This special edition of EMS Best Practices acknowledges the outstanding contributions made by our many EMS providers throughout Contra Costa County. The EMS Week theme for 2008 is “Your Life is Our Mission.” We would like to recognize the difference that each of you make through your commitment to the communities you serve. Your dedication to this mission provides round-the-clock care to those in need in Contra Costa County. Thank you!

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is easily recognized by the public when they see a police car, fire engine or an ambulance responding to an incident. What they don’t realize is that responders, YOU, are a part of an intricate system of agencies and organizations that know what to do in a medical emergency. Each player in the EMS system has an essential job to perform as a part of the coordinated system of care. It takes each of you to save a life!

A car crashes, someone suffers a stroke or sudden cardiac arrest—an emergency—a bystander or loved one recognizes the situation as an emergency and calls 9-1-1. (EARLY ACCESS)

The call is answered quickly by a primary PSAP and transferred to one of our three medical dispatch centers for interrogation and step-by-step instructions on what to do before help arrives. Dispatch shared in the success of our system on April 13th when Margee Freudentahl, dispatcher at Contra Costa County Fire, assisted a bystander with CPR instructions which ultimately resulted in the 8-year-old near-drowning victim being discharged home several days after the event. Margee was just part of the team—Contra Costa County Fire Engine 88’s Captain Carpenter, Acting Captain Prescott, and Paramedic Firefighter Gomez, AMR’s Thomas Westbrook and Dmitry Golovin, and CALSTAR’s Ernie Acebo and Timothy Castelli cared for the victim.

Our public access and public safety defibrillation programs (EARLY CPR & EARLY DEFI-BRILLIATION) can claim several out-of-hospital saves in 2007/2008. A young woman of 83 collapsed in her home, and Brentwood Police Department Officers Figueroa and Schroer began CPR and delivered 2 shocks with the AED. When East Contra Costa County Fire Engine 54 arrived, Peter Benson, Brandon Earhart, and Jim Mathers found no further shock was required. They continued care with a return of spontaneous circulation and agonal respirations after good CPR and BLS airway. AMR Unit 6299, Matthew Wacker and Tom Rodgers arrived (EARLY ALS) and as they were providing ALS care the patient went into a pulseless V-Fib. A shock was delivered by the AMR crew, the patient converted to a Sinus Tachycardia and was transported to Sutter Delta Hospital where she was admitted to be transferred to an extended care facility three days later, awake and alert.

These are examples proving that the intricate system you are a part of is working well. Not everyone finds themselves on a call that saves a life, but dedication to a job well done each day is what really counts. Each of you should congratulate yourself for the job you do!!!

TOP HONORS

It is not often that our patient is one of our own...and that is the good news! But, not the best news! Recently, while on duty, Don Danielson, Fire Engineer, Contra Costa County Fire, collapsed from Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Location, quick thinking on the part of retired B/C Ron Gesner who witnessed the arrest, and the crew members’ - despite the impact of treating one of their own - brilliant performance all saved Don’s life. Kudos go to Lon Goetsch, Robert Ray and John Kipp! Don has returned to duty and been promoted to Captain at Station 5. Now that’s the BEST NEWS!
AAA Stars of Life Celebration
The Stars of Life is a national event that recognizes dedicated ambulance service professionals.
AMR’s Henry Ledo and Robin Kneer were honored in this year’s celebration.

Above and Beyond
San Ramon Valley Fire’s Todd Thomas has made a difference this year. Todd volunteered to assist in the EMS Division in Debbie Meier’s absence. Todd, while always an exceptional paramedic, really stepped up and impressed those around him with his work ethic and abilities. He was instrumental in getting the Zoll PCR program up and running. “Todd is one of the most dedicated and honest individuals I have had the pleasure of working with.” - Andy Swartzell

Captain Doug Brown and Captain/Paramedic Mark Figueira worked tirelessly, while short staffed, to assure the QIU (Quality Improvement Unit) for the Richmond Police & Fire Dispatch Center completed the required review that has led to the pending reaccreditation of that center as an Accredited Center of Excellence. Yea to Doug, Mark and West County Communications Center dispatchers and administration on a job well done!

E/P Mathew Alexander, currently serving as a FTO, A Shift PCR/AMA Auditor and Medical Supply officer is credited with being a big reason the El Cerrito Fire Paramedic program works. Thank you for your dedication!

Great Job!!
Not all of the great care you give can be recognized in two pages, but here are some…

AMR paramedics Keith Robinson and Alan Almazon, EMTs Serena Talugon and Julie Christy and Ops Supervisor Andrew Pentecost provided high quality care in the face of a difficult situation involving two pediatric patients who were ejected from a vehicle.
A 14 year old and his mother are happy they met Richmond Fire Captain Vargas, Engineer Rincon, and F/F Brownlow, and AMR paramedic Robert Graham and EMT Jeremiah Ribeiro as the shocks they provided converted him from a lethal rhythm.

East Contra Costa Fire Captain Gil Guerrero and Engineer Jim Mathers along with an AMR paramedic were called to the home of a patient with chest pain. “Acid indigestion” was his chief complaint as he coded. He was shocked successfully and opened the front door of his home one week later to greet Captain Guerrero who had stopped by to see how he did.

When 68-year-old Mrs. X collapsed in front of her husband he called 9-1-1, Cheryl Young provided CPR instructions. When Pinole Fire Engine 74C’s crew, Captain Brian Lowery, F/F Jerry Short, F/P Juan Ortiz arrived they found her in V Fib. With the help of AMR paramedics Dennis Link and Walter Fields, Mrs. X was successfully resuscitated.
SRVF 32’s patient, a 57-year-old male, was discharged after being converted to a sinus rhythm by P/FF Pruett, and his partners Captain Daugherty and Engineer Corrie.

“The system worked perfectly.” Vince Matulich, MOFD credits Michelle Stoffregen, CCCFPD dispatcher and her “perfect” CPR instruction and the “Great job” by his engine crew, Captain Trumps, and Engineer Wells for the save he had in December. Medic 41—Martinez & Mc Cullah too!

Recognizing Captain/P Ben Castillo and FF/P Bruce Budge for their rapid intervention of a near exsanguinated patient cut by his skill saw and who is now back to work!

It is with great sadness that we remember Contra Costa County Fire Captain Matthew Burton and Engineer Scott Desmond who perished while attempting to rescue victims of a house fire on July 21, 2007. Matt and Scott gave the ultimate sacrifice. Our thoughts are with their families this EMS Week and always.

Top Documentors
Matt Epperson, Tony Perry, and Mike Martinez
Moraga Orinda Fire are not only accurate, but fast. Way to go!

Thank you to Chuck Coleman for stepping up to coordinate the QI Program for Rodeo Hercules Fire.

EMS Virtual Advisors Rock!
The EMS Virtual Advisor program is a Quality Improvement Advisory Group that gives anonymous input and feedback about the EMS system. Since recruited in November 2007 their feedback has been used to:
♦ Understand current communication issues in the system.
♦ Focus on ways to improve patient handoff.
♦ Update our EMS for Children Program.

As an anonymous group we could not list the participants, but know your contributions count! To learn more about Virtual Advisors go to: http://www.cchealth.org/groups/ems/committees.php

Please contact us with your comments or concerns. Visit our website @ www.cccems.org