



77TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

MONTEREY CONFERENCE CENTER | AUGUST 20-21, 2025

OFFICIAL AGENDA

ADVANCING TOGETHER. SHAPING THE NEXT WAVE.

Join us for the California Ambulance Association's 77th Annual Convention!

Mark your calendar for August 20–21, 2025 and get ready to gather at the beautiful Monterey Conference Center for an inspiring and impactful experience. This is your chance to connect with industry leaders, stay ahead of key issues, and be part of the conversations shaping the future of emergency medical services in California. Whether you're looking to expand your knowledge, grow your network, or simply recharge with peers from across the state, the CAA Annual Convention delivers meaningful value at every turn.

FEATURED SPEAKERS



KEYNOTE

Chris McChesney

Expert in strategy execution Chris McChesney is the co-author of *The 4 Disciplines of Execution®*, the world's bestselling book on strategy execution. As the global practice leader at FranklinCovey, Chris has spent over 20 years helping organizations from Marriott and Coca-Cola to Lockheed Martin achieve breakthrough results by focusing on what matters most. He's known for making complex strategies simple and actionable at every level of an organization, from the boardroom to the front lines. His work has helped hundreds of teams cut through the chaos of daily operations to stay focused and execute on their top priorities, something every ambulance provider can relate to. With unmatched energy and clarity, Chris delivers practical tools that leaders can immediately apply to reach their "wildly important goals," even amid constant demands and pressure.



BRAD NEWBURY, MPA, NRP
NATIONAL MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING CENTER



CHIEF ROB REARDON
DUXBURY FIRE DEPARTMENT



DOUG WOLFBERG
PWW ADVISORY GROUP



ED NORWOOD
ERN ENTERPRISES, INC.



ASBEL MONTES
SOLUTIONS GROUP SERVICES



AMBER HEALY ESQ.
BUCHALTER

TUESDAY AUGUST 19, 2025

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM: Ambulance Strike Team Leader Course
Monterey Marriott | Must be pre-registered to attend

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM: Exhibitor Setup & Registration
Monterey Convention Center

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM: Golf Tournament
Pacific Grove Golf Links | Must be pre-registered to attend
Check In: 11:00 AM | Tee Times: 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM: Welcome Reception
Marriott Monterey | Must register to attend
\$75 Members | \$80 Non-Members

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20, 2025

6:30 AM - 7:30 AM
Exhibitor Setup

7:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Registration & CAA Marketplace

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM
Continental Breakfast

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM: GENERAL SESSION
Welcome & Keynote Address: Executing What Matters

Rob Lawrence - CAA Executive Director

Chris McChesney - Keynote Speaker

Join us as we kick off the convention with an energizing keynote from Chris McChesney, global practice leader at FranklinCovey and co-author of the bestselling book *The 4 Disciplines of Execution®*. With over two decades of experience helping organizations like Marriott, Coca-Cola, and Lockheed Martin achieve strategic breakthroughs, Chris brings a powerful message on how to focus, align, and execute on what matters most—especially in high-pressure environments like emergency services. His insights and practical tools will inspire leaders at every level to cut through the noise, stay focused, and achieve their “wildly important goals.” Don’t miss this motivating and actionable start to the event.

10:30 AM - 10:45 AM
Break

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM: REIMBURSEMENT SESSION

Charting the Course: Federal Appeals Strategies for Medicare Advantage & ERISA

Ed Norwood - ERN Enterprises/The National Council of Reimbursement Advocacy

In this transformative session, healthcare strategist and national advocate Ed Norwood dives deep into the foundational appeal concepts that empower organizations to push back against complex denials and win. Participants will gain practical tools to combat medical necessity transport denials, navigate statutory timeframe disputes—including post-stabilization, and post-acute care denials—and apply conceptual frameworks that simplify even the most technical appeals. From tactical guidance on case-specific strategies to jurisdictional trend mapping, root cause analysis, and writing appeals using high-impact conceptual language, this session offers the strategic edge revenue cycle and clinical teams need. Whether you're a CFO, reimbursement leader, managed care executive, or part of the patient access or health information operations team, this session equips you with the insight and clarity to move beyond compliance and into wins that last. Because in federal appeals, laws don't win — concepts do.

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM: LEADERSHIP SESSION

Just One of the Guys: A Leadership Wake-Up Call in the Rising Tide

Carly Strong - SEMSA/RIGGS

Danielle Thomas - LifeLine Ambulance

Danielle Thomas and Carly Strong don't call themselves “female leaders”—they're just leaders. In a field where leadership and industry norms are dominated by men, these two trailblazers have carved their path by focusing on what truly matters: exceptional leadership. While other sessions may focus on the differences between male and female leaders or why females face challenges, this talk shifts the narrative to the mentality and skills one must cultivate to succeed regardless of gender. To thrive in EMS leadership, you need grit, adaptability, and a relentless focus on results. This session rejects the idea of being “pro-women in EMS” and instead champions being pro-good leader.

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM: OPERATIONS SESSION

Charting the Course: Navigating Public-Private EMS Solutions

Glenn Leland - Strategic Fit, LLC

Glenn Leland is a nationally known EMS strategist and former CEO/COO with decades of leadership across AMR, Priority Ambulance, Paramedics Plus, and more. From LA paramedic to global EMS consultant, he's helped design systems on five continents. Glenn now teaches EMS business to fire service leaders through the Ambulance Business Academy and brings deep insight into evolving models of EMS delivery and partnership.

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM

Lunch

12:45 PM - 1:45 PM: GENERAL SESSION

The Global Pulse: State of the Nation Insights

Asbel Montes - Solutions Group Services

Jamie Pafford-Gresham - Pafford EMS

Matt Zavadsky - PWW Advisory Group

2025 has been a pivotal year for EMS—from the “Big Beautiful Bill” to ongoing underfunded mandates. In this dynamic 60-minute panel, national thought leaders examine the current and future state of EMS, tackling the impact of new legislation, fragile reimbursement models, and persistent workforce challenges. Moderated by Jimmy Pierson and Rob Lawrence, the discussion will confront key issues like hospital offload delays, burnout, and the path to sustainable funding. With expert insight and action-focused dialogue, this session gets to the heart of what must change—and who must lead the way.

1:45 PM - 2:45 PM: REIMBURSEMENT SESSION

To Refund or Not to Refund: Battling the Rising Tide of Overpayment's

Donna Hankins - American Ambulance

With audits rising and denials increasing, providers face a familiar dilemma: refund or fight? This session breaks down the decision-making process around overpayments, voluntary refunds, and appeals. Gain practical strategies to assess risk, manage documentation, and respond effectively—whether you're dealing with past issues or preparing for what's next.

1:45 PM - 2:45 PM: LEADERSHIP SESSION

Riding the Leadership Wave: Meta Leadership for the Future of EMS

Brad Newbury MPA, NRP - National Medical Education & Training Center

As EMS faces workforce, regulatory, and technological challenges, leaders must guide beyond internal operations and across healthcare systems. Rooted in Harvard's Meta Leadership framework, this session gives leaders tools like POP-DOC, emotionally intelligent decision-making, and cross-organizational strategies to lead through uncertainty with clarity, influence, and agility.

2:45 PM - 3:00 PM

Break

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM: REIMBURSEMENT SESSION

Riding the Revenue Wave to Full EMS Reimbursement

Melissa Harris - AmbuServe, Inc.

Liza Lane - Revenue Lane

Discover practical strategies to tighten your EMS collections and hold payors accountable. Melissa Harris and Liza Lane will share tools to flag stalled accounts, streamline denials, and apply KPIs to boost performance. Walk away with a proactive framework to protect revenue and respond effectively when payors delay.

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM: LEADERSHIP SESSION

When the Tide Turns: Leading Through Tragedy to Build a Resilient Culture

Chief Rob Reardon - Duxbury Fire Department

As EMS faces rising demands, one thing remains constant - the responsibility to care for our own. This session shares the real experience of leading through unimaginable tragedy and how adversity can spark the wave that carries a stronger, more resilient EMS culture forward. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to shape the next wave of EMS leadership, prioritizing mental health and the well-being of those who answer the call.

4:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Break

4:15 PM - 5:00 PM: GENERAL SESSION

Wine & Whine: Rebounding from Your Reimbursement Hangover

Donna Hankins - American Ambulance

Melissa Harris - AmbuServe, Inc.

Ed Norwood - ERN Enterprises/The National Council of Reimbursement Advocacy

Doug Wolfberg - PWW Advisory Group

Matt Zavadsky - PWW Advisory Group

Let's end Reimbursement Day One on a high note. Join our reimbursement specialists for wine and a discussion of the hot topics in California ambulance reimbursement. Don't miss this opportunity to talk about the billing issues with other billing office staff. We'll bring the wine; you bring the questions for our expert panelists.

5:00 PM - 5:45 PM: GENERAL SESSION

Beers & Tears: Hopping Back from What Ales You

Michael Coan - Medic Ambulance Inc.

Corey J. Cabral, Esq. - CDF Labor Law

Amber Healy, Esq. - Buchalter

Sean Sullivan - LIFEwest

What's better than free legal advice? Free legal advice - with beer! Join our top legal beagles for an open session addressing your EMS legal questions about employment law, compliance, reimbursement, operations, liability and more. This is sure to be a rollicking, fun and insightful!

5:45 PM - 6:45 PM

President's Reception

Connect & celebrate at the President's Reception!

This special event honors our association's leadership and brings together members, partners, and guests. Enjoy refreshments, meaningful conversations, and the opportunity to toast to our shared accomplishments and bright future.

6:45 PM - 7:15 PM

Code3 Trailer and Writer Q&A

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Registration & CAA Marketplace

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

Continental Breakfast

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM: GENERAL SESSION

Rising Together: From Collision to Collaboration in California EMS



Progress doesn't always start with agreement. In California EMS, conflict and tension between fire and ambulance, hospital and field, county and state have long shaped the landscape. This panel brings together leaders from across the system for a candid conversation that leans into discomfort, surfaces hard truths, and seeks trust through curiosity, listening, and respectful challenge. We rise not by avoiding friction, but by working through it—together.

9:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Break

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM: REIMBURSEMENT SESSION

Navigating the Swell: Reimbursement Challenges & Compliance Currents in EMS

Doug Wolfberg - PWW Advisory Group

Join CAA Reimbursement Consultant Doug Wolfberg as he leads a rapid-fire session to cover the latest hot topics on the minds of California's ambulance billing and compliance professionals. Doug will discuss the latest balance billing issues at both the state and federal levels, including AB716, and will help demystify some of the issues under California's new consumer protection law regarding medical debt. This session will also cover some of the pressing concerns arising under Medicare Advantage and other managed care issues.

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM: LEADERSHIP SESSION

My Supervisors Suck: When the Tide Turns on Leadership That Fails Us

Danielle Thomas - LifeLine EMS

Have you ever thought to yourself, "My supervisors suck" — and blamed them for the problem? You're not alone. But what if that frustration is also an invitation? In this bold and honest session, we'll confront what happens when leadership fails—and what it really takes to change it. From identifying the right people and firing fast when needed, to implementing sustainable development tools and accountability frameworks, this session gives you real-world strategies to build the kind of leadership your organization actually needs. We'll explore the shared ownership between frontline staff, senior leaders, and supervisors themselves—and how to have the crucial conversations that drive culture forward. If you're ready to stop treading water and start leading the next wave, this is your session.

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: REIMBURSEMENT SESSION

Building a Balanced EMS Organization

Ana Gnojek - Apex360, LLC

Donna Hankins - American Ambulance

This session explores the synergy between Operations, Finance/Admin, and Reimbursement, tying it to the critical role of Compliance. Learn how to break down silos, connect departments, and bring compliance into daily decisions. We will share practical strategies to improve communication, reduce risk, and strengthen performance, giving your organization clear ideas to support a stronger EMS organization.

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: LEADERSHIP SESSION

Rising Tides in EMS: Strengthening Your Workplace Through Smart Employment Law Strategies

Amber Healy, Esq. - Buchalter

Explore the unique HR and legal challenges facing EMS organizations, from fatigue and wage issues to mental health and discipline. This session offers practical tools, policy guidance, and frontline leadership tips to ensure compliance while supporting your team. Walk away with checklists, conversation starters, and strategies to build a legally sound and resilient EMS workforce.

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: OPERATIONS SESSION

Shifting Currents, Stable Teams: What You Need to Know on CA Strike Team Deployments

Kevin Anderson - EMT-P, California EMSA

Jimmy Pierson - Medic Ambulance Inc.

Andrew Sulyma - Alameda County EMSA

How have disaster responses changed? We will discuss best practices for real-time no-notice emergencies, pre-planned operations, and deployments, including support for large venues like Super Bowl 60 and upcoming FIFA matches, plus the role of Ambulance Buses for mobile clinics and command units. We'll share real-world insights from actual Strike Team deployments.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

Luncheon & CAA Service Excellence Awards

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM: OPERATIONS SESSION

Anchored in Insight: Staying Afloat in the AI Era

Asbel Montes - Solutions Group Services

Artificial intelligence has already started to reshape how healthcare leaders approach financial performance, decision-making, and patient care. But with a flood of tools and buzzwords, how do you separate hype from meaningful impact? In this session, Asbel Montes will explore how to stay anchored in data-driven insight while navigating the waves of rapid AI innovation. Drawing on real-world examples from the healthcare finance space, he will unpack how to evaluate emerging technologies, avoid common pitfalls, and position your organization to stay afloat—and ahead—in an AI-driven future.

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM: LEADERSHIP SESSION

From Local Waves to Statewide Currents: Growing Your Political Impact

Dorian Almaraz - Prime Strategies, CAA Lobbyist

Steve Grau - Royal Ambulance, CAA President-Elect

Jimmy Pierson - Medic Ambulance Inc., CAA Past President

Real influence starts at home—and grows with purpose. In this timely and energizing session, Steve Grau, Jimmy Pierson, and Dorian Almaraz take the stage to explore how California EMS professionals can amplify their political voice from city hall to the state Capitol. As EMS faces unprecedented challenges in funding, regulation, and workforce sustainability, now is the time to transform local connections into statewide momentum.

Learn how the California Ambulance Association is expanding its political and lobbying footprint, and why consistent engagement with elected officials is no longer optional—it's essential. This session will outline how to build lasting relationships with policymakers, craft compelling advocacy messages, and become part of the legislative solution. Whether you're a field provider, manager, or executive, you'll walk away with practical tools to connect, advocate, and help secure a stronger future for EMS in California. It's time to stop waiting for change—and start shaping it.

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Break

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Exhibitor Breakdown

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM: GENERAL SESSION

Tidal Shift: Six Experts—One Weird AI Showdown

Brenden Cameron - LifeLine EMS

Christian Carrasquillo - Fast Medical AI

Nidish Dhru - Huly AI

Jonathan Feit - Beyond Lucid Technologies

Dave O'Rielly - Truamasoft

Mike Taigman - FirstWatch

Grab your floaties and hold onto your lanyards—this isn't your average panel. In Monterey, six AI experts take the stage to debate one of the biggest questions in healthcare and EMS today: Will AI revolutionize our systems... or replace us entirely? From billing and dispatch to real-time PCR writing and CQI that runs while you sleep, AI is already reshaping how we operate. Is it making us better—or just pushing us faster toward the edge?

No demos, no pitches, no pricing slides—just unfiltered insight from six data-driven minds, ready to challenge each other (and maybe you). Moderated by fearless EMS pros, this session promises to shake up your thinking—and if it knocks your socks off, good thing you brought flip flops.

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: General Session

Closing Remarks & CAAPAC Raffle

Rob Lawrence - CAA Executive Director

As we wrap up the convention, thank you for being part of this incredible gathering. Your presence and participation help strengthen the voice of our association and the vital work we do. Before we officially conclude, don't forget we'll be drawing for the CAAPAC raffle! Your contributions support our continued advocacy efforts, and every ticket makes a difference. Stick around to see if you're a lucky winner and thank you again for supporting CAAPAC and the mission of the California Ambulance Association.

HOST HOTEL



MARRIOTT MONTEREY

ADDRESS: 350 Calle Principal Monterey, CA, 93940

PHONE: (831) 649-4234

CONVENTION VENUE



MONTEREY CONFERENCE CENTER

ADDRESS: One Portola Plaza Monterey, CA 93940

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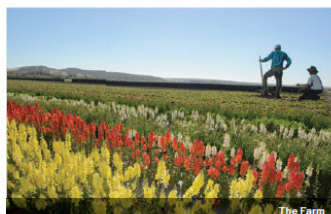
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QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

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