

Local & Regional EMS News

by Kathy Clayton

AMA and STRAC partner to demonstrate use of health security card

The American Medical Association held a two-day conference in April in San Antonio to discuss and demonstrate the use of a “health security card.” A secured card would contain a person’s health and emergency contact information, which would connect affected individuals, responders and providers across electronic medical record systems during a disaster or public health emergency.

The conference, supported by the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, included overview discussions of health security cards, reporting of research on the use of health security cards, panel discussions and a live simulation of a public health triage scenario using health security cards.

The exercise, held in the Alamodome and in the Emergency Operations Center in San Antonio, created four lines of patients representing a displaced population, each triaged with and without a health security card. The exercise also included a mobile medical unit, an ambus, two ambulances and cots, arranged to receive the triaged patients.

The conference and exercise helped demonstrate the effectiveness of using health security cards, including reductions in medical errors and medical identity theft, improved emergency care efficiency and access to emergency contact and notification information.



The AMA and STRAC partnered to demonstrate use of a health security card in a two-day conference and triage exercise in April in San Antonio.



Paramedics Philip Boyd and Rolando Moreno Jr. received outstanding service awards from the Coastal Bend Regional Advisory Council for their actions in response to a welfare check at a residence in early February.

CBRAC offers outstanding service awards

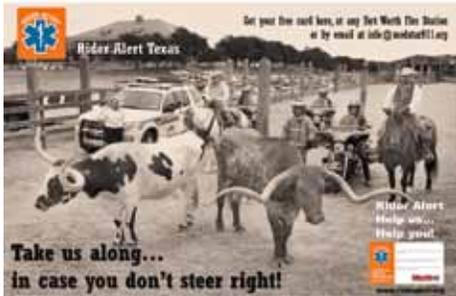
The Coastal Bend Regional Advisory Council, TSA-U, serving Nueces and 12 surrounding counties to Corpus Christi, recently awarded its first outstanding service recognition awards. Paramedics Philip Boyd and Rolando Moreno Jr. were nominated by Diana Bluntzer, EMS Director for Nueces County ESD #2, for their actions in response to a welfare check at a residence in early February.

The request for service came from a family member who had not had contact with the resident in more than 36 hours. The medics were dispatched without knowing what they would encounter. They arrived at the rural address during a significant rainstorm and

discovered the lengthy driveway was under 18 inches of water. Rather than risk damage to the ambulance, the medics approached the house on foot; first barefoot and then using waders provided by neighbors.

When they reached the residence, they found a 67-year-old female face down in the back yard. The patient was responsive only to pain and had multiple cuts and bruises. She was backboarded by the medics and carried back through the water to the ambulance. They transported the patient to the area trauma facility. Later reports indicated that the patient was already suffering hyperthermia, with a core temperature less than 90 degrees.

Rider Alert motorcycle safety program makes Texas debut



MedStar brings the Rider Alert program to Texas, helping to provide free alert cards, placed inside a motorcycle rider's helmet, that include life-saving information, emergency contacts and medical history.

Rider Alert, a motorcycle safety program, made its Texas debut as thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts gathered in Ft. Worth in May for the Texas State Harley Owners Group rally at the Fort Worth Stockyards. The Rider Alert program, created by the Richmond Ambulance Authority and

Bon Secours Virginia Health System in partnership with *Motorcycle Virginia!*, provides free identification cards that will help first responders provide rapid and accurate medical assistance to riders involved in crashes.

“Many motorcycle crash victims are unconscious when responders arrive, making it very difficult for EMS personnel to know the patient’s medical history or emergency contacts,” explains John Elder, MedStar’s Clinical Director.

A Rider Alert card is placed inside a rider’s helmet and contains vital, life-saving information, emergency contacts and any important medical history. When first responders arrive on the scene of a motorcycle crash, a one-inch sticker on the *outside* of the helmet will indicate that the biker has the Rider Alert Card. The sticker

also warns untrained responders not to remove the helmet so as not to risk further injury.

Matt Zavadsky of MedStar explains that this card was born out of experience; it was designed by paramedics who have been on both sides of a crash as the injured rider or as medical help. “As an EMS provider *and* a motorcycle rider, I’ll be the first person to have the Rider Alert card and sticker on my helmet. Accessing this basic information after an ‘unscheduled dismount’ can sometimes be impossible. This small tool could mean the difference between life and death,” said Zavadsky.

The card is free and can be obtained at any Fort Worth fire station, at MedStar’s headquarters and at most motorcycle dealerships throughout Fort Worth.



In recognition of EMS Week, Maxie Bishop, State EMS Director (right), and Brett Hart, EMS Compliance Central Group Manager (second from right), visited nine EMS providers and traveled more than 250 miles during the week of May 20. They visited Belton, Harker Heights, Killeen, Copperas Cove, Capital Ambulance, Burnet EMS, Marble Falls EMS, North Blanco County and Spicewood Volunteer EMS. Nervousness (at the first sight of DSHS personnel) gave way to excitement when on-duty responders realized Bishop and Hart had arrived to give EMS Week cheer rather than inspections.



In April, Austin-Travis County EMS set up a hyperthermia awareness display at City Hall in Austin. The outdoor display of a car with temperature readings and signs with information about the risks associated with hyperthermia was established through cooperation with Safe Kids USA and the Texas Task Force. Austin-Travis County EMS Chief Ernesto Rodriguez, founder of Ray Ray’s Pledge, Kristie Reeves-Cavaliero and Captain Randy Chhabra spoke about the dangers of leaving children in cars during hot weather. The display is part of an ongoing effort by ACTEMS to improve hyperthermia awareness by providing information through social media, online and print resources, and community events.

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Members of Port Alto Volunteer Fire and EMS recently got a new station and ambulance for the service, which is staffed by 21 volunteers.

Port Alto Volunteer Fire and EMS gets new facility, upgraded ambulance

Port Alto Volunteer Fire and EMS, founded in 1961, was recently able to move into a new facility and remount an ambulance for improved service to its three-county area. The new station has offices, a training area, a kitchen and six truck bays to house the ambulance, fire trucks and a rescue boat. The updated ambulance is a 14-foot Frazer box mounted on a 2012 Dodge Chassis, and it came with new paint, lights, air conditioning, flooring and generator.

The new equipment will serve Port Alto's 120 EMS and fire calls per year. Located on a line where three counties merge, Port Alto EMS and Fire provides mutual aid

to Calhoun County (outside the Port Alto response area) as well as to Jackson and Matagorda counties. Twenty-one volunteers include a paramedic, five EMTs and 15 firefighters.

Port Alto Volunteer Fire and EMS also served the region through the donation of its 1995 ambulance. The Victoria chapter of the Pink Heals Tour will have a new pink ambulance, named for 15-year-old Kaitlin Staloch, the daughter of Fire Captain Boyd Staloch with the Port Lavaca Fire Department and Kelly Staloch, a paramedic Supervisor with Calhoun County EMS. Kaitlin has been diagnosed with Stage II Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Neil Coker receives accolades

During the commencement ceremony in May, Neil Coker, BS, EMT-P, the director of Simulation Teaching, Assessment, and Research (STAR) Programs for Temple College, received the 2012 Claudia and W. T. Barnhart Outstanding Teacher of the Year award. The Barnhart award is given annually by the Temple College Foundation on behalf of the College's Faculty Council in recognition of leadership and contributions to student success. Coker also received an Excellence Award from the National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) at its conference in Austin in May. NISOD is the outreach vehicle and service arm to the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin, a doctoral-level program training community college presidents, vice presidents, and deans.

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Iris LaBelle and Bethany Minter, graduates of the Lone Star College-Montgomery's first EMT-I class, treat a participant in the BPMS150 bicycle ride at a mobile hospital unit in LaGrange. Photo by Jessica McClosky.



Six-year-old Jasiah Rubalcava is Acadian Ambulance Service's newest Outstanding Samaritan. Jasiah performed the Heimlich maneuver when his best friend, Nicholas Carvajal, choked on a nacho chip during lunch at San Antonio's West Avenue Elementary School. Jasiah is the youngest recipient of the award, which typically is given to first responders or emergency medical personnel.

During a presentation at the school this spring, Acadian Vice President of Operations Troy Mayer praised Jasiah as a hero and presented him with an Outstanding Samaritan certificate. Both boys also received Lego ambulances, and their kindergarten classmates received Acadian activity packs and had a chance to tour an ambulance.

"Someone that's this young is not someone we would typically see performing this type of life-saving action on another person," Mayer said. "We want to set an example for the rest of the kids and the rest of the population that if someone this age can pick up on these lifesaving techniques, then everyone should take lessons in first aid."

EMT-Intermediate class graduates with firsthand knowledge of large-event medical operations

Lone Star College-Montgomery graduated its first class of EMT-Intermediates in May. One of the most exciting challenges the class of 14 students faced was taking part in the medical response for the BPMS150, aka the British Petroleum MS 150, a bike ride that raises money for multiple sclerosis.

As part of their EMS operations course, the students helped out as medical responders for more than 15,000 bike riders, who rode from Houston to Austin over two days in April. The students were able to work with physician and nurse volunteers providing care to injured riders at relay first aid stations and mobile hospital units. In addition to treating injuries from bike crashes, the students learned what it takes to manage the medical aspects of such a large event.

Lone Star College-Montgomery also gave some students in this first class special recognition: Jessica McClosky was named outstanding class leader; Benji Mullens, outstanding clinical practitioner; Ali Blair, rising star; Brynne Butterfield, highest academic achievement; and the Dyron Powell award, which honors a student with exceptional character, skill, and academic achievements was given to Sheryl Ratcliff.