

EMS Best Practices

MAY 2013



NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK MAY 19–25, 2013

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATES YOU!

EMS Week is a time to say thank you to you, our team, for the services you provide every day. Your great work and compassionate care makes a difference. Your patients think so and so do we!

Providing the best care for your patients can be challenging and often goes unsung. We will not be able to thank each of you individually in this issue, but will share stories that reflect the care you give that changes outcomes, that leaves a smile on the patient's (or their family's) face, or that give this profession a "good" name.

EMS Best Practice Is...

Wellness and safety for EMS practitioners is important! How can you help to assure your safety and the safety of those around you...

Speak Up—you need to communicate with your partner(s) when you see something that doesn't seem right. They may not see what you see.

Maintain situational awareness—when working in the roadway, be sure to wear the appropriate vest and keep a vigilant eye for oncoming traffic.

Take care of your tools—Your vehicle is your living. Respond to any safety concerns. Check those batteries on your battery-powered devices—you want them to work when you need them.

Drive safely—Driving under emergency conditions is an important part of our job. Spend time reviewing safe driving habits. Make it there safely.

Watch your back—Meaning, lift safely and make sure you have enough help to avoid hurting your back. One in every four EMS workers will suffer a career-ending back injury with the first four years of service.

Take care of your body—It can be challenging to eat properly while you're at work. Planning ahead can eliminate over-reliance on junk food. Get enough rest. Do simple exercises and stretches. **Take care of yourself!** ■

The theme for National EMS Week reminds us how important it is to approach our patients as a team. The call begins with the first ring at the dispatch center and continues as each of you adds your expertise.



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JUST SOME OF THE WAYS YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE

—By Joe Barger, MD, Medical Director Emergency Medical Services

Sean Diemert, EMT, ProTransport, on his way home from work witnessed a car traveling at a high rate of speed crash into the back of a semi-truck parked on the shoulder of the road. The car burst into flames. Sean assisted by other bystanders extricated an unconscious woman from the burning vehicle. Strong work, Sean!

It took 6 shocks and high performance resuscitation for Jim Howard, Frank Elston and Angela Johnson-Davis of Contra Costa Fire Engine 8, to get a pulse on their patient. She had all of the links in the Chain of Survival in place resulting in her successful survival. Way to stick with it!

- Survival from sudden cardiac arrest is something to cheer about, but when your patient is the father of a retired coworker – a celebration is in order! Pinole Fire - Captain Jon Madigan, Engineer Keith Fields, Engineer Jim Brooks, FF/P Steve Dorsey, and FF/P Clint Ballard responded to a patient in cardiac arrest. They arrived to find Pinole Police Officer A. Likos performing CPR. Agonal respirations gave them some hope, but the initial rhythm of asystole was concerning. Advanced Life Support care was initiated and resulted in return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) – he was discharged home on Valentine’s Day. Congratulations to those involved in this save!
- A helpful bystander who began CPR and delivered a successful single shock with an automated

external defibrillator (AED) assisted Richmond Police Department, Richmond Fire Engine 68 Captain Ed Valdivia, Engineer William Bachman, and F/F Kevin Carr and the AMR crew to perform a miracle at Hilltop 24 Hour Fitness. The gentleman who had collapsed on the treadmill was a successful resuscitation. Extra kudos to Ryan Darfler and Joseph Holland who did a 12 lead post arrest to discover a STEMI. (ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction)

- When a 29 year old with a brand new baby (2 weeks old) is your patient in cardiac arrest – Wooo – San Ramon Valley Fire paramedics Demian Bannister and Brian Olson were confronted with just this situation. They took over CPR from her husband, found ventricular fibrillation on the monitor and immediately delivered a shock. It wasn’t until shock 4 that they got ROSC. After the placement of an implantable defibrillator (AICD) she was able to go home!
- AMR’s Tony Schollar and Henry Toyota had a 29 minute door to intervention on their STEMI – great catch since the patient presentation was atypical! Without the 12 lead this MI may have been missed.
- A heart too good to die...isn’t that the saying? AMR’s Steven Curry and Dave Howerton with Contra Costa Fire’s Ben Sanders, Nick Galvan and Brett Schooley weren’t about to let this 38 year old male go. Suffering from non-specific “body pain” and just out



shower the patient collapsed on the floor. CPR was started by his family. High performance resuscitation resulted in ROSC and after stents and an AICD he was discharged home. Great teamwork!!

- Dispatcher Gillian Graham directing the family who witnessed this arrest to do CPR, Contra Costa Fire’s Capt. Kevin Platt, FF/P Jake Valdez, FF Dave Perkins, AMR paramedic Gabrielle Dale Harrel and EMT Sergio Lara working as a team were able to bring a 54 year old gentleman back. 100% occlusion of his artery – 2 stents, Intra-aortic balloon pump and ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) this STEMI patient has come a long way to be discharged home doing VERY well.
- Capt. Troy Skillman, Eng. Vito Impastato & FF/P Vincent Aiello worked with AMR’s Karen Wright, Dayne Campbell and Intern Matt Hammond to relieve their patient’s “heavy weight” in his chest and quickly transported him for intervention. Door to Intervention was 44 minutes. Teamwork saves muscle/lives!
- Many firefighters and AMR personnel have worked to “change a culture” teaching Hands Only CPR. Thank you for assisting to train our citizens to SAVE A LIFE.

Contra Costa EMS honors all our pre-hospital providers for a job well done ■