



Village Ambulance Service Summer 2013 Newsletter



Let the Sun Shine!

Welcome to the summer 2013 edition of the Village Ambulance Service EMS & Community Awareness Newsletter. This publication is aimed at keeping you updated on the progress of Emergency Medical Services in Berkshire County.

Employee Spotlight



Kevin O'Mara

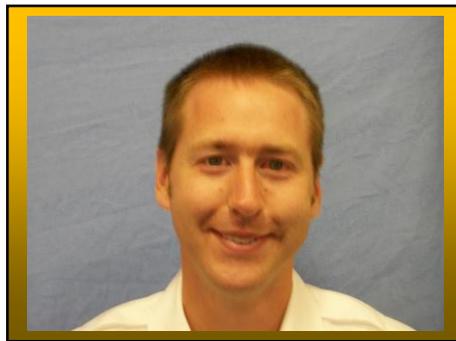
EMT-Paramedic/CQI Officer

Kevin, a 'fifth generation' born and raised in Williamstown, was first bitten by the public service bug after becoming certified in CPR in 1992. He went on to become First Responder certified in 1998 as a new member of Williamstown Fire Department before earning a Bachelor's degree in Communications with a minor in Business Marketing and Management.

In order to pursue his love of rock climbing, biking (mountain and road), hiking, camping, and touring the pacific northwest, he decided to move to Colorado where he lived for two years.

Upon his return to the Berkshires in 2004, Kevin found EMS employment working for Bennington Rescue Squad, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, Windsor Fire Department, Southern Vermont Ambulance Service, and Rutland Ambulance Service.

In 2008, Kevin enrolled in the Paramedic



program at Greenfield Community College. He became certified in 2010 and joined Village Ambulance and North Adams Ambulance within a few months of receiving his certification.

During his public service career Kevin has held positions including Field Supervisor, Quality Improvement Officer, Field Training Officer, EMT Basic Instructor and Certification Examiner. For the Williamstown Fire Department: Firefighter, Apparatus Driver, Pump Operator, Training Instructor, and Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Williamstown Forestry Department.

Thanks for the dedication to EMS, Kevin!

New Operations Manager Hired



Michelle Sawicky, EMT-P, I/C, has been promoted to Operations Manager for Village Ambulance Service.

Michelle has been with the company since late 2008 and during her five year tenure has held the positions of EMT-Intermediate, Paramedic, Shift Supervisor, Lead Child Passenger Safety Technician, VAS EMS Explorer Post 911 Advisor, CPR Instructor, and Instructor/Coordinator of numerous VAS training and education programs.

In addition to her lengthy resume, Michelle was selected for the position because of her global understanding of the company's organizational structure and operations, and is dedicated and committed to the company's long-term success.

Michelle earned her EMT-Basic certification from Westfield State College in 2005 before becoming certified as a Paramedic in 2012.

To contact Michelle, please call 413-458-4889 or e-mail her at msawicky@villageambulance.com

Summer Fun Fact

Even though the first day of summer is the longest day of the year, it's not the hottest. This is due to something called seasonal temperature lag, which means that it takes a while for the oceans to let their stored summer solstice heat back into the air. That's why it tends to be hotter in July or August than in June. Please keep this in mind when planning outdoor activities.

Follow VAS:



First Aid Ready

If a summer filled with fun activities is your goal – packing a first-aid kit to address the inevitable bumps, bites, abrasions and blisters – will keep you on track.

Village Ambulance Service recommends keeping first-aid essentials within arm's reach.

Use a small, water-proof bag that's easy to stash in the glove compartment, suitcase, backpack or golf bag. And what should you put on the essential list?

- Hand cleaner
- 2 pairs of exam gloves
- Several sizes of adhesive bandages
- Medical tape
- Gauze wrap
- Several 4-inch gauze squares
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Small flashlight, with batteries
- Instant cold packs



Be sure to store your kit in a place that is out of children's reach but easily accessible for adults. In addition, put a note on your calendar to check the kit regularly to make sure it's fully stocked and batteries still work.

Lastly, if you're flying be sure to pack the first-aid kit in your checked luggage. Many of the items won't be permitted in your carry-on bags.

Barbecue Safety

Barbecue season is upon us. This means many people will be enjoying cooking and eating food that was prepared in this manner. It also means people will be injured and thousands of dollars of property damage will result because of carelessness. Even people who use combustible products safely at the worksite will make mistakes and ignore safety practices once they are at home. Many fire fighters and paramedics have responded to barbecue fires and related injuries that could have been prevented. The following are a few tips we should keep in mind to help us have a safe barbecue season:

1. After purchasing a barbecue, make sure you follow the manufacturer's directions for assembly and use.
2. Don't use your barbecue indoors. Fire and carbon monoxide poisoning are a real threat. Keep the barbecue a safe distance (over 3 meters, or 10 feet) from your house. If there is a fire, you don't want it to spread to your house.
3. Keep your barbecue's propane tank in an upright position. If it's not in an upright position, the tanks relief valve may not work properly. Also make sure the burner ports are clear of rust and dirt.
4. Check for leaks by putting a soapy solution on the connection of the tank and hoses. Where you see bubbles, tighten the connection. If you can't stop the bubbles, don't use the barbecue - it's leaking propane. Never use a match to check for leaks.
5. When lighting a gas barbecue, keep the lid open to avoid gas buildup and light the barbecue as soon as you turn on the gas. Keep your face away from the grill. Make sure the flame is visible from the burner ports.
6. A barbecue lighter with a long handle is safer to use than matches. It provides the extra reach that reduces the chance of singed hair or a burn to your body.
7. Make sure coals are cool before you dispose of them.
8. Avoid wearing baggy sleeves when cooking over a barbecue. They could catch fire.
9. Remember, the entire barbecue assembly is hot. Keep children away.

EMS ADVANCEMENTS

Senate Passes EMS Week Resolution

With an overwhelming show of support and co-signers, the 188th Massachusetts State Senate passed the below resolution on Wednesday, May 22nd, 2013. Leading the bipartisan resolution were Senators K. Donnelly (Arlington) and J. Kennan (Norfolk & Plymouth). Senator Donnelly requested that members of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health - Office of Emergency Medical Services be present to accept the resolution on behalf of the Commonwealth's EMS community. Great work everyone!



Massachusetts EMTs and National EMS Certification

www.mass.gov/dph/oems

Effective July 1, 2013, all new Massachusetts Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) candidates, at all levels will be required to participate in the NREMT certification process for both psychomotor and cognitive skills evaluation.

NREMT Registration

There will be four identified tracks, which Massachusetts EMTs can choose to follow once Massachusetts recognizes this certification standard.

1. All new EMT candidates requesting initial licensure after July 1, 2013 will be required to enter the NREMT Registry and maintain NREMT certification throughout their career as part of their Mass licensure.
2. All existing Mass licensed EMTs who have current NREMT certification will be required to maintain their Registry certification as part of their Mass licensure.
3. All EMS providers who were formerly registered by the NREMT, but have not maintained their NREMT certification will be able to have their certification reinstated, if currently licensed by Mass OEMS without restrictions. Those who have already successfully tested into the registry will not be required to test again.
4. EMTs that have never registered with the NREMT will be able to maintain their Mass licensure, without NREMT certification, provided that they meet or exceed NREMT recertification training requirements and fulfill continuing education credits.

For more information on the new Mass OEMS & National Registry changes, please visit:

www.villageambulance.com

National EMS Education Standards a Big Step Forward

By Mike Touchstone
EMS1.com

What are the National EMS Education Standards?

"(The Standards) define the competencies, clinical behaviors, and judgments that must be met by entry-level EMS personnel to meet practice guidelines defined in the *National EMS Scope of Practice Model*." (NHTSA p. 7)

There are four certification levels: emergency medical responder (EMR), emergency medical technician (EMT), advanced EMT (AEMT), and paramedic. The Standards are built upon the premise that each certification level is part of a sequence that culminates in paramedic certification. Each certification level is built upon the knowledge, skills and competencies of the lower levels. Thus, an EMT must meet all of the competencies of an EMR, as well as those specific to the EMT. Likewise, a paramedic must meet all of the competencies of an EMR, EMT, AEMT, as well as those specified for entry-level paramedics.

The Standards are made up of four components: competencies, knowledge required to achieve the competencies, clinical behaviors/judgments, and educational infrastructure. They provide a general framework to support individual programs for developing specific curricula to meet identified training and educational needs in particular regions. The format also allows for ongoing revision when research supports practice changes based on scientific evidence or when standards of care change. The NHTSA also published instructor guides for each certification level. These include the basic information that programs must deliver in order for their students to meet the described competencies. The guides will serve as the foundations for textbooks and lesson plans. It is important to note that programs will need more than just the instructor guides to deliver a complete program.

Why Are the Standards Important?

The most important aspect of the Standards is the fact that they move EMS, paramedics in particular, one step further along the road to professionalization. The EMS Education Agenda process in general and the Standards in particular are together raising the bar for EMS practitioners. Just as practitioners progress from level to level, so does the discipline progress from a training to an educational perspective. As a consequence of this, many of the individuals who teach EMS will have to become more than simply certified instructors; they will have to become educators.

EMS educators will need to possess a foundation in educational methodology; adult learning theory; curriculum and lesson plan design and development; as well as evaluation, assessment, analysis and communication skills. Our EMS educators must be well-prepared for the transition; education is more than simply training. This change in perspective will make our practitioners better at what they do, and ultimately, will lead to better patient care.

What Will the Standards Mean to Us?

At first glance, it may appear the Standards will have little impact on current practitioners. The Standards solidify the four certification levels so that each level will have a common set of minimum, entry-level competencies across the country. It means that those who learned initial assessment and the four different pathways of secondary assessment may not recognize the concept of "primary and secondary" assessments. For the old school folks like me, it means a return to familiar terminology.

For those who hope to become paramedics, it means that you will need to know more information at a greater depth and breadth. Paramedic programs may include such course work as ethics, special operations, incident management, leadership, as well as more in-depth pathophysiology cardiology and pharmacology. Practitioners will learn much more about the "why" we do what we do.

As a result of more formal education, I predict that paramedics will eventually be recognized as a more independent practitioner, rather than one who simply collects data, reports the findings, and follows a physician's orders. Practitioners will then be better prepared to practice in the field.

The biggest impact the Standards will have on current and future paramedics is that many will receive college credits and Associate's Degrees in the process of achieving paramedic certification (some will even attain Bachelor's Degrees). This increased standard level of education will make it more challenging for the "dinosaurs" to keep up with the "young Turks."

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?



FALL 2013 PROGRAM

WHERE

Berkshire Mall – Route 7 & 8 Connector Rd.,
Lanesborough, MA 01237

WHEN

Classes begin on September 5th and run until
December 21st every Monday and Thursday
evening from 6:00 pm-10:00 pm. (Saturday
classes TBA)

COST

Program Cost: \$750.00
(\$150.00 non-refundable deposit with application,
Balance due first night of class)
Cash, Money Order, Bank Check, or Agency
Check Accepted

CONTACT

To obtain an application packet, please visit our
website, call our office, or simply scan the QR
code with your smartphone.

FOR A CAREER THAT COUNTS!

EMT – BASIC PROGRAM

The Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) Course teaches initial evaluation, treatment and transport of patients with medical problems and/or trauma. Students learn to recognize and provide initial care for ailments including, but not limited to, shock, heart problems, breathing problems, strokes, burns, diabetes, drowning and accidents.

EMT-Basics are the foundation of American pre-hospital emergency medical care.

For medical emergencies, they provide rapid response, initial evaluation and care, and transport to an appropriate medical facility. They also provide non-emergency transportation for patients who are bedridden and/or require continuous monitoring and basic-level care.

