior to an incident
- supports patient disposition decisions, efficient resource utilization and balances patient loads among facilities

- the scoring of patients was found to be an improvement over current color coded systems
- grouping of patients was identified as being an improvement over the current <START> method of conducting triage in a mass casualty

SMEs agreed the STM methodology is scalable, would enhance their ability to do their job, and that the Sacco Score is easy to use and the STM software is easy to navigate and use.

In general, STM was found to be compatible with many NIMS concepts/elements:

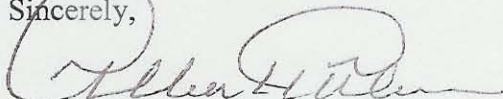
- Overarching and measurable goal/objectives
- Objective methodology
- Resource management
- Advanced planning
- Communications and information management
- Ongoing management and continuous improvement
- Supports technology
- Interoperability
- Scalability
- Easy to learn and use
- Flexibility

START was not formally evaluated during this process. However, START does not consider resources, does not determine an optimal triage strategy and has no software to evaluate. SMEs were well acquainted with START and used their experiences and knowledge as a basis of comparison to STM.

NIMS is based upon using current best practices, and requires new concepts, processes and protocols, to better secure the homeland and to protect our citizens from both natural disasters and acts of terrorism. Leveraging new technologies and adopting new approaches that immediately improve capabilities for the short term and that can be developed and refined over time are critical to our success.

Thank you and your Okaloosa County Public Safety team for taking the time to be thoughtful, for not ignoring difficult problems, for taking the responsibility to seek out improved NIMS compatible triage capabilities, and for setting a leadership example of being responsibly proactive to help us all achieve our mission.

Sincerely,



Albert H Fluman  
Acting Director  
Incident Management System