

Congrats to the 2010 EMS/Trauma award winners



Eric Epley poses with his wife Sondie, after GETAC gave him its Journey of Excellence Award. Photo by Ronnie Stewart



Kathleen Sallade-Karczewski took home EMS Person of the Year. Photo by B. Kinney.

Texas EMS and trauma honored its best at Texas EMS Conference in November. The awards were announced at the Tuesday luncheon. Congratulations to the 2010 winners!

EMS Public Information/Injury Prevention – Washington County EMS for making public information and injury prevention one of its priorities. The service visits the elementary school twice a year to present programs on nine areas of injury prevention, and the program is now part of the school's physical education curriculum. WCEMS regularly holds car seat

education classes; last year the staff educated 67 families. Community CPR and first aid classes are offered each month, including a partnership with Brenham ISD to certify all district personnel in CPR. WCEMS has trained nearly 600 people – so far. WCEMS also has worked increase the number of AEDs in the county, taking the number from five to a total of 83 in the last five years, including 16 in school district buildings. WCEMS also sponsors an Explorer Post, in which young people are able to experience EMS as a possible career; and, twice a year, Senior Day, in which senior citizens learn about health topics and receive health screenings.

EMS Citizen – Elijah Wandel for saving his sister from choking. Eight-year-old Elijah had recently learned about CPR, basic first aid and the Heimlich maneuver after his mother, and AMR employee in Arlington, arranged for AMR paramedic Felipe Garcia to visit Elijah's class. While AMR doesn't expect children to recall or execute all they're taught, they want the children to get exposed to lifesaving and to learn the most important thing: How to call 9-1-1. However, Elijah retained much more from that lesson. On the day of the incident, Elijah's father had left two-year-old Ellie snacking on crackers and watching television. A few seconds later, a goldfish cracker became stuck in her throat and blocked her airway. When



Joe Hamilton was voted EMS Educator of the Year. Photo by B. Kinney.



Plano Fire Department administrator Ken Klein took home that categories top honor. Photo by B. Kinney.



Dr. David Lakey, commissioner of health, congratulates EMS Citizen Elijah Wandel, and Elijah's mother. Photo by B. Kinney.



North Central Texas RAC celebrated a win in the RAC of the Year category with Health Commissioner David Lakey, MD, far left; and Assistant Commissioner Kathy Perkins, far right. Photo by B. Kinney



MedStar won Public/Private Provider of the Year for its innovative programs. Photo by B. Kinney

eight-year-old Elijah saw what was happening, he told her to calm down and performed the Heimlich maneuver he'd been shown a few weeks earlier. Ellie recovered immediately and was back to eating crackers and playing when her father came back in the room.

EMS Educator – Joe Hamilton for leading by enthusiastic example with fairness and integrity while upholding the highest standards for staff and students. Under Hamilton's leadership at San

Jacinto College EMT Department, he has expanded the program, encouraging partnerships with local businesses and industries. Hamilton supports new education methods, working with other allied health departments at the college to stage training exercises and to manage grants that benefit all allied health departments. A recent grant paid for two simulation learning labs, each equipped with a Sim Man 3G, and Hamilton is also working on a redesign of the EMT ER lab. Hamilton has been instrumental

in developing opportunities for hands-on learning in myriad areas, including advanced airway management, labor and delivery and confined space rescue, to name a few. Hamilton has actively participated in GETAC's Education Committee since 2006. His commitment, enthusiasm and fairness were cited in nomination forms.

Designated Trauma Facility – JPS Health Network for raising the level of trauma care for Fort Worth by taking the initiative to upgrade its designation to a Level I, the highest designation to achieve. Originally designated as a Level II in 1999, the hospital was surveyed by the American College of Surgeons in 2009 and was verified as Level I a few months later. As a leader in trauma education, JPS Health Network teaches professionals from all over the country about the latest in trauma care, conducting programs for EMTs, paramedics, nurses and physicians. JPS is the only Level I Trauma Center in Tarrant County, which has a population of approximately 1.8 million people.

EMS Telecommunicator – Tojuana "TJ" Escobar for her calm handling of a frantic 9-1-1 call from a child whose mother had collapsed. In March 2010, nine-year-old Ariel called to report that her mother was on the floor and unable to get up. Escobar obtained the address and dispatched emergency responders, while calming the child down and gathering more information. She assured Ariel she would remain on the line with her and coached

Ariel on how to continue to monitor her mother. When help arrived, Escobar told Ariel to turn on the porchlight and unlock the door, enabling first responders to get help to Ariel's mother more quickly. The nomination praised Escobar's persistence, reassurance and helpful instructions for making Ariel's experience with 9-1-1 a positive one.

EMS Administrator – Ken Klein for his exemplary leadership at the Plano Fire Department. Medical Director Mark Gamber says Klein challenged Gamber his first week on the job to make PFD the most progressive EMS system in the country, and since then Klein has worked to make that happen. Under Klein's quiet leadership, PFD brought dispatch to balloon time to under 90 minutes for an entire year and is now down to 70 minutes; and spearheaded a community rollout of prehospital induced hypothermia. Klein also participated on local hospital trauma committees and the RAC, and is an active member of the Collin County child fatality review board. Nominations cited Klein's high expectations and work ethic that inspire his colleagues to take the best care of Plano's citizens and visitors. In one inspiring story, a victim in a motor vehicle collision was reluctant to leave his dog at the scene. Klein volunteered to transport the dog to the station, where he fed and cared for the dog until it could be reunited with its owner.

EMS Medical Director – Jeff Beeson, DO, RN, LP, for implementing new and

innovative systems to improve patient care as medical director for MedStar in Fort Worth. Beeson, a physician who maintains his licensed paramedic and registered nurse designations, created an award-winning Community Health Program that helps reduce unnecessary 9-1-1 calls and emergency department use and implemented hypothermia protocols that dramatically improved patient outcomes. Dr. Beeson responds daily to EMS calls, assists personnel with on-

site education, and approved protocols for response that improve crew safety and make cardiac resuscitation more effective. He also implemented a continuing education program for area first responders that brings more than 30 classes to responders every three months. The nomination praised his commitment to the profession, adding that he has earned the respect of both EMS providers and hospital emergency department staff.



Deer Park Volunteer Fire Department took home the top spot in Volunteer Provider of the Year. The service is located near Houston. Photo by B. Kinney



Washington County EMS works all year to educate its citizens about health and safety and they won the EMS Public Information/Injury Prevention Award.



Jeff Beeson., DO, won EMS Medical Director. The MedStar medical director for innovative new programs.

Outstanding RAC – North Central Texas (RAC E) for their commitment to the future of a self-sustaining RAC, making solid financial decisions and use of a competitive program to distribute undesignated funds. NCTTRAC recently hired a full time manager for public relations and development to tap into corporate and other funding opportunities. The RAC makes sure the money they receive is spent well, basing their spending decisions on data and using that data to present a case for funding to local corporations and foundations. When many RACs have dissolved their finance committees, NCTTRAC’s committee stands out as a best practice, tracking spending and developing standard operating procedures and guidelines that the bar. The RAC excels in communication, with a user-friendly website that encourages public awareness of emergency health care and the work of the RAC.



Tojuana “TJ” Escobar of Victoria won Telecommunicator of the Year for her calm handling of a child’s frantic call to 9-1-1.

EMS Air Medical Service – MCH Carestar for living their motto: “Whatever it takes to get the job done.” The Ector County-based, CAMTS-certified, air medical service is praised for being professional, courteous and loyal. Nominations listed Carestar’s emphasis on community, with staff participating in Children’s Miracle Network, United Way and other charities. Because its base facility, Medical Center Hospital in Odessa, is surrounded by oil field activity, the crews have taught basic safety and proper landing zone set-up to oil field crews. Carestar staff also participated in helping

Medical Center Hospital obtain JCAHO stroke center certification. Nominations applauded Carestar’s loyalty to the community and to its 250-miles radius of service.

EMS First Responder – Windcrest Volunteer Fire Department for willingness to go beyond what is expected from a first responder. Windcrest ran more than 1900 calls last year and is on track to do the same number this year. Although a BLS program, Windcrest has protocols for 12-leads on all rescue trucks, combitubes, and blood sugar readings. Windcrest ensures all firefighters are trained in CPR, and pays for ECA and EMT classes for anyone interested. Windcrest offers continuing education on a monthly basis, opening it up to any of the 27 first responder organizations in Bexar County. In 2010, Windcrest hosted a disaster drill that involved EMS, hazmat teams, the sheriff’s office, SWAT, the fire marshal’s office and several other local volunteer fire departments to determine where gaps in service existed. Windcrest is currently planning a large-scale disaster drill using an MVA scenario with school and charter buses. Windcrest’s motto sums it up: “Professional volunteers, setting the standard.”



Windcrest Volunteer Fire Department was honored as EMS First Responder.

EMS Volunteer Provider – Deer Park Volunteer Fire Department for innovation and dedication to its community. The all-volunteer staff has grown since the 1950s from a few volunteers and one fire station to more than 100 volunteers and three stations responding to about 3000 calls a year. Working with medical director Donald Metz,

DO, the DPVFD has developed aggressive protocols. They work with San Jacinto College to provide members with continuing education. Membership in DPVFD includes free membership to a local fitness center, and currently the department is working as a group with a fitness trainer. DPVFD participates in community and charity events throughout the year, including the “Gift of Christmas,” where volunteers sort donated toys, clothes and food and deliver them to people in need.

EMS Public/Private Provider

– **MedStar** for its innovative approaches to age-old challenges in EMS. MedStar provides ambulance service to 15 cities, including Fort Worth, and covers 421 square miles. The service makes about 100,000 calls a year. In 2010, MedStar launched Advanced Practice Paramedic (APP), a 16-week training program in which graduates deal with the

most frequent users of EMS and also the most life-threatening calls. For frequent users of EMS, specially trained medics visit patients to evaluate their needs, often relaying information about the patient between primary care physicians and specialists. According to the Emergency Physicians Advisory Board, this program has reduced 9-1-1 use by 57 percent in this population. APP staff also visit patients who have recently been discharged from the hospital. MedStar also recently focused on improving cardiac arrest outcomes, initiating community education, therapeutic hypothermia and the use of APP staff on those calls. MedStar has improved ROSC by 37 percent; 14 percent of those patients are discharged neurologically intact.

EMS Person – Kathleen Sallade-Karczewski for exemplifying outstanding professionalism and performance in her role

as a paramedic lieutenant with Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS. Sallade-Karczewski is praised for her dedication to the service and community; her compassionate, considerate and respectful treatment of everyone, from patients to co-workers, on every call and throughout every day. Recently, Sallade-Karczewski helped one family get back on its feet after a devastating medical condition left the husband confined to a wheelchair. Sallade-Karczewski’s assistance included giving the wife a respite from care giving and regularly checking on the family. These acts of kindness so inspired the wife that she recently submitted her application to volunteer at BSBEMS.

GETAC’s Journey of Excellence

– **Eric Epley** for his dynamic leadership as executive director of Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, better known as STRAC. The 22-county RAC has 71 EMS agencies and 53 hospitals, with a population of more than two million. GETAC Chair Vance Riley cited Epley’s work on an EMS electronic charting project, the EMS/Trauma Registry, a unified ID badge and Texas WebEOC Interoperability Project (TWIRP), which connects 30 WebEOC jurisdictions to the State Operations Center. In addition, Epley was director of the Regional Medical Operations Center (RMOC) in San Antonio for the last six hurricanes that hit the Texas coast. Epley leads GETAC’s Disaster Committee, working tirelessly to ensure Texas is prepared to respond to any emergency.



MCH Carestar in Odessa was named EMS Air Medical Service of the Year.